

Filipino Martial Arts

Legends of the Filipino Martial Arts Digest

Special Issue
2005



Grandmaster Leo Giron
BAHALA NA

Mangisursuro Mike Inay
Inayan Eskrima



Grandmaster Remy Presas
Modern Arnis



Maestro Elmer Ybanez
LESKAS

Grandmaster Angel Cabales
Serrada Eskrima



Founder Filemon Canete



Punong Guro Edgar Sulite
Lameco Eskrima

Professor Florendo Visitacion
Vee Arnis Jitsu



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Giron Arnis Escrima International™
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LESKAS – Organization
Leo Fong – Angel Cabales
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Dog Brothers Inc.
Aguillon Family – Manuel Aguillon
Professor David B. James – Florendo Visitacion

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Professor Florendo Visitacion
Remembered and Not Forgotten

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

The authors and publisher of this digest are not responsible for any injury, which may result from following the instructions contained in the digest. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the digest, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity.

From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

What is a Legend? It is one of great fame or popular renown. It is in this case, persons that are historical in the sense that they brought their fighting art to the world, sharing with others the techniques, philosophies, attitude, and part of a culture that represents the Philippines.

In this Special Issue are some of the Legends that have passed away and that through their teachings, passed on the Filipino martial arts for all to be able to learn and understand as part of the culture of the Philippines. Whether it was empty hand, with the baston, or the blade their knowledge has not been lost and is carried on by either their blood relatives and/or their devoted students.

The legends in this special issue are not in any order, for all were most notable in their style. Many others I would have liked to include in this issue, but could not get information about them or permission to use what has been written about them. So maybe if some of the past legends that are not in this issue, if their students would contact the FMA Digest and submit information, another special issue could be published.

If on the FMA Digest website you do not see a legend on the **legends page**, please, if possible **submit** the name, style, date of birth, the date they passed away, and a picture so it can be included. This is so others can know who shared their fighting art with others in hope that it would not be lost in their passing.

As much as possible the FMA Digest has included websites and contact information for those that are interested to find out more about the style of Filipino martial arts that has been passed on to their students. And most hopefully will continue to be passed on from generation to generation.

Salamat Po

Grand Master Emertius Leovigildo (Leo) Miguel Giron

[1911 - 2002]

Giron System of Arnis Escrima

BAHALA NA



Leovigildo "Leo" Miguel Giron was born in Bayambang a little barrio in the province of Pangasinan, Philippines on August 20, 1911. Young Giron first started his training in the Filipino arts because of the neighborhood children and bullies that would take advantage of him and others. Giron soon learned, however, that if he stood up to him and made one of them cry, the rest would run away and leave him alone.

All of Giron's early training was with family members. They would train under the mango tree late at night. Giron would first hold the lantern for the training until his father had asked the teacher to train young Giron. His training started in 1921 and lasted until 1926 until Giron would set sail on the USS President Lincoln for America.

Giron landed in San Francisco in November 1926 and was picked up by his cousin and brought to Stockton, California. During this time Stockton, California had the largest population of Filipinos in America that it would earn the nickname "Little Manila". Young Giron would work in various areas in Stockton until in 1929 when he would move to Meridian, California to pick prunes. During this time he would meet a man by the name of Flaviano Vergara. Vergara was from the town of Santa Cruz in Ilocos Sur Luzon, Philippines. Vergara was the top student of Dalmacio Bergoina who defeated the great champion Santiago Toledo. Giron and Vergara would "play" deep in the orchards so no one would be able to watch the secret training of the deadly art of Arnis / Escrima. Their training would last from 1929 until 1932. Vergara and Giron would meet again directly after the outbreak of World War II. They would train again for the last time from October 1942 until January 1943.

In 1937 Giron was initiated into the Legionarios del Trabajo in America. The Legionarios del Trabajo is a fraternal order or lodge, they would be known as one of the most powerful and richest of any other Filipino lodge. This organization with membership at the time would top over 3,000 members, 86 men's lodges and 12 women's only lodges.

On September 24, 1942 he was inducted into the United States Army and would be attached to the 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment and would later be assigned to the famous 978th Signal Group and The Allied Intelligence Bureau. This was a select group of men that served as secret operatives for General Douglas MacArthur. Then Sergeant Leo Giron would be dropped behind enemy lines by submarine nearly one full year before any American Soldier would set foot on Philippine soil. It was there assignment to search out the enemy, extending lines of communication, securing vital weather data and obtaining military information and not to be detected by the enemy. Sergeant Giron led a group of American and Philippine soldier's through the most hazardous conditions of World War II deep in the jungles of the Philippines. Many encounters are documented in



the United States Library of Congress in Washington DC. Because of his contributions during World War II Sergeant Giron would receive, The Bronze Star Medal, The Philippine Liberation Ribbon, The Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, The American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and a letter of commendation ordered by the President of the United States of America.



Giron would return to civilian life as World War II hero and a part of America's Greatest Generation. But, without anyone knowing he would return too live a new and normal life in America as a Filipino American, not pondering on his heroics during the War. After the war Giron would return to Stockton, California to raise a family.

Because of a person back East that had killed several nursing students, most of them Filipino women this would enrage Giron that only if they would know self defense they could have try to subdue this maniac. So in 1968 Leo Giron would open his first licensed Bahala Na club in Tracy California.

In 1970 Grand Master Leo M. Giron and wife Alberta would move to Stockton along with his Bahala Na Club. And in 1973 the first student to graduate from his system would be Stockton born and World Renown Martial Artist Dan Inosanto. In 1979 the first meeting was called to order of the Bahala Na Filipino Martial Arts Association. Grand Master Giron was the founder and leader of this Association that is governed by a Constitution and by laws.

Grand Master Giron's contributions to the Filipino Martial Arts in general were enormous. He was known as the Father of Larga Mano in America. A World War II veteran that knew how to use his weapon and will be always remembered as a great man, a humble man, with dignity, love in his heart, a living legend and martial art Icon. He was a super star, he was our star and he was our shining light of life. He gave us all the liberty of freedom to learn of life and the arts, Equality in having the necessary ability and strength, Fraternity in which the same beliefs in work along with fellowship and family.



Grand Master Giron left us with a legacy that we must all carry on with all of those that would like to share in his system.

“BAHALA NA”



As a direct result of superior skill and devotion to the principals, philosophy and purpose of Bahala Na Martial Arts combined with leadership and his master level Instructorship, **Master Tony Somera** was promoted to the rank and responsibility of Grand Master by the late Grand Master and founder of Bahala Na Martial Arts Leo M. Giron. Grand Master Somera is the leading authority and promotes the art of Giron Arnis Escrima along with its rich Filipino history and culture. Tony Somera is the only person ever to be promoted to the rank

of Master and then Grand Master by the late Grand Master Emeritus Leo M. Giron.

Contact

Bahala Na Filipino Martial Arts Association

www.gironarnisescrima.com

www.bahalanamartialarts.com

Giron Arnis Escrima International™

Giron Arnis Escrima Filipino Martial Arts™

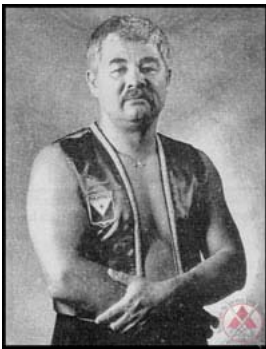
“Patakaran Ni GNG Giron”

30 Years Anniversary (1968 – 1998)

Mangisursuro Michael G. Inay

[1944 – 2000]

Inayan Eskrima



Suro Inay devoted his entire adult life to the promotion, preservation, and propagation of the Filipino Martial Arts. He was born on December 11 1944 at Dos Palos Community Hospital in Dos Palos, CA. After his Mother gave him up at six weeks his father Mateo Inay raised him.

Suro's first experience in Eskrima and would not realize it until later in life was when he was a child. Was from an old migrant worker named Mariano. Suro was playing with a makeshift wooden word and the old man asked, “So, you can fight boy?” and young Suro said yep. Mariano picked up a branch and teased Suro badly. In hindsight Suro realized that the man was an Eskrimador.

Working in the asparagus fields of Stockton and living in the temporary camps was not where Mateo wanted for his son while going to High School so he arranged for Suro to live with one of Suro's friends, Benny. Mateo paid Benny's mother Mrs. Amigable to take care of him. While living with this family Suro was introduced to Max Sarmiento. Max was married to Benny's sister so he was around the house often. When Suro was dating his first wife Mary she had a relative in San Jose that got Suro a job so Suro and Mary moved to San Jose. It was while Suro was in San Jose practicing Gung Fu that he found out about Max being an Eskrimador through Mary's sister. She said she had read an article in the newspaper about Angel Cabales and Max Sarmiento.

Well when Suro heard about this he could hardly believe it. He called Max and asked to take lessons. Max invited him up to his house that weekend to begin. When Suro got there he walked in, hugged his “uncle “ Max and got introduced to the little man sitting on the couch smoking a cigarette. This was Angel Cabales. After the introduction was over they cleared the furniture from the living room and started with Suro's first lesson. This was sometime in 1965. Suro continued his weekly private lessons for approximately 8 years with both Angel Cabales and Max Sarmiento.

Suro Inay co-founded the West Coast Eskrima Society with its first chairman, Max Sarmiento in 1979. The West Coast Eskrima Society was formally inaugurated in



Grandmaster Cabales (top left)
Grandmaster Sarmiento (top right)
Senior Students (left to right)
Jimmy Tacosa, Remi Estrella and Mike Inay.

Los Gatos, California in Suro Inay's home. The West Coast Eskrima Society was founded in the hopes of preserving, propagating and promoting the Filipino Martial Arts.

The "West Coast Eskrima Society" was, for the first time in the Filipino Martial Arts community, able to unite several Filipino Masters under one organization. The Society's Charter was signed in Suro Inay's house in Los Gatos, California on January 13, 1979. Many notable Eskrima Masters joined the West Coast Eskrima Society and were present during the Charter signing.

Some of the original members were:

Max Sarmiento, Mike Inay, Jimmy Tacosa, Jeffrey Elliott, San Tendencia, Dentoy Revillar, Gilbert Tenio, Leo Giron, Narrie Babao, Dan Inosanto and Richard Bustillo. Suro Inay was instrumental in bringing both The "West Coast Eskrima Society" and the "Cabales-Serrada Eskrima Association" to light. They were the forerunners of the present day Filipino Martial Arts organizations that have emerged in the last 20 years. Suro Inay also played an integral role in the events over the past several years that lead to the growing acceptance of the Filipino Martial Arts in the U.S.

Suro Inay began teaching law enforcement throughout the United States and became well known and respected in the law enforcement community. Suro Inay also began traveling abroad to conduct seminars and clinics on Inayan Eskrima in England, Germany, France, Norway, Sweden, Canada and Australia.

At the request of a large Midwest law enforcement organization, PPCT, Suro Inay developed the first nationwide law enforcement knife defense program called "Spontaneous Knife Defense". He also appeared on Law Enforcement Television Network (LETN).

During this period, he also developed and refined the Inayan System of Eskrima (ISE). Inayan Eskrima is comprised of 7 distinct styles of Eskrima. Each of these styles have a complete set of basic, intermediate, and advanced techniques and concepts that make them independent of each other in terms of self-defense viability.

Suro Inay put a learning structure to these styles and a ranking system for grading. He elected to call all of the styles he teaches "Inayan" to avoid confusion with other teachers and styles that have the same or similar names. This also reduced the amount of controversy and claims of validity others could or could not profess with regard to "Inayan" Eskrima.

Suro Inay developed several courses dealing with pressure sensitive nerve areas, riot baton and advanced knife training. He also developed the use of the knife as an

alternative weapon for executive protection in instances where a firearm is not warranted or safe to use.

Mangisursuro Michael G. Inay passed away while doing what he loved the most - teaching Inayan Eskrima. Though he was taken from us long before his time, he made a profound impact in the Martial Arts world and improved the lives of many. Those that he touched most have vowed to keep his dream alive by spreading the word of Inayan Eskrima.

"To be a truly complete and effective fighting defense, a style must have an arsenal of competent techniques and theory to pull from to use in any situation without borrowing from another style."



www.inayaneskrima.com

Inayan Eskrima was developed by Mangisursuro Michael G. Inay. In Inayan Eskrima several styles of Eskrima are studied but the focus are on three “core styles” which are Inayan Kadena de Mano, Inayan Serrada, and Inayan Largo Mano. Each is taught in its whole form as a complete style and covers a specific range: short (Kadena), medium (Serrada) and long (Largo). Having these three styles that cover these three separate ranges is the key to balancing out Inayan Eskrima. All three (short, medium and long) are essential. When the Inayan student reaches the proper level he or she can then understand how each

piece fits the greater puzzle and puts them together as it fits their particular way of fighting.

Each style has its own advantages and is very effective in its own right but might not be the best answer to every combative situation. For example, a Largo Mano stylist is very adept at long ranges, but what happens if that student is standing in a corner when confronted and has no space to move the way he or she was taught? In this particular situation, having a good working knowledge of a medium- or short-range style would be very beneficial.

Having 3 ranges at his or her disposal is a great asset to the Inayan student. Whatever situation they might find themselves in, the student can quickly adapt to the surroundings at hand. They can then “flow” easily from range to range and/or style to style, depending on the circumstance, without corrupting their objective.

Taking this a step further, the advanced student can understand how to implement long-range theory in short-range engagement or possibly medium-range theory in long-range engagement.

Below is a brief description of the three core styles that make up the backbone of Inayan Eskrima in Inayan Systems International and the Inayan Federation of Eskrima.



- **Inayan Kadena de Mano**
Kadena De Mano translates to “chain of hand” and is a combination of empty-hand and knife/dagger techniques. It covers basic and advanced hand and knife drills as well as permuted locks from the basic/advanced drills. Lock/flow/trap practice drills are stressed as well as subject control through the use of Vital Points (Pressure Sensitive Nerves).
- **Inayan Serrada**
Serrada translates to either "to close" or "close quarters". The style is noted for using a shorter cane, male triangle footwork, and quick, linear, in-close fighting. This blade and stick style translates well into empty-hand applications.
- **Inayan Largo Mano**
Largo Mano translates to "long hand" and is a long-range system of Eskrima. Evolved to use a longer/heavier cane (~40") and to use the cane as if it were a Kampilan, the longest sword found in the Philippines. This style is credited as being the first complete formal style to teach the use of the Kampilan.

Supplemental styles include:

- Inayan Dequerdas
- Inayan Sinawali
- Inayan Espada y Daga
- Inayan Sibat/Bankow

Inayan Systems International is made up of the following three components:

Inayan Brotherhood of Eskrima (IBE).

The IBE is the active founding Guro council that sets the policy and direction for the underlying organizations. The IBE members are:

Emanuel Hart - Inayan Masirib Guro
Steve Klement - Inayan Masirib Guro
Cory Hanosh - Inayan Masirib Guro

Inayan Systems International (ISI).

The ISI is made up of the core schools and students. These schools are headed by Inayan Guros and have Inayan Eskrima as their core curriculum.

Click here for detailed ISI information.

Inayan Federation of Eskrima (IFE).

The IFE is made up of the schools, the IFE Instructors, and individual students within those schools that train from ISI instructors by either intensive seminars or private on-going curriculum.

Click here for detailed IFE information.

Grandmaster Remy Presas

[1936 - 2001]

Modern Arnis

THE LEGACY OF REMY A. PRESAS

BORN A WARRIOR, TO FIGHT and TO LEAD!

by: Kelly S. Worden



Remy A. Presas eldest son of *Jose B. Presas* and *Lucia Amador* was born December 19, 1936 in Hiniganran, Negros Occidental, Philippines. Bred from the spirit of his ancestors, the courage to stand alone as a warrior was passed from grandfather *Leon Presas*, to father *Jose Presas*, to son, *Remy Amador Presas*. Remy felt this life force as a child and began cultivating his own spirit at an early age. Many times in our personal conversations he would re-account the stories of hiding behind the Nipa-huts while he observed his father, U.S. Army Lieutenant *Jose*

Presas train the Filipino Military troops in the battle field fighting maneuvers of the **deadly Bolo Knife!**

Forbidden, and unbeknownst to his father, young Remy would wander off into his imagined battle ground and practice the energetic strikes and slashing patterns he had just witnessed. Mimicking the war cries of fighters and soldiers, the young warrior sensed the fire in his own blood and deliberately sought a deeper understanding of the cultural fighting arts of his native country. His grandfather *Leon Bonco* proudly witnessed this transformation in the young Filipino and offered to train him secretly in the traditional family arts of Arnis, known as *Presas Style*.

After exposure and traditional training from his Grandfather *Leon Bonco*, *Remy A. Presas* left home at the age of 14 years old and traveled to Cebu seeking a greater challenge in the art. It was in Cebu that a young Remy learned the deadly art of Balintawak from the Cebuano experts of Eskrima, Grandmaster *Venancio Anciong Bacon*, *Timoteo Maranga*, and *Rodolfo Moncal*. It is from the guidance of these Eskrimadors that Remy Presas grew to be known as a fearless fighter and Remy won any and all contests he entered. As he matured he grew conscious of his own reputation and sought to teach and share his knowledge with others. With the direct blessings of Grandmaster *Anciong Bacon* he left Cebu to form his own method of Arnis. Prior to being introduced in Manila, the true roots of Modern Arnis became established during the year of 1957 in Bacolod City Negros Occidental in the Visayas. It was also there that he met and married *Rosemary Pascual* a driving force behind Remy and the development of Modern Arnis. Rosemary Presas came to be known as the Mother of Modern Arnis and assisted Remy in all organizational matters as well as the publishing of his first books on Arnis.

In an excerpt from the book “Modern Arnis Philippine Martial Art Stick Fighting” written by Col. Arsenio de Borja (Ret.) the following quote can be read about Remy’s dream: *“He believes that a good art should be shared by the whole world. This is his ardent dream and when this dream shall have flowered, the world will have to thank not only Remy but also his wonderful wife, Rosemary, whose inspiration, perseverance and priceless assistance made this book possible. Also their children Mary Jane, Mary Ann, Remy Jr., Maria Presas, and Demitrio Jose, whose innocent laughter’s have lightened the mental load in the awesome preparation of this book. Modern Arnis will go a long way and Modern Arnis is incomplete without bringing into the picture the athlete and the crusader, Remy A. Presas, **The Father of Modern Arnis**”*

Early recognition

Historically throughout the Philippines, Remy A. Presas became well known as a dynamic fighter, great martial arts practitioner, and the driving force behind the revitalization of Arnis as a cultural treasure.

One example of his historical impact is listed below as a public acknowledgment to his dedication of propagating the art of Arnis within the Philippines.

On March 19, 1974 the City Council of Iloilo, Philippines, presented publicly

*** Resolution Number 388***

RESOLUTION 388 HEREBY RECOGNIZES “REMY A. PRESAS” AS THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIVING THE ANCIENT FILIPINO MARTIAL ART OF “ARNIS.”

His impact on the modernization of Arnis as a national treasure and cultural sport was acknowledged nation wide, which garnered *Remy A. Presas* with countless awards of recognition from such prestigious groups as the Philippine Air Force and the National College of Physical Education. Additionally *Remy A. Presas* was twice chosen to receive the coveted top Arnis award of the Philippines, the *Sigla-Lakas* Award. *Sigla-Lakas* represents two Filipino words, in broader English words "Sigla" means skill; "Lakas" is strength and power. *Sigla-Lakas* is skill, strength and power.

The *Sigla-Lakas* Award is given annually to the sports athletes who excel to the highest level in their individual sport category each year. To this day, no such award has been presented to another Arnis practitioner in the Philippines.

Dreams and acknowledged accomplishments

Later around 1969 when he brought his family to Manila Remy A. Presas established the National Amateur Karate Organization (NAKO), and the Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines. Further propagating the beauty and value of the cultural art of Arnis, Professor Presas implemented many instructional programs within the Bureau of Public and Private Schools, colleges, police agencies, and different military units throughout the Philippines. Proudly he shared his art with all who were interested and through further professional perseverance founded the Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines. It was at this junction of his life he had the opportunity to demonstrate and perform before the late Philippines President Ferdinand E. Marcos in Antipolo Rizal. As popularity of modern Arnis grew so did his status as a great diplomat and representative of the cultural fighting art, in 1970 Remy A. Presas went to Japan to teach and demonstrate the functional beauty and effectiveness of Arnis. This was truly a

highlight in his life; even years later during a radio interview conducted in the United States he mentioned with great pride his Arnis demonstration for Japanese masters at the legendary Kodokan, the Mecca and center for all Japanese martial arts. This was an important milestone in the acceptance of Arnis as a world recognized martial art and was also personally important to Remy due to the fact he was a 6th degree black belt in Japanese Karate and a black belt in Judo, he felt it was a great honor to be the only Filipino in martial arts history to be acknowledged at the Kodokan!

Systemized methodology, the foundation

The 12 foundational striking and deflecting techniques of Arnis that Remy Presas emphasized were also complemented by traditional patterns of movement including rompida (diagonal slashing), palis palis (go with the force), figure eight (interlocking circular strikes), banda banda (Presas flow side to side slashing), abanico (to fan the stick) Double action Abanico (fan with reverse circle follow up), Redondo (multiple circle hitting), crossada (crossing and uncrossing maneuvers), sinawali (weaving patterns), espada y daga (sword and dagger), and of course his own close-quarter interpretation of Balintawak, Presas tapi tapi.. By cross referencing and connecting various concepts Professor Presas created functional sub-systems intended for natural adaptability and personal developmental study. Through his teachings each sub-system could be instructed separately but conclusively progressed to become part of the whole system, strategy, and foundation of Modern Arnis. Presas felt by isolating sub-system characteristics the concepts would enhance each individuals physical attributes and they're ability to flow. Remy Presas put a great deal of confidence in the principles of flow and explained proper flow as being "the instinctual ability to adapt to a confrontational situation naturally, no matter the range or weapon." Therefore a properly trained technician of Modern Arnis potentially flows instinctively and the system matures into an art of improvisational adaptability guided by muscle memory and motivated by fighting spirit or tactical intent.

Have stick, will fight

Professor considered the *Balintawak* style of Cebu to be the most aggressive and deadly arts he ever encountered. Realizing the dynamic potential of *Balintawak*, Remy sought to develop an art form with the same degree of effectiveness yet modernized to adapt to an ever-changing society. Furthermore living the life of an Arnisador exposed him to the potential threat of his skills or art to be challenged. This self-realization coupled with personal pride drove Remy to polish and maintain his fighting competency. To Remy A. Presas knowledge was only valid if you possessed the ability to back it up with fighting skill. As the Grand Master of Modern Arnis his reputation as a dynamic Arnisador was everything thus he developed his Tapi Tapi method to neutralize any potential future threats or challenges. As time progressed, Remy's skill and teaching ability became extremely refined. Additionally the fact that he was born left handed yet instructed primarily with his right hand gave him a strategic advantage few others possessed. This factor allowed Remy to become more confident knowing he basically had an *ace in the hole*.

Anyo, the same, yet different

Another *ace in the hole* that should be attributed to Remy A. Presas is his integration of Filipino kata or anyo into the mainstream cultural art of Modern Arnis. To a large degree Filipino martial arts owe its cultural revival to Japanese or Okinawan arts. These arts laid a foundation for the systemization of the Arnis arts. Looking into the historical lineage of most Arnisadors', evidence exists as to the participation of Arnis practitioners also training in karate, judo or jujitsu. This is a commonality most westerners have misconstrued; for the most part many find the essence of kata or forms in Filipino martial arts non-essential. This prospective no doubt comes from westerners being strung along within the Karate-do systems and learning very little about form other than block, punch, kick, and jerky static mobility.

Amorado, abcederio, and anyo are in essence kata, and are all part of a valuable training matrix. For some practitioners pre-arranged forms have little or no value. Of course this could be true, especially if the practitioner has only trained in two person drills and does not possess the ability to think outside the box and visualize physical engagements. This is a long drawn out argument but simply put, Professor Presas devised the anyo of Modern Arnis to simplify technique categorizing. The forms serve as an active and ever changing storage unit of essential patterns or combinations relevant to Modern Arnis. Within the context of each anyo (form) techniques include strikes, kicks, deflections, locks, throws, footwork, and evasive maneuvers all set within a standardized pattern. Without question they were initially established to reflect the dynamic stylized actions of karate postures yet through his innovations the anyo contained much more flow and a diversity of applications not universally found within karate kata.

Kumpadres, brothers of the art

The late Dr. Guillermo Lengson, the late Antonio Mendoza, and the late Professor Remy A. Presas were all "kumpadres" and much of the foundational insight of the Modern Arnis anyo came from this interactive exchange of knowledge. Each individual Anyo isolates specific concepts, angles, and techniques while drawing from Professor's in-depth study of karate, judo, and jujitsu. In truth the strategy of developing the anyo was an ingenious revelation to help draw interest into Modern Arnis. The creation of anyo and its relativity to karate kata formed a transitional conduit for Filipino practitioners of karate, judo, and jujitsu. The anyo served as a connecting link allowing them to embrace the beauty and function of the Philippine cultural arts while still maintaining a structural and systemized method of training. No matter how simplified the anyo is formatted some practitioners will never be able to free themselves from the bonds of rigidity.

Over the years Modern Arnis became exposed to a vast array of different styles and practitioner's world wide, for some practitioners Professor relaxed the required structural guidelines and allowed personal expression to blossom within the anyo. Truly with the acceptance and success of Filipino martial arts it only seemed natural for the anyo/ forms to evolve and express the essence of Filipino cultural flavor compared to maintaining structured karate rigidity. Just as Filipino stick, knife, or staff maneuvers capture the essence of flow, so should the anyo evolve to express cultural relevance and independent value.

Technically if we were to analyze a boxer fluidly executing a jab, cross, hook, uppercut combination, we would perceive his maneuvers to be naturally performed. Yet if he were not polished and refined in the techniques we would immediately condemn his “form.” All movement is form based and Professor Presas understood this, but westerners are impatient and pragmatically he felt it was much simpler to teach *ballistic form* than to bring life to *static form* or overly ridged students. Additionally Professor Presas believed it was up to the practitioner to seek the balance in combat efficiency and advance himself in order to thoroughly comprehend the dynamics of all movement. It is that distinction that separates a good player or teacher from a great one, Professor Presas was a great overall practitioner and teacher!

Anyo evolution or revolution

Professor was a man of vision and felt deeply in his soul that the Filipino martial arts could stand on their own, the evolution and acceptance of Modern Arnis was a self-realized and proven fact in his lifetime. In the months prior to Professor passing away I demonstrated the anyo of Modern Arnis to him and Roland Dantes. During this demonstration I emphasized movements with the flavor of Kuntao or Silat and clarified why the anyo possessed the true essence of Modern Arnis flow, additionally I utilized the extraction of anyo sequences to implement functional maneuvers and demonstrate natural attribute development. Professor was astonished, he directly blessed the progression as true Filipino art, authorizing me to continue the evolution and teachings of the Modern Arnis anyos. Does this mean all practitioners will make changes in the manner of which they execute the anyo/forms? Hardly so, yet over time the beauty and value of the anyo enhanced with Filipino attribute development will continue to flourish in a natural progressive manner. The beauty of Modern Arnis is expressed in its adaptability to evolve and progress, thus it remains an ever-evolving entity, “Modern not Traditional in context.”

Brief Acknowledgements

In the United States his dynamic efforts have impacted the entire industry of martial arts. In 1982 *Remy Armador Presas* was inducted into the prestigious ***Black Belt magazine Hall of Fame***. Throughout the years he has authored three instructional books; “*The Practical Art of Eskrima*, and *Modern Arnis Philippine Martial Art of Stick Fighting*, both published in the Philippines; as well as *Modern Arnis, The Filipino Art of Stick Fighting*, published by Ohara Publications in the United States. Equally as important and a testament to his indomitable spirit *The Father of Modern Arnis* produced and starred in a over 20 best selling instructional video projects highlighting the dynamics of his beloved Modern Arnis system.

The Big Three

Remy was new to the United States and personally felt he had to prove his worth, therefore he sought out and embraced students that had already established a position of authority in the diverse arts being taught in America. . Here in America he became great friends with Wally Jay and George Dillman and together they toured the world presenting their seminars as the “Big Three.” It is common knowledge the three exchanged ideas and concepts to broaden the knowledge of all their individual arts. So much more should

be mentioned in regard to the brotherhood these three martial arts leaders maintained; Remy considered them both two of the greatest teachers and innovators in the world. Furthermore in personal discussions I experienced with both men, they shared their mutual respect and love for Remy A. Presas without hesitation. According to a quote from George Dillman, “Remy established a market no one else was tapping into, the seminar market. Worldwide, it was Professor Remy Presas himself who literally created the seminar instructional circuit single handedly.” Additionally George shared, “What has been established as acceptable teaching through seminars should be directly credited to Remy Presas as a historical president, no one comes close to him in that arena.” Together the *Big Three* opened the doors to cross training and allowed practitioners from all arts to experience a dynamic blending of advanced theories and concepts with not strings attached. Wally Jay was quoted as saying, “Remy was the fastest person I have ever known at putting someone down with controls and locks.” That’s quite a comment since Wally Jay has known so many dynamic martial artists. Keep in mind; the only other person Wally has spoken so highly of in this manner was “Bruce Lee!”

Open door policy

Professor Presas felt all arts had validity and within the Modern Arnis format it’s okay if the practitioner also trained in Karate or other arts. Remy did not try to change those who didn’t have the vision to see the difference. He just accepted you and offered people his art. Additionally if you operated a structured school with a specific style he felt he was reaching more people by embracing and instructing the leader who would draw their students into Remy’s Modern Arnis format.

By becoming the teacher of leaders he felt his Modern Arnis curriculum would have more impact on the martial arts evolution that swept thru America and around the world. Professor’s art and personal influence has literally touched thousands of dynamic practitioners worldwide. Traveling from city to city and state to state, Remy Presas was committed to spreading the cultural art of Arnis to all who would listen and learn. Modern Arnis was his vehicle to becoming a *legend in martial arts*, in reality the name *Professor Remy Presas* has attained almost mystical status because of his historically acknowledged worldwide impact.

A teachers teacher

Truly to be recognized worldwide is a rarity in any man’s lifetime. A leader of men, Remy A. Presas stepped into fame by persevering his dream, creating a vision, and living the art of Arnis as a way of life. Professor Presas was a man revered by leaders, a teacher of teachers. With great pride he faced adversity in his lifelong struggle for prominence yet moved steadfastly to achieve his dreams driven only by cultural strength and the heart of a warrior.

The fact that Remy was immersed in teaching and refining his art almost every day for the last 50 years has much to do with his personal development. Remy was known to travel worldwide and teach several seminars per week. In this regard Remy crossed sticks with a great number of skilled practitioners and thousands of people called Remy Presas their teacher. Interestingly were some of the things he would say during an instructional engagement. For instance if someone shifted off line and forced Remy to respond instinctively he might say, “My God, I didn’t know I knew that, I am very

good!” Additionally a common response was, “You are teaching me,” and “Oh Wow, You got it Baby.” Of course, then he would lock you up and dump you on the floor! Remy could switch from left to right hand weapon control without a break in the flow; few were faster than Remy at that, none that I ever meant! I have witnessed Remy tie up and control up to four or five people all in his grasp, controlled with finger locks and being slammed into one another while hopping around in immense pain. Professor Presas possessed a highly refined sense of sensitivity; he meticulously understood and controlled a person’s pain threshold to the point of knockout. Without a doubt, Remy Presas could see a technique once and immediately integrate it into his system, thus “the art within your art.” Modern Arnis was devised to be a complete system, integrating the cultural connection of the Filipino arts while blending to make a foundation art more functional for self-defense.

Making the Connection

His conceptual approach of adapting the art to the student would guide the practitioner to establish a strong comprehension of flow, natural movement, and style relativity. Professor Presas literally created the *art within your art* approach for simplicity and self-realization, truly an accomplishment equal to the contributions of the late *Bruce Lee* and his art of *Jeet Kune Do*. In prospective, the progressive art of *Modern Arnis* is literally the “*Jeet Kune Do*” of the Philippines, truthfully instituting an in-depth amalgamation of concepts extracted from countless martial art systems. In this regard *Modern Arnis* has the future capabilities to expand and thrive beyond any perceived structural guidelines. *Modern Arnis* under Professor’s leadership was a progressive art. Openly and willingly he felt all arts offered something of value and therefore incorporated whatever techniques he deemed functional. This approach of adaptability further adheres the interactive conceptual bond between *Modern Arnis* and *Jeet Kune Do*.

Social consciousness and acceptance

Professor’s compilation of counter-to-counter training was constantly evolving even in the final stages of his life. Interestingly in his teaching style he became more jovial, fluid and relaxed. Witnessing in his close-quarter Tapi Tapi engagements it was easy to see his skill was more refined and not nearly as intentionally vicious as years gone by. His power still showed thru but Remy no longer made the effort to prove his skill, only present it and maintain a highly sophisticated flow, this he did very soundly. In 1998, I questioned him about the level of pain he inflicted on me during the 1980’s, he explained he was currently more interested in the world propagation of *Modern Arnis* as an art, with positive benefits other than fighting. Professor knew the value of having students that loved him as an educator of the arts and unlike years ago did not want his students to be in fear of his “iron will” or the impact of his stick.

Who’s really on the edge?

Furthermore Professor’s main focus was on the modernization of *Arnis*, thus *Modern Arnis* was propagated as a self-defense art. Professor Presas felt the stick was easy to share without public fear or criticism; contrarily individuals with knowledge of the bladed arts could potentially instill fear in the average citizen. Possibly, Professor Presas felt he was protecting his students from legal liabilities or the impact of a negative

social image that some knife dominate systems project. He felt by directly adhering to stick and empty hand aspects a more socially acceptable art could be presented while still maintaining the essence of the art. In that regard, few students received extensive training in the bladed aspects of the art; instead Professor demonstrated only basic patterns from rompida, crossada, or palis palis during his seminars. When Professor came to the Natural Spirit Int'l Tacoma gym in 1984 he mentioned my proximity to the Northwest Army, Air Force, and Navy Military Bases and felt it was important for me to specialize in knife training and capitalize on the potential interests of Military men in the area. He also felt that the average citizen was instinctively afraid of knife techniques yet for military men it was a natural inclination to seek out knife training methodology. Consequently Professor shared his knife fighting knowledge specifically with me and very few others. I was fortunate in that regard as we bonded and became close friends; this friendship was due primarily to our radical upbringing as young men who sought out the excitement of the fighting arts at an early age. It was this connection that opened the door for Professor to choose me as his primary knife exponent in Modern Arnis. I am also sure this is the reason as to why he assisted me in the development of the Filipino Sibat system and in 1988 promoted me to the title of Datu of Modern Arnis. This was a distinction and honor that created a great deal of jealousy which increased within the ranks as few others were awarded the title again until years later. In the mid 1990's I was a writer and assistant editor for Full Contact and Fighting Knives Magazine and produced "Four" Knife Fighting Instructional videos. It was this time in my career he named me the *Blade Master of Modern Arnis*, a title he acknowledged to his final days. With the release of several tactical knife designs and finally the knife I handmade personally for him, ***The Presas Legacy*** he was quoted as saying "the others are just chasing my tail." This statement was referencing the political struggle that seemed to be prevalent in his final days during hospitalization and the care facility where he passed away. When I presented him the *Handmade Custom Damascus Presas Legacy Knife* he would not release it, and embraced it tightly for several hours. I told him " *Professor, steel will outlive us all, when we have both passed on our knives will be a part of our legacy to the arts!*" This statement brought a tear to his eye and he blessed the knife as his official Modern Arnis knife. To this day no other knife has been officially accepted by the Presas Family or has been authorized to use the Presas name as a trademark or name, only ***The Presas Legacy!***

Art within your art

Modern Arnis is considered the art within your art and to some degree the methodology of the art is uniquely different in every part of the World. Many if not most of the senior Modern Arnis teachers are also disciplined in multiple systems which has added a great deal of diversity to Modern Arnis. In essence the interaction of Modern Arnis with other arts has created a natural evolution, without exception Professor Presas encouraged every student to broaden their personal expression and knowledge base to further deepen the roots of Modern Arnis. It is hard to conceive the prospect that Modern Arnis is a pure art, to perceive or preserve it as that or label one aspect and not another as pure Modern Arnis would take away from the adaptability of the system. This in turn would lead to the stagnation of Professor's own research into creating the "art within your art" approach of diversity and functional adaptability. The progressive nature of Modern Arnis cannot be

stopped or contained, as some practitioners believe it should be. Without question the foundation elements of the art are ingrained within the context of the art and therefore even a gross deviation could not change the original premise or teaching of Professor's work, his essence and systemization will always shine through. Additionally Professor's efforts will continue to impact systems that are not even related to the original art. This element of evolution was apparent even when he was living, some traditional arts incorporated Modern Arnis stick patterns, lock flow, and self defense techniques to add depth and a functional strength especially if they relied primarily on the simplicity of kick-punch strategies.

Memories of a small boy

In June of 2001, Roland Dantes went to Victoria B.C. Canada and spent several weeks consulting with Professor Presas about his future personal plans and Modern Arnis affairs. Professor Remy Presas did not expect to die from his Brain Tumor surgery. In an audio interview I conducted June 22, 2001, Remy spoke positively of recovering from his surgery and discussed the history and the continued evolution of his lifelong dream of Modern Arnis. As we further broadened the scope of our conversation Remy began questioning us about the impact he had on Roland and I personally, as well as the martial arts world. Almost as if he were a third party listening in, he asked, "How does a person obtain legendary eminence in their chosen field of endeavor?" We all kind of chuckled and Roland stated, "it was his undying dedication to fulfill his life's dream, and that he had accomplished just that!" Again Professor asked, "How is it just a small boy with a stick could change the world around him and bring to life a dying art?" Literally these were honest questions that he wanted direct answers to, Roland and I could see the mystery and innocence of the question in his eyes. It was almost like he was re-living the highlights of his life in those brief moments of wonderment. He reflected on many issues concerning the continued propagation of Modern Arnis. Together Remy A. Presas, Roland Dantes, and I swore a pact of brotherhood, further Professor asked Roland and I to form an allegiance and continue his work in Modern Arnis and the future propagation of all Filipino martial arts.

Presas bloodline and legacy

On July 29th 2001, when contacted by his children at the Care Facility in Victoria B.C. Canada where he was convalescing, I was spending my 49th Birthday with him. Upon answering the telephone and conversing a few minutes, Remy became emotionally distraught and started crying uncontrollably. Shocked and concerned I embraced Remy and tried to comfort him. Caught up in his emotions I tried to console him and I told him "everything would be alright". Minutes passed as he kept saying, "I did not know my family still loved me"... "My God, my children love me"... It was a joyous moment in his life, and he expressed it in the tranquility of his facial expressions as if a weight had been lifted from his soul.

The following week, finally rejoined with their Father, the family was understandably shocked at his state of ill health. Troubled, confused, and angered at the situation at hand, Remy's children recited prayer after prayer as they rejoiced for their reunion with the father who left their side so many years ago. Extremely weak and dehydrated, he spoke about going to California to spend his final days of hospice in their

home with his beloved children. He shared his dream of their involvement in the Presas family legacy of Arnis, passed from generation to generation evolving into the Presas Style Modern Arnis. Remy Jr. swore an oath of dedication to his father that day, he would take up the stick, embrace his Philippine Culture and Modern Arnis, continuing the Presas Legacy into the future. These words are factual, shared directly with Roland Dantes and I in personal conversations with Professor prior to his passing on August 28th 2001.

Without exception, Professor's eldest son, Remy P. Presas Jr., has stepped up and is as dedicated to the propagation of Modern Arnis as his father before him was. It may seem to early in time to make this statement but I have witnessed a transformation in his spirit and technical skill few others have. His promise to his father is the driving force that has drawn him closer to his father than ever thought possible after experiencing the years they were apart. Remy Jr. with the guidance of his Mother Rosemary Presas, Rodel Dagooc, Roland Dantes, Dr. Wilfredo Matias, myself and so many others in the Philippines and here in the U.S. is blossoming into a dynamic Arnisador. Make no mistake, the Presas blood is alive in his spirit and his desire to succeed in the art is the same desire that motivated his father to excel farther in the art than anyone could possible foresee. The Family of Professor Remy A Presas born in the Philippines and now residing in the United States consist of five children who have formed MARPPPIO (Modern Arnis Remy P. Presas International Organization). Remy P. Presas Jr., has accepted leadership. From the very first seminar I joined the family in March of 2002, Remy Presas Jr. has blossomed faster than anyone I have met over the many many years I've been involved in Modern Arnis. Remy Jr. is truthfully a natural, he is polished and innovative and beyond doubt moves much like his father, Professor Remy A. Presas!

Demitrio Jose Presas is in my opinion is a "Golden Child" possessing amazing skill, and a unique balance of physical and spiritual sensitivity. Demitrio's ability to feel and respond to an individual energy is mystical, during training I witnessed him escape and reverse every lock or control maneuver that was applied no him, with his eyes closed!

Mary Ann is the eldest of all the Presas children, her personal skill is deeply rooted in the very traditional foundation arts that formed Modern Arnis in the beginning, as a female warrior she is strong, dynamic, and disciplined in the cultural ways of old. Mary Ann emulates a balanced blend of her Mother Rosemary's stability and her Father Remy's indomitable spirit.

The children are all talented traditional practitioners and instructors of their Father's original teachings. Together the Adult Presas children are proud and determined to make an impact on Modern Arnis worldwide. They are a life force of skill and humility, growing stronger and more determined with each passing day!

MARPPPIO is acknowledged and recognized by the Philippine Government as the rightful Family heirs to the system of Modern Arnis! I personally promised Professor Remy A. Presas to assist the Presas Family in their efforts to embrace the art of Modern Arnis. I do this to honor the memory of my teacher, to assist in the preservation of Modern Arnis as a Filipino cultural art, and to assure the Presas family lineage is part of the legacy and heritage of Modern Arnis! Achieve.



www.modernarnis.com

Maestro Elmer Ybanez

[1953 - 2004]

Lema Scientific Kali Arnis

[LESKAS]

Maestro Ybanez was born on August 13, 1953 in Masbate, Philippines as one of seven siblings. He has 2 brothers (Judge Elihu Ybanez, Edwin Ybanez) and 4 sisters (Dorcas Ybanez-Rocabo, Deborah Ybanez-Quinto, Ropeccah Ybanez-Villabuena, Rebecca Ybanez-Liwanang). He met his future wife Maribel Padua at the Miracle Revival Church as teenagers. They were married on August 31, 1997. Maestro Ybanez passed away March 31, 2004 due to complications following his leukemia treatment.

Maestro Elmer Ybanez was the highest-ranking and most trusted student of Grandmaster Benjamin 'Mang Ben' Luna Lema who was the founder of Lightning Scientific Arnis International (LSAI) and whom he trained under for nearly 20 years.



www.leskas.com

The LSAI martial art system became widely known and accepted, first, in the Philippines, and now, in the U. S., mainly because of Maestro Ybanez's efforts and hard work to promote the art. Both he and Grandmaster Lema were delegates to the Martial Arts Federation for World Peace in Washington D.C. in 1997 representing the Philippines. Maestro Ybanez was also the first runner-up in the Second World Eskrima Kali Federation Championship (Super Lightweight Division) in 1992 and was national champion in both the Philippine's National Kali-Eskrima Tournament and the Philippine Union of Martial Arts Arnis

Tournament in 1991 and 1990 respectively.

Maestro Ybanez finished his degree in Business Administration, majoring in Accounting, at the Philippine Christian University, and earned his Diploma in Physical Education at the University of the Philippines where he founded and started teaching LESKAS style of Eskrima to a handful of dedicated students who now have their own organizations in the different parts of the Philippines. Since then, the University as part of the regular physical education curriculum has adopted LESKAS. LSAI/LESKAS

practitioners are found not only in the Philippines and the U.S., but also in England, Hong Kong and Singapore through the enthusiastic propagation of Master Ybanez and his students.

Maestro Elmer Ybanez founded his own organization in 1996 in honor of the Grandmaster (who passed away in January 2003) which is what is now known as the Lema Scientific Kali Arnis System (LESKAS). Currently the head of Grandmaster Lema's LSAI organization are the children of Grandmaster Lema.

In 1998 Maestro moved to Seattle. His students in the Philippines have LSAI/LESKAS clubs in UP Diliman and in Davao, Mindinao.

The LESKAS/Lightning Scientific system is characterized by it's speed, power, and tactical setup of an opponent, be they armed, or unarmed. The fighter is always coiled and ready to explode with tremendous force. It is a system designed to maximize power and efficiency in a strike, yet never to the detriment of defensive tactics.

Although a LESKAS fighter may work at varying ranges, be it long, medium, or close, the style is generally recognized for it's aggressive jamming and hard-hitting medium/close range strikes, which tend to smother an opponent, leaving them little opportunity for counters.

The head of the LESKAS organization is the Ybanez family.

Seattle Club [[Click Here](#)]

UP Diliman Club [[Click Here](#)]

Mindinao Club [[Click Here](#)]

Grandmaster Angel Cabales

[1917 - 1991]

Serrada Eskrima

By Leo Fong

Grandmaster Angel Cabales was born in Barrio Igania, Sibalom, Antique, Philippines, in the early 20's. His mother died when Angel was only two weeks old. His father entrusted the care of young Cabales to his maternal Uncle in Barrio Guintas, San Jose, Antique. Cabales' uncle took care of him until young Cabales reached the age of 16. It was in this Barrio setting that young Cabales became interested in the Filipino art of stick fighting which he later referred to as Escrima. His introduction into the Filipino art was through an Escrimador by the name of Felicisimo Dizon. Dizon was known as the "Wizard" because of his skill in combat. In fact he was the undisputed death match champion of the Philippines; never having been defeated in reality death matches. In 1932 at the tender age of 15, Angel Cabales began his rigorous and intensive training under the watchful eyes of Felicisimo Dizon. Cabales absorbed the knowledge of Escrima quickly. It was common occurrences for other schools to challenge their competitors; this was no exception when word circulated that Cabales was Dizon's top student. In his first challenge Cabales defeated his opponent in short order. As other challenges came to Dizon, Cabales would be his right hand man. Together the two were



www.angelsdisciples.com



a formidable team in the stick/knife art. Most matches last less than a few seconds, as Dizon and Cabales were precise in their Escrima art. Dizon and Cabales were an undefeated duo. Time finally came when the two had to take different paths in life. Without any technical job skills, Cabales had to take any type of job that he could get to survive economically. He landed odd jobs on the docks of the Philippines, working as dock worker, laborer, cement mixer and longshoreman. Recognized as an accomplished Escrimador he was hired by wealthy Filipino Matrons as a bodyguard. He also worked as a special policeman at Muella Industria, Intramuros, in Manila.

In 1939 Angel Cabales departed the Philippines and joined the crew of the SS Don Jose, a freighter carrier under the flagship of the Madrigal Shipping Lines. The vessel was plying route from Manila to several ports of the world, which included the ports in the United States. Seeing great opportunities in the United States, Angel Cabales abandoned his job as a sailor and decided to reside in Stockton, California, where he opened his first Escrima Academy in 1966. His reputation spread and soon he attracted some of the legendary martial artists of the time as students.

Such names as Max Sarmiento, Mike Inay, Dentoy Revillar, Al Concepcion, Jimmy Tacosa, Leo T. Fong, Dan Inosanto, Fred Bandalan, Richard Bustillo, Ted Lucylucay, Anthony Davis, Leo Giron, and many others were privileged to learn Cabales Serrada Escrima System. Cabales died in 1992 and leaves a rich legacy of his art through his students. Serrada Escrima is now being taught around the world.

Founder Filemon De La Cuesta Canete

[1904 - 1995]

San Miguel Eskrima



The island of Cebu is famous for developing some of the finest martial artists in the Philippines. Chief among these were members of the Illustrisimo family in Northern Cebu, the Saavedra family in Central Cebu, and the Romo family in Southern Cebu. These families were friendly with each other and it is likely that they trained together from time to time (although a lack of written records makes this difficult to determine). In the early 1900s, the Saavedras were among the most respected fighters in Cebu and many of the great Eskrimadors of that century trained with them.



Filemon De La Cuesta Canete ("Momoy" to his friends) was born in 1904 on the island of Cebu, Philippines. He and his brothers were taught eskrima by their father, Gregorio "Oyong" Canete, and their uncle, Pedro Canete. As he grew older, Momoy studied with Eskrimadors from the San Fernando region of Cebu, including Lieutenant Cipriano Aranas, Huanso Tecson, Juan Takya, Goriong Tagalog, Andres Suarez and Tito de Goma. In 1920, the family moved to the San Nicolas district of Cebu City, and he began to study with Lorenzo "Tatay Ensong" Saavedra and his nephew Teodoro "Doring" Saavedra. Momoy also explored faith healing with Don Tecson, who was known as a faith healer and wild animal catcher. He later studied Combat Judo with Jeseus Cui and blended its principles with his eskrima. Jesus Cui was also versed in espada y daga (Punta y Daga) and Tapi-Tapi. He is credited with orienting Momoy towards a traditional mid- to long-range style of eskrima, in contrast to the shorter-range styles that were becoming more popular. His eskrima was sometimes referred to as the "Batangueno" style.

In 1932, the Canete brothers and the Saavedras were the principle organizers of the Doce Pares Club. Momoy was officially listed as one of the Sergeants at Arms. Momoy considered the Saavedras to be his main teachers, and the stick and dagger methods that he later developed into his method of eskrima are based directly on their teachings. The style of Eskrima practiced by the Saavedra family consisted mainly of counters to the different angles of attack, and Tapi-Tapi - a form of controlled sparring at close quarters that emphasized the use of the empty hand to monitor and control the

opponent's weapon. In addition, Doring Saavedra taught a method of espada y daga that utilized the daga in a manner that was similar to the use of the empty hand in tapi-tapi. Momoy concentrated on espada y daga in his own training because he considered it the most difficult style to master. He developed extensive footwork skills to allow him to evade an attack and move back in quickly with a powerful counter-strike or thrust, and created a more aggressive role for the dagger, which could now be used both to monitor and control an opponent's weapons as well as to attack the opponent with thrusts. Momoy also introduced practice with the spear, an ancient weapon that had fallen into disregard during the Spanish occupation. He linked the movements of the spear to those of the stick and dagger, and added the ananangkil, chain, bullwhip, and throwing knife to his arsenal of weapons. These were all used as weapons in their own right, but also to develop attributes that Momoy considered essential to his method of eskrima.

During World War II, Momoy ferried supplies from the Americans to the Filipino resistance army in the mountains and forests. He also served as a healer for many Filipino soldiers. The Japanese killed many eskrimadors during the war. Those who survived either hid with the guerrillas or fled. Teodoro "Doring" Saavedra was executed by the Kempetai, and Lorenzo "Tatay Ensong" Saavedra died of old age in Mambaling. After the war, Momoy became well known in the San Nicolas barrio of Cebu City as a healer. Often during Eskrima practice he would pause to treat patients from the neighborhood with spiritual healing and hilot in his courtyard. As he massaged an injury, aligned bones, or healed illness, he recited spiritual words and prayers. Momoy attributed his skill to God and claimed that concentrated prayer developed his ability to heal. (It is interesting to note that Momoy may have based the name "San Miguel Eskrima" on a statue of Saint Michael in Cebu City that depicts him slaying a dragon in a crossed-legged stance; "San Miguel Stepping" employs a similar stance as the transition between forward and backward footwork movements. According to GM Casio, Momoy may also have developed his ideas from the concept of "Sinugdanan ug Kataposan," which means that no one can conquer or defeat an angel of God.)

Momoy also learned to play the guitar, and composed several popular songs. He was considered a talented musician and songwriter. His ability to come up with new movements and forms was attributed by his students to his talent for musical composition. Tom Bisio states that during breaks in Eskrima practice he could often be seen staring off into space, clapping his hands together to mark time as he created new forms.

Momoy Canete continued to teach and refine his Eskrima up until his death in 1995. His students continue to develop and pass on his art. Some of these students include Nong U. Borja, Noy A. Canete, Vicente "Inting" Carin, Nong I. Casio, P. Flores, A. Pasa, and A. Dacayana. GM Diony Canete and Master Dong Cuesta of the Doce Pares system have propagated aspects of Momoy's eskrima method. Steven Drape studies with GM Urbano "Banoy" Borja and teaches eskrima in Saudi Arabia. Ramon Rubia, also of Doce Pares, studied both with Momoy and with several of his senior students, and teaches Momoy's eskrima in Southern California. Agapito Gonzalez, Ralph Hamrick, Ron Harris, and Mike Berkeley also traveled to Cebu to study with Momoy in the late 1980's. (See the "Links" page below for further information.)

Following the death of Filemon Canete in 1997, Tom Bisio formed the "San Miguel Eskrima Association" in the United States. The goal of this group is to preserve,

promote and develop Master Canete's eskrima method. The name is a product of discussions with Master Canete in 1987. It is also an attempt to define his method as a traditional style of eskrima that emphasizes the use of the blade, and to differentiate his method from the modern tournament styles of Doce Pares.

Tom Bisio is the head of the San Miguel Eskrima Association. He made several trips to the Philippines to train with Filemon Canete between 1979 and 1987. The name of the association and its goals to preserve and develop the principles and methods of the old eskrima came out of a series of discussions between Mr. Bisio and Master Canete that took place during those years. Mr. Bisio was given authority at that time to promote Filemon Canete's Eskrima method. The San Miguel Eskrima Association is composed of a dedicated group of instructors who wish to preserve Master Canete's art and personal vision.

Punong Guro Edgar Sulite

[1957 - 1997]

Lameco Eskrima

by Dog Brothers Inc.



www.lamecoeskrima.com

In 1981 Edgar created the Lameco System of Eskrima. The name Lameco is actually three words joined together.

La = Largo (long)

me = Medio (Middle)

co = Corto (close)

All the ranges you will fall into in combat. Lameco uses primarily Double and single Stick, Double and single Dagger, Stick and Dagger, Sword, Staff, Handkerchief, and Empty Hands. Lameco Eskrima is a synthesis of five major and 6 minor systems of Eskrima.

Edgar created training drills that he called Labon Laro (Play Fighting). Labon Laro would allow the practitioner to come as close to real combat as possible without injury, it was also designed to make you get an uncountable number of repetitions in, in a short period of time. Following the theory "repetition is the key to success". Edgar was always looking for unique training methods to improve Lameco. He devised training armor for the hand and forearms that let the practitioners train more realistically.



Through his wife Felisa and their five children, and his students, LEI lives on.

In addition to being an outstanding martial artist and teacher, PG Edgar was an innovative creator of Eskrima training gear. This gear, as well as a complete line of sports clothing (T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, etc.) is available from LEI. To get your **catalog** visit the website or please write:

Lameco Eskrima International

PO Box 901356

Palmdale, CA 93590

Or call: 1-661-533-0050

Pundador Manuel Molina Aguillon Sr.

[1915 – 1991]

Arnis Balite



Practiced in the Aguillon family since the domination of the Philippines by the Spanish. Which is still unknown to most, unless they are from the province of Zambales on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. A style of arnis de mano passed down from generation to generation, concepts added by each generation to improve the style.

Born June 19, 1915 in San Antonio, Zambales on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, Manuel Aguillon commenced his training in the fighting arts as a young boy. As a teenager he also found that he had a great desire to use his hands with or without the cane, he turned to boxing. He found that boxing was demanding in using the flowing movements of the body coupled with foot and hand coordination. With his desire of Arnis and boxing he combined the body movements. Going to Manila and various other cities throughout the Philippines his skills as a boxer grew and soon he became known as 'Kid Balite.' Winning many bouts and building his career as a boxer he became a champion in 1938.

To be a true student of Pundador Aguillon learning his family art was an opportunity that only few would get for his standards of trust, conduct, personality, and morality were key factors which would permit one to become a personal student of his. As he would instruct, he would learn your weaknesses and strengths. This was to better instruct the student, building his weaknesses into an equal relationship with ones strengths.

A student that later became a celebrity in Hong Kong and throughout the Philippines in the movies and used the philosophies, and taught what he learned from Pundador Aguillon and later established his own organization was Grandmaster Trovador Ramos of TRACMA [Trovador Ramos Consolidated Martial Arts - of Combat Judo and Karate]. Grandmaster Ramos always has shown the highest respect to Pundador for sharing his knowledge with him.

Pundador constantly throughout his life reached out for more knowledge, either from other Arnisadors, Grandmasters, and Masters of other fighting arts and even books when available. Constantly practicing and combining his family's stick fight art any fighting art that would blend in with his philosophies. Manuel found that the graceful



movements of other martial arts such Judo, Ju Jitsu, Karate, Kung Fu and coupled with the swift hand and foot fighting techniques of boxing, made a distinct and characteristic form of Arnis into a Scientific Filipino Martial Art.

As the years passed Manuel Aguillon became set and guarded in his families art. Being selective and discreet in choosing students, he would only teach those who he found had high morale standards. So upon his passing away on January 8, 1991, only a hand full of students is known to exist that has the knowledge of Aguillon Arnis.

Passing away in 1991 Grandmaster Manuel Molina Aguillon Sr. his qualified instructors in the Philippines taught as he did in an informal atmosphere, taking few students and maintaining the high standards which Pundador promulgated and believed in.

Pundador wife Consolacion Mata Aguillon passed away in 1995. They have left behind their four daughters and one son. Named by his surviving family members as the most senior student and Executor of the Arnis Balite system Punong Guro Steven K. Dowd has been appointed by the family to carry on their father's art and philosophies.

Punong Guro Dowd returned to the Philippines in 2004 for a visit with the Aguillon family and has learned that the other instructors that were personally taught by their father have passed away during the years. And he is the only original student left that was taught by their father Pundador Manuel Aguillon.

Professor Florendo Visitacion

[1910 - 1999]

Vee Arnis Jitsu



Professor Florendo M. Visitacion or as he is commonly called, Professor Vee, was born in Ilocos Norte, Philippines in 1910. He began informal training in Arnis at the age of ten.

At the age of sixteen, he left his home and family and journeyed to the Hawaiian Islands. In 1928, he moved to Stockton, California where he continued studying Filipino martial arts from available sources.

After traveling around California for a number of years, Florendo Visitacion entered the U.S. Army during World War II. This marked a turning point in his life in that he began to view martial arts in a new light. He read and became intrigued with an officer's hand-to-hand combat manual, which claimed to present a combination of styles from different countries. The idea of integrating techniques from a variety of martial arts was very appealing to him.

This soon led the young Visitacion on a personal journey where he was to devote many years to the study of different fighting styles. Along the way, he realized that mastery of a particular system was not always necessary. What was essential, however, was the ability to understand its useful principles and how to apply them effectively in a given situation. It was important for a student of the fighting arts to absorb only what was

applicable and to tailor the art to his or her needs. That was why he also advocated the researching of other systems. It was by doing so, he felt, an individual could learn and choose from a variety of techniques, thereby improving one's fighting skills.

In 1950, he moved to New York. A year later, Visitacion trained under ex-marine Charles Nelson, also a World War II veteran and an expert in the art of Mongolian wrestling. Nelson was particularly adept in joint locking techniques. Professor Vee later augmented his training by learning modern Jiu jitsu under Kiyose Nakae, author of the book *Jiu jitsu Complete*. He also took up Judo and the Indian art of Varmannie. In 1958, he studied under R. H. Sigward, the author of *Modern Self-Defense*. On September 5, 1955, he introduced Vee Jitsu, an early forerunner of his art, Vee Arnis Jitsu.

In 1960, Visitacion joined the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation. He was appointed the director of its Northeast Division. During one trip to an AJJF conference in California, he met and began a life-long friendship with Professor Wally Jay, the renowned grandmaster of Small Circle Jujitsu. He also befriended the late Raymond Tabosa, a noted master of the Filipino martial art, Kali.

Thanks to a renewed interest in Filipino martial arts, Professor Vee began a ten-year study of Arnis Lanada under Master Amante Mariñas. He also learned additional techniques from Grandmaster Remy Presas of the school of Modern Arnis. In addition, he also received training from Leo Gaje, a noted expert in Pekiti Tirsia, a Kali system. In 1978, the Arnis America Organization headed by Grandmaster Gaje gave him the Datu award in recognition for his work in promoting Filipino martial arts. Five years later, he also received the prestigious instructor's rank from Master Mariñas and the World Arnis Federation.

Professor Vee began his career as a martial arts instructor during the mid-1950s and for over three decades, he actively taught his art at different locations throughout the New York City metropolitan area. Over the years, his system would produce a number of notable martial artists, some who founded their own fighting styles. These include Professor Moses Powell, father of Sanuces Ryu Jiujitsu, and Master Lil' John Davis of Kumite Ryu Jiujitsu.



Professor Vee continued cross-training and researching other fighting systems. He embarked on a study of several different styles of Chinese Kung Fu. They included Southern Praying Mantis, Yang style Tai Chi Chuan, Baqua Chang, and Wing Chun. He also studied basic Karate techniques from Lou Angel.

He continued to refine and make changes to his system. As it evolved, so did its name. At one point, after adding Kenpo Karate forms, he renamed it Vee Jitsu Te. In 1965, Professor Vee introduced Vee Jitsu '65, an improved version of his art. The following year, the AJJF conferred upon him the title of Professor and awarded him a 10th Dan ranking in his own art. The AJJF repeated the process in 1971, after Professor Vee presented them with another update of his system, now called Vee Jitsu Ryu Jiujitsu. In 1983, he discarded the Kenpo katas in favor of Arnis and later adopted the name, Vee Arnis Jitsu. Later, he approved the addition of Muay Thai boxing techniques, making the art more powerful and effective.

In 1993, in recognition for his contributions, Professor Florendo Visitacion was elected to the Martial Arts Hall of Fame and given a "Life-time Achievement" award. Since his passing on January 4, 1999, his martial art continues to flourish thanks largely to the effort of David James, the present chief instructor of the Vee Arnis Jitsu School of New York. He is a worthy successor to Professor Vee in that he continues to make improvements by updating certain concepts, adding new techniques, or by just modifying and making minor changes. Professor James is firmly committed to bringing his students the best self-defense system available today.

Remembered and Not Forgotten

The following are Legends that the FMA Digest tried to get information from the inheritors of the art or permission to use what is on their website, but was unsuccessful. The FMA Digest hopes to have a 2nd Special Issue - Legends where we can have full information about these legends and more.



Grandmaster Benjamin Luna-Lema

[1919 - 2003]

Lightning Scientific Arnis

Grandmaster Benjamin Luna-Lema founded Lightning Scientific Arnis International in 1937 in Mambusao, Capiz, Philippines. He was born on March 19, 1919 in Panay, and his father, Juan Lema, was his first arnis teacher.

He acquired additional training under several respected arnis elders in the Visayas. He also studied Karate and Judo while in Japan, and was an avid boxing and bodybuilding practitioner in both the Philippines and Guam. In 1941, he served as a Guerilla under General Macario Peralta in Panay to fight off the Japanese advances. It was during a special mission to Agana, Guam, in 1947 that he met and married Maxima Perez. They had four children, Patty Jean, Benjamin Jr., John Edward, and Paul Anthony--all current practitioners of the art. In 1959 Grandmaster Lema returned to the Philippines to teach, and lived and taught there until his death on January 5th, 2003. He was a great man and a good teacher, and the Lightning system has been both his legacy and his gift to his many students.

Grandmaster Timoteo Timor Maranga

[? – 1988]

Combat Eskrima Maranga

Grandmaster Timoteo *Timor* Maranga was one of the most battle tested Eskrimador of World War II. His hand-to-hand fracas with Japanese soldiers placed him in the league of other decorated World War II veterans like GM Leo Giron and GM Antonio Ilustrisimo and was member of the legendary Bolo Battalion. Grandmaster Maranga started practicing Eskrima at the age of seven. One of his first instructors was father Gregorio *Godoy* Maranga a



practitioner of the *Demarina* one of the obscure Eskrima systems of the pre-war period. His other instructors were Emilio Tadio, Faustino Tanio, Rogelio Ortiz, Emo Sagarino and Dalmacio Salinguhay. These lessons were a mix nuts of styles such as *Florete*, *Sumbra* (shadow), *Batanguenta Serrada* and *Batanguenta Abierta*.

Rodrigo Maranga the son of the late GM Timoteo Maranga founder of Tres Personas Eskrima de Combate Super Kuwentada System heads Combat Eskrima Maranga or C.E.M. It was shortened to C.E.M. or Combat Eskrima Maranga not only for convenience but to honor the patriarch of the Cuentada system.

Grandmaster Romeo Mamar, Sr.

[1938 – 2005]

Tapado



Romeo Mamar, Sr., Founder of Tapado and Grandmaster of Filipino martial arts died of a stroke on February 7, 2005, while tending to his farmland. He was for buried on February 19, 2005, at Sum-ag, Bacolod City. His widow is Mrs. Wilceta Mamar. Her mailing address is: Km. 13.5, Taloc, Bago City, Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Nono Mamar learned Filipino martial arts as a boy in the mountains of Negros. He mastered various styles of stick fighting, such as: Ohido, Lagas, and Sinimak, which he used to invent and develop the Tapado Long Stick-fighting System. Fighting more than 100 duels, Mamar was undefeated using Tapado in contests to the knockout or death. Mamar's nephew, Grandmaster and Chief Instructor Benefrido M. Lobrido, will inherit the Tapado System. May God bless Romeo C. Mamar, Sr., who was my adoptive father in the Philippine Islands.



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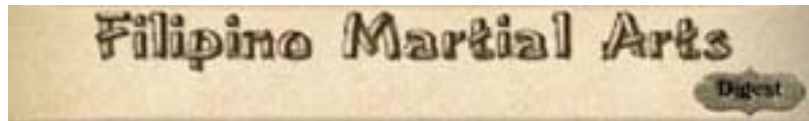
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