

Filipino Martial Arts

Filipino Martial Arts

at

Ang Daga

Digest

Special Edition
2006

Carlito Bonjoc Mata Sa Bagyo
DeCuerdas-Diestro Fighting Systems

ATIENZA KALI
Discipline of the Blade

Espada y Daga Techniques
of

San Miguel Eskrima and Pekiti Tirsia Kali

Maryland Pekiti-Tirsia Kali Bulls
Apolo & Bobby Ladra

Sonny Umpad
Visayan Corto Kadena

Hunear
Applied Natural Defense Systems

Johan Skålberg
Kali Sikaran

Silat Combat Academy
Silat Mubai Australian Training Group

Zach Whitson's
Full Circle Martial Arts

Bram Frank



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BladeMasters of the FMA in the U.S.

Tulisan "Knife Fighting Art"

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The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

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

This Special Edition brings many of the Filipino martial arts practitioners out to talk about how the Daga (knife) is used or some of the philosophy that is either their own or used in the system that they are a practitioner of.

Bram Frank, the Ladra Brothers, the Atienza Brothers, Zach Whitson, all top instructors in handling the knife. The Silat Mubai Australian Training Group brings Filipino knife fighting to Australia.

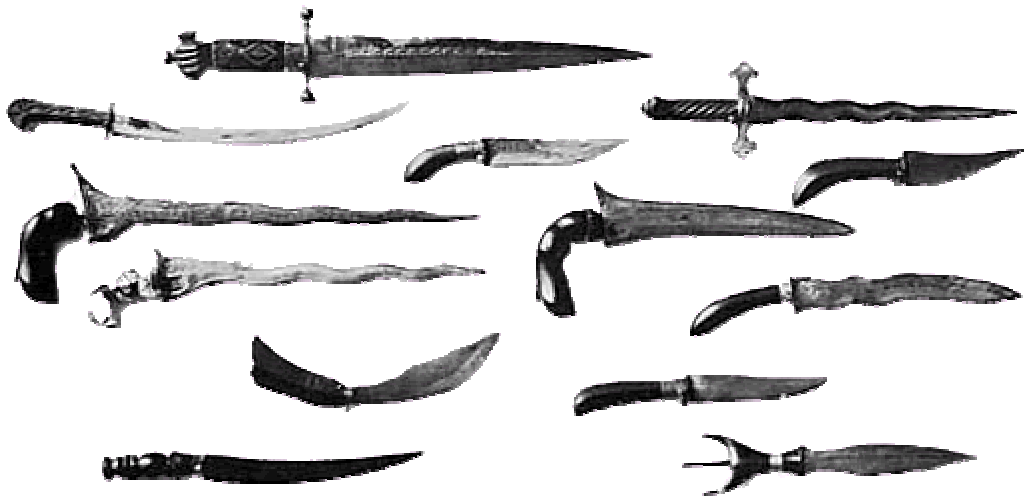
Stephen Lamade and Wes Tasker have been doing and continue to do seminars on the aspects of San Miguel Eskrima and Pekiti Tirsia Kali in Espada y Daga techniques. They have a video coming out soon and it is highly recommended to get a copy. They show the differences between the two styles in handling the daga.

Guro Jojo S. Latorre, Guro Kurtis Goodwin, and Joe Huncar, tell about their aspects of the daga. And Grandmaster Arthur Gonzalez of DeCuerdas-Diestro Fighting Systems and Carlito Bonjoc Jr. of Mata sa Bagyo are two practitioners that clearly are no nonsense practitioners of the blade. And Johan Skålberg shares a little about the development of Kali-Sikaran and the blade.

At the time of this Special Edition being published it is understood that Sonny Umpad is in the Hospital, with some serious complications, (it is hoped that he recovers and can spend more time practicing what he loves). Known as an excellent daga practitioner, the FMA Digest was very lucky to obtain from a gentleman who is in Switzerland, an interview he had with Sonny Umpad. Sonny Umpad talks a little about the art of the blade, but also about himself and his art Visayan Corto Kadena.

The FMA Digest wants to thank all the practitioners that contributed to this Special Edition.

Maraming Salamat Po



Blade Master Bram Frank

Smooth is Fast

By Edessa Ramos

An old Chinese proverb says: when the student is ready the teacher appears.



Bram Frank is a first generation personal student of the Professor. The first time he saw Professor and Grandmaster Remy A. Presas, he said to himself, this was a martial arts genius, the true “master” of what he did. The day he met his teacher, he knew immediately that this was what he wanted to learn and the man he wanted to learn from. He had found his muse, his master, his mentor. Prof. Remy was the one who told him to learn slowly by working hard until the art was really his, to be patient, to understand how important it is to be smooth in order to be fast, and soft in order to be strong. This master showed him that if one trained slowly, one could see, understand and master the why’s of the concepts. Modern Arnis and Professor Remy Amador Presas showed Bram how to think conceptually: “You are already there. It is all the same! You must understand and feel the flow.” (Professor Presas). And Bram said to himself, “Gee, that’s how I thought martial arts and fighting should be.” Thus began his odyssey.

Bram attributes his conceptual method of teaching to Professor Remy. “Bram...do you see the differences? Yes? Good... Can you now see it’s all the same? It’s the same difference!” Remy’s way of teaching demanded that you think, that you actually use your mind, that you see the connections. He used to say that the key was translation: that Modern Arnis allowed one to translate between tool and empty hand. To him it was important to understand the art at a functional level. Remy encouraged Bram to teach from day #1, telling him to “go teach what I taught you, for in teaching you will learn fastest, and find out what you really know, and know what you really need to learn.”

Hence Bram does not teach in linear fashion. He teaches conceptually, that is, he teaches others to learn by teaching. At that time, Bram realized that Remy was giving him something to be proud of and to build on, to live life through understanding. Remy was teaching him about life, not fighting. Fighting and Arnis are just ways to understand how to deal with any situation: to go with the flow.

The desire to understand steel was a fervor that kept growing in him. It shows in his knife designs, in his art. Bram visualizes Filipino martial arts motions into Celtic-type designs, which frequently become tattoo flash. Just as he grew conceptually, and learned to see motion visually, he also learned a different kind of perspective on life, and a bit more about patience with things as they happen.

Bram’s training under Professor Remy included the origins of Arnis. The soul of Arnis was defense, based on the use of the bladed weapon. It was protection for the weak against the oppressors. It was an art founded on a simple way of transferring knowledge, a blade art that is Philippine in origin, with many aspects derived from the myriads of multi-ethnicity of the Philippine Islands. Within Arnis is a fully functional art of cutting. The names of Arnis changed with region to region, but the soul of Arnis - that act of

defending one's personal freedom - pulsed unchanged. Remy clarified to him that there are hundreds of styles of Arnis but all use the same principles and utilize the same concepts of motion under their personal labels. Inspired by his professor, Bram has been in constant search since then of the origins of Arnis.



Professor Remy introduced him to the “Jungle bolo”. This bolo has a narrow tip, a piercing point not made useful in agriculture but for thrusting, to tip rip. It is a fast blade used to fight other humans. He bequeathed to Bram his jungle bolos, inherited from his uncle and grandfather. Each was hand made, each was crafted to fit the person so that rotation of the blade did not cut one's own arms. (Now the old ways of measuring a “stick” made real sense. One didn't measure a stick; one measured a blade for safety). Whereas all of Bram's sword and armour research was on cultures long gone,

with the jungle bolo came blade usage that was more recent and made for real combat.

These two old “Jungle bolos” had buffalo horn handles, very light and fast and able to cut deeply. They were magnificent, with very fine thrusting tips. Quite recently, out of respect for Remy, for Bram's teaching, and for the continuity of the Presas art of the bolo, the Presas Family Bolo was replicated by Ed Schempp, an expert blade craftsman and father of Mosaic Damascus. Ed Schempp's replica was made of two layers of longitudinal Mosaic Damascus over a 60RC core steel. Schempp said it was the finest tactical fighter he has ever made, and that with great power comes great responsibility. Schempp's gift served as a statement that Bram was one who knew the Art of the Bolo and treated it with great respect.

It has been said that the stick transfers to the blade, but Bram says that this is not completely true, especially with such techniques as blocking and disarms. One cannot transfer Stick to Blade directly. One cannot translate from impact tool to cutting tool directly. The purpose is different. The orientation is different. No force is needed to cut, whereas impact is affected by strength or amount of force. The order of progression for default is blade, firearm, stick, and then empty hand. The blade is regarded as the highest art of self-defense. With a blade, there is little or no room for error. If one can do something with or against a blade, it works for the others. If it works with using a firearm, it will work against a stick or empty hand. But not necessarily against a blade. And so it goes on down the pyramid of default. You can grab a firearm. Maybe. You can grab a stick, you can grab a hand, but you cannot grab a blade, unless you are willing to lose your fingers and your hand.

Lots of the currently taught disarms do not focus on disarming a blade, for the tool is grabbed and rotated or the tool comes in direct contact with an angulated joint. An edged tool in contact with an angulated joint is called disjointing or de-limbing, that is, in butcher talk or culinary arts. Disarms against a knife-wielding opponent are like putting your hand into a food processor while it's whirring. It's risky, downright dangerous. Incidental contact with a stick can be hurtful; incidental contact with a blade could be fatal.

Force to force blocks with a stick does not take into consideration any edge orientation. Because of edge orientation, one blocks with the flat of the blade, not the edge. Edges chip and break! Blades are not impact tools. Steel is hard to make and no one would sacrifice their edges to chipping or breaking. Fighters would not want to sacrifice such an important tool. Medieval, Renaissance & Japanese sword manuals all agree: block with the flat, block near the guard if possible, use the spine for redirect, do not break your sword!

With blade, one must learn hand control not weapon control. One must learn edge orientation and usage. Edges are matter separators. How one enters a combat situation is definitely important when it comes to blade. There is a difference between high line and low line. Changing up at one's discretion can lead to serious injury to one's self. The blade cuts through anything in its path, including the user.

Bram always wanted to be as Remy had encouraged him to be: a trainer of combative Arts. He dreamed of teaching Military, Police and Security as his main field of work. Professor Presas blessed the Combat Arnis and CSSD/SC programs of Bram Frank. Bram was one who loved the blade. Combat stirs his soul. The Combative Arts aspect of Arnis keeps him humble, he says, "for anyone can die, anyone can be hurt, and you can do everything correctly and still fail. That's real combat. Finality."



In designing his combat systems, Bram did no such thing as reinvent the wheel or come up with a new way to execute techniques. What he did was to come up with a better training methodology. It is a repackaging of the conceptual things from Arnis and other contemporary fighting arts. It is tool based. "We use edged, impact and projectile tools," Bram explains. "It's a Train the Trainer methodology. We have to be able to impart knowledge and usage within a few hours of training. That's how

Arnis worked in the old days. In Military and LE (law enforcement) and Security fields, I have ONLY 6-12 hours to impart my section of training to the students. Then the students have to move on. It's got to be 'one mind- one way, many weapons'. My guys come home safely from military combat and LE Street combative situations. My students have survived street attacks and assaults. It works real time."

The fact is, when adrenalin is pumping, one loses fine motor skills. Therefore the techniques must be simple and direct. It is the law of physical reaction. Adrenalin dump happens, period. When it does, trained people sometimes only move from fine motor thought to complex motor thought. Unfortunately, physical reactions do not follow that easily. Meaning, you think you can but your body says NO! "That's why the simple gross stuff works. It doesn't look pretty but it happens. We get tunnel vision and time distortion as well." Bram came up with a system that allows for people to function on



the gross motor skills level, so that even with the sh*t hitting the fan, they keep going, they succeed rather than go fetal and die.

Knife fighting is a totally different matter. Bram's is the MODULAR combative reaction and skills system with an edged tool. It involves SDR: Self Defense Response with blade or edged tool. MODULAR is a reasonable, ethical and moral response to a personal attack by using an edged tool. "I don't teach people to 'fight with knives'. I do teach people how to save their lives and the lives of their loved ones while using an edged tool."



Bram is the director and founder of the Common Sense Self Defense/Street Combat (CSSD/SC). Its training covers all combat ranges. It uses projectile tools from far way, but also from up close and personal. This means firearms, both handguns and rifles. And also edged tools and impact tools, mostly up-close-and-personal tools. "Real combative situations take place much closer than people care to imagine. This is NOT threat assessment or management. This is threat involvement! I can reach out and touch someone...I can smell them...I'm close! We have to know ranges because its something that is talked of, yet in reality, one has no control over combative ranges except in the minute." CSSD/SC covers long range, middle range, close range and grappling range.

The core combat principles of CSSD/SC are simple: use common sense, stay alive, cheat a lot! Use only bio-mechanical functions that can be done at gross motor skills level. The basis is "Open-Close"... what will the body actually do? Stop function. Remember that form follows function. Stop form, stop function of the weapon limbs. Shut down the attacker's tools. Destroy the function of the fingers, hand, arms, making it impossible to use or utilize a tool. And always remember: Rule #1 says, "Steel cuts flesh." Rule #2 says, "You can't change rule #1!"

Learning all aspects of empty hands and weapons combat is important. One needs empty hands to get to one's tools. For CSSD/SC, the empty hands are not "empty hand" concepts. They employ tool concepts and defaults when using empty hands. Just like regular Arnis, any of the CSSD/SC weapons methodology can be translated to empty hands. "We use firearms, impact tools, edged weapons, restraint tools and OC spray," Bram says. "We are equal opportunity weapon-tool users."

CSSD/SC now operates in the USA, UK, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Israel, and Australia, to name a few. Its instructors teach Military, LE and Security in these countries. It continues to grow and evolve, not just from the master but from the spirit of innovation of its members as well. Bram's students understand that they have a stake in this. "For example: David gave us Pac Man grabbing. Greg gave us Modular Firearm. Florian gave us environmental stress training. Steve gave us restraint and cuffing procedures. Yuval & Guy gave us Walking the Cuts-Blocks into empty hand translation. We've had second generation CSSD instructors Emir and Tomer come up with a thrusting flow drill." And Bram continues to find better ways to teach, better ways to show the instructors how to teach.

Some approaches to knife teaching must be viewed with concern. It is often a case of non-users telling potential users what to do. It's dangerous to spread urban martial arts

myths about knife usage. People tend to forget: Knives cut flesh. ALWAYS. Teaching must be accompanied by a responsible, ethical, and moral use of blade, and an understanding of what edged tools really do. People who have no knife experience should not dictate or teach knife usage. Those who have never really cut anything, never hunted or worked in a kitchen, should not ask people to wade in and get cut. “Would you learn driving from someone who NEVER drove a car? Would you let a person who never used a firearm teach you firearm safety?” Bram is concerned that we let non-knife users teach the use of the blade and how to defend against it.

Think of edged tool as if a firearm. Bram emphasizes the need to concentrate on something Remy had taught him: Don’t be there. In other words, get out of the way of the attack. Use body shifting, get yourself off-line.

Bram’s Abaniko blades came out at last. The Abaniko is a fixed blade series designed for extreme tactical usage and made by Ontario. The Abaniko follows the idea of a gross motor skill tool: it is held in a standard pistol grip, one of the strongest grips we know of. There is a 7’ and a 5’ Abaniko. The knives come with a functional identical training drone. As a knife designer, Bram made sure that all of Bram’s knife series have Filipino names in honor of Remy Presas and Arnis. They are the following: Abaniko, Lapu-Lapu, Gunting, Guro, Gunt-asong, and the Gunt-arambit.

Bram’s first folder series is the highly successful Gunting. He wanted a tool that offered options, so out came the world’s only full-force continuum tool. This means, it escalates and de-escalates through the full force continuum. The Gunting starts out as an impact tool that can be used for restraint and control. It can be partially opened to be used as a less-than-lethal cutting tool, meaning, it is capable of executing bodily damage without having to kill. It opens Kinetically within usage so as to escalate to the lethal force option, yet it can be closed within usage so as to de-escalate the force continuum. SWAT magazine called it “the best less than lethal tool ever designed for Law Enforcement”. Police Marksman Magazine called it “the only legitimate answer for an Officer to carry an edged tool.” Police Shot gun News called it an historic event in the world of Law Enforcement knives.

The Gunting aids in the removal of suspects from cars. It aids in body searches, especially with pockets that might contain needles or sharp objects... And it really aids in controlling and cuffing the suspects!

With the Gunting, Bram has actually designed a tool that would do all the Arnis moves and limb destructions, escalate or de escalate in force, execute Dillman Pressure Point attacks and restraints as well as Wally Jay Small circle Ju Jitsu. It was his way of honoring Remy, Wally and George.

The Gunting system is easy to learn and the tool usage is self-evident. The CRMPT or Close Range Medium Impact Tool version is a non-lethal non-cutting version of the Gunting that is perfect for law enforcement, security, military and civilian use. Bram designed it as the perfect SDR tool. There is of course limited liability in its usage. One can use it against a knife. It’s like a knife without the cutting!



The SPYDERCO GUNTING is the only knife designed to be used CLOSED. The shape of the knife itself, its physical attributes, is designed for maximum efficiency in closed usage applications. It is the only Kinetic-Opening knife made today.

defense,” Bram declares. Everyone has the god-given right to defend themselves against attack. And such skills should work effectively for the little girl, the old guy and the young lady, not just the muscular jock. Therefore it’s got to be simple, direct and essential. Self defense has to be based on Common Sense even if that element is really not so common.”

It’s exciting to be a student of Bram Frank. It’s exciting to realize after some time how one has evolved. The realization always comes as a surprise, for the process is smooth and the development is subtle. Once the teacher has shown the door, and the student has discovered the key and how to use it, a whole new world opens up. It is obvious from his training methodology that Bram aims to create instructors. “Instructors that are better than I am,” he says. He wants his students to think, to understand, and to know that all things change while they stay the same. He is like a parent who wants his children to do better than him, to surpass him. He follows the footsteps of his teacher Remy, who wanted his students to make the art part of their own art.

Bram Frank as mentor: in his own words relayed to Dayang Edessa Ramos

Training in knife or bladed weapons is not just about the use of an edged tool. It involves the understanding of MOTION. It involves the critical need to understand an attacker’s actions, his abilities with a cutting tool, and the repercussions of confronting such a person. The best art of self-defense lies in the ability to recognize threat, to recognize the opportunities for defense and quickly pick out and apply which of the various methods would be most effective. The ability to effectively implement the cutting tool could spell the difference between life and death.

Knife is real. Knife is honest. When training with blades, the first thing we learn is that accessibility is real. A cut does not lie.

Knife training teaches the art of empty hand: checking, intercepting, inserts. The art of striking disarms, joint locks and grappling moves. These are only effective if one

Bram often teaches large numbers of students at seminars. He is one who thrives in crowds. They feed off his energy. Not unlike a rock star; the bigger the crowd the more the juices flow! For him, it’s no different from teaching several combative units at a time. Like he always tells his students, this is not rocket science. This is a train the trainer methodology that allows beginners to train with advance students at the same time. It’s easy to learn and everyone can get it very quickly.

CSSD/SC’s approach to teaching self defense skills is clear: If it’s not reality-based, don’t do it. “I believe in tool-based self



Bram Franks demonstrating the finer points to Dayang Edessa Ramos

understands anatomy and physiology as well as psychological response to situations. Knife forces this understanding on the user.

A blade is a matter separator. It makes no difference whether you are using the edge or the point; you are dealing with the heart of steel. Steel shapes flesh, steel cuts flesh. Flesh guides steel, and it is the human heart that directs it all. The tool itself does not determine right from wrong, good guy from bad guy. The heart of the person does. Therefore it is important that we know, in our teaching that the tool is in the hand of the good guy. But at the same time, it is so important that we learn what a bad guy can do with the tool, so we can deal effectively with the terror he is capable of inflicting.

On Women and Blades

Steel is so cool!... it can be malleable, hard but brittle, or strong, flexible and of course sharp. Steel makes you see how fragile life can be. How serious the art is. Why we need to respect life. Why we need to train. And that steel can last for generations or crumble within years, so one needs to care for it. Steel is a person's best friend, mankind's best friend.

Warriors know no gender. Blades are cool. Women with blades are incredibly cool & sexy... & deadly. A small animal can fight a bigger animal and win. The ability to function under duress is not tied to gender.

Once trained in the martial arts, one has the knowledge of how to maim and kill. How to hurt but also how to avoid doing so. And how to teach and impart this knowledge to others.

It is very rewarding to teach women in the use of fighting tools. Women have enough common sense to not relish fighting because they understand the absurdity of testosterone-driven action. They know the duality of being human, and that is the ability for nurture and at the same time destruction.



On Teaching and Learning

Some of you travel and teach all the time. You know that it can get very tiring and lonely, no matter if you have friends. There's just too much of sharing of yourself with others, seemingly with no end in sight. Thus even pleasurable things like teaching can wear you down. And that's normal.

Learning is a daily thing. A real teacher is one who realizes that he will never know enough. And the surest road to knowing is to teach. Sometimes you need to hear yourself teach in order to see the truth, to believe finally that you know it already. Professor Remy Presas used to say to us all the time: Find the art within you; make it the art within your art. So you need to find how you want to express what's in you, how to share it, how to add to the depth of that knowledge you give to others.

It is difficult for those practitioners who live in areas where they have no constant instructor. So learn from teaching rather than from being dependent on having an instructor nearby. Explore the boundaries. Practice and grow. And watch with enjoyment how you help others grow with you. Visit an instructor somewhere or go to seminars if you can. You can get additional truths there, but then move on. Stagnation and repetition without originality or creativity can be smothering. Originality only comes from you.

When you teach, be bold, be true, and show them how simple it is. Try to train trainers. Teach a “train the trainer methodology” that supercharges how we learn and understand. You might encounter people who would say that they don’t need what you’re teaching, that they know it already. So do not teach them or attempt it until they are ready, if ever they get to be. You are imparting a knowledge that has captured you. Your tune is beautiful... sing to those who want to hear your song.

And always teach that smooth is best.

Always remember: smooth is fast.

By Edessa Ramos (www.silkensteel.com). This article includes portions of an interview by David Foggy courtesy of Bram Frank. Interested in blade training or ordering the Abaniko? Visit Bram Frank and his organization: www.cssdsc.com. Master Bram Frank will be teaching at the 3rd International FMA Festival in the Philippines in July 2006. Visit: www.fmafestival2006.com.



The LADRA Brothers...

A long journey home

By Will Price

Its not every day that a Philippine-born 6th degree black belt and Martial Arts Hall of Famer suddenly realizes that he has limited defenses against the skilled, bladed attacker. More unusual is the fact that this world-class champion had to travel half way around the world to learn this startling fact, and the only effective response lay in his homeland, the Philippines, waiting for him to discover it.

This is the story of the Ladra Brothers, Guros Apolo and Bobby Ladra, who have committed their lives to the martial tradition, built one of the most successful martial arts

schools in the United States, and then earned the respect of the most credible names in the martial arts industry by returning to their roots and embracing Pekiti-Tirsia Kali, the oldest and purest Filipino martial art as their own.

The brother's martial career began in the Philippine province of Batangas, where they engaged in frequent, but informal martial arts training hoping to become more like their childhood hero - Bruce Lee. It never occurred to them that Bruce Lee's best friend and top student, the legendary Guro Dan Inosanto, would teach the Filipino Fighting Arts at a school that they would one day own and operate in the United States; or that they would become the private students of the Supreme Grand Master of the Filipino Fighting Arts, Grandtuhon Leo Gaje Jr.

"Life is full of opportunities... you must be ready to seize them"

Guro Apolo

In the mid-70's, the brothers joined their father, who immigrated to the United States four years earlier with \$100 and a dream, and continued their martial arts education until they could no longer afford to pay. In exchange for free lessons, young Apolo would mop floors and clean the studio, and practice relentlessly... until he progressed through the ranks and achieved instructor status by the age of 14. This break opened the door for his two brothers to train with him again, for free. They have remained loyal, and continue to study with him to this day.

Over the years, as young Apolo matured, he became a top-ranked Eastern Regional Champion and a world-class athlete by winning more than 100 first-place trophies and Grand Championship Titles in national and international competitions. Shortly after opening Apolo's Karate at the age of 23, he established himself as a successful martial arts school owner, operator and consultant, and was recognized as the Instructor of the Year for four consecutive years (1985-1988) by the premier U.S. Martial Arts Organization - Master of Tae Kwon Do Hall of Fame in Pocono, PA.



In 1991, he participated in the first Russian World Championship Martial Arts Tournament, and returned to the US with both a gold and silver medal. Later that year, he was selected to be a member of the National Tae Kwon Do Team set to represent the Philippines in the 1992 Olympics. In 1997 and 1999 he was inducted into the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

Since 2004, he has become the Executive Vice President of the **Kali World Council, USA, Inc.**, who's primary goal is to raise the public's awareness about the effectiveness, beauty and culture of the Filipino Fighting Art of Kali, but also to professionalize the art, make it an Olympic sport and to unify the Filipino Martial Arts under a single banner that they can all claim as their own.... He has also launched a new product line targeting the Filipino Martial Art / Fitness Industry.



Finally, in 2005, he became a founding member of “**A Martial Renaissance, Inc.**”, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping faith- and community-based groups promote values-education and mentoring for our nation's youth, who are in desperate need of positive and accessible role models like those he has nurtured and developed through the years.

Master Apolo is currently a sixth-degree black belt, successful martial arts professional and a Guro in the Filipino Fighting Art of Kali. Together with his brother and sister, Apolo's Karate/Kali consistently serves it's 1,200 students with a straight-forward, no-nonsense and progressive curriculum that allows him to successfully offer self-defense (Tae Kwon Do) and “the art of weaponry” (Kali) under a single roof, while blending his traditional martial arts upbringing with a contemporary approach that the new generation of martial artists can identify with and adopt.

This is the secret to his success... to be able to bridge the gap between the traditionalist's approach to training and the needs of the “new generation” of martial artists without compromising the purity, culture and philosophy behind the art. For these reasons, the Ladra brothers have attracted a number of top Grand Masters, leaders and educators to their school who wish to propagate and promote their arts in the same way.



For example, in spring 2005, Grandtuhon Leo T. Gaje Jr. and **Guro Dan** joined forces to teach Kali (in its "purest" form) to a **select group** of practitioners in North America. This event marked the first time in FMA/FFA history that the “Legends of Kali” have joined forces to deliver an **accelerated training program** in the combative disciplines of empty hands, ground fighting, edged and impact weaponry. The first seminar was a huge success, and the second annual seminar to be hosted by the Ladra

Brothers will take place at Merritt Athletic Club located in Baltimore Maryland in April 6-8, 2006 and promises to be even better!

Highlights from the 2005 seminar can be viewed by visiting www.martialview.com, where you'll also find more information about the upcoming "Legends of Kali II" seminar as well. Be sure to visit the Multimedia page for other exciting materials.

Back to their roots...

The Ladra brothers came to know and love the art of Kali through different, but complementary paths. Master Apolo often visited his home in the Philippines, and practiced with Filipino martial artists... yet as a karate master and highly skilled kicker/boxer; he lacked the ability to defend himself against a skillful bladed attacker. Finally, after much research and evaluation, he reached the conclusion that the only effective defense against a "superior enemy" is to learn the Filipino Martial Art of Kali. And, once started, he never looked back... has since earned the designation of Guro, and is now a top competitor in full contact edged and impact weapons tournaments, along with his brother and their team, the Maryland MABAGSIK Bulls (so named by Grandtuhon Leo Gaje).



Mabagsik is a unique Filipino term used by Grandtuhon Gaje to describe the strength, alertness, and quickness of action, superb evasiveness, viciousness and deadliness of the Maryland-based warriors, the new Kayumanggi.

Since Guro Bobby was a child, the blade culture has been a major component of his martial art training, even while devoting himself fully to the success of Apolo's Karate as a young adult. Often, he would invite Arnis and Escrima masters to teach weapons-oriented seminars at the school, and then practice diligently until the next seminar, at which point he would repeat the process again. Eventually, his passion for the Filipino Martial Arts grew, and after much research and dedication to the art of weaponry, he was exposed to Kali, which he now believes is the most effective and complete combat system available. And like his brother Apolo, he has never looked back – and continues to excel as a top contender on the competitive track.

"It's not the years one has studied that makes the difference, it is the hours one has practiced", and it is not uncommon to find the brothers training day and night, together and with their MABAGSIK brothers.

Fiercely devoted to each other's development as Filipino martial artists, the Ladra brothers continue to apply the principles that they are learning from the world's leading authority on edged and impact



weaponry with the culture and philosophy that is essential to its proper understanding, execution and propagation.

Their process of learning, analyzing, understanding and then developing ways to communicate this knowledge to their students is what makes them effective instructors and contributes to the success of their school. It's been written that "to be a good teacher, one must be a good student..." and the Brothers have demonstrated mastery on both accounts. The proof is in the success of Apolo's Karate, the quality of his tournaments (the Maryland Open), and the undisputed impact that their MABAGSIK brothers have had on the full-contact stick-fighting scene.

Grandtuhon Gaje says about MABAGSIK:

"They are the selected few... Their mentality is to train 24 hours a day... their goal is to hit the "dummy" enemy 1,000 to 6,000 times without mercy... and more. They were bound to win in Los Angeles, New Jersey and Maryland, where they showed no mercy ... Often outnumbered, but never out fought, the Ladra Clan brings the word MABAGSIK to life under the institutionalized teachings of the "Doctrine of Discipline" known as Kali."

And this is only the beginning... Together with **MartialView Productions**, a Maryland-based media and marketing solution provider, the Ladra Brothers and the Kali World Council intend to (a) help raise Kali from the second fastest growing martial art in the world to the first; (b) help other martial arts schools successfully integrate Kali into their curriculums by assisting in the training and certification of instructors around the world, and (c) help martial arts schools achieve greater retention, competitiveness and effectiveness of instruction through an innovative, yet proven approach to personalized training, which is on target to be released in mid-2006.

The brothers are also featured in Grandtuhon Gaje's inspiring documentary titled "PETIKALIS – Discovery in Action." This powerful media event describes the history, philosophy and impact of the Filipino "blade" culture - around the world, and it features exciting segments from the first "Legends of Kali" seminar, as well as Grandtuhon Gaje and Guros Dan, Apolo and Bobby training at their best! It will soon be aired in the Philippines, as well as in Washington DC, New Jersey, Maryland and California. Confirmation from Europe is pending, and we're hoping to expand viewer ship into other regions, as well. If you would like to see this viewed on a station near you, please add your comments to the Guest book, which is available at **www.martialview.com**.

MABAGSIK at work and play

The Ladra brothers and the MABAGSIK Bulls have been training Grandtuhon Gaje for the competitive circuit, and they have managed to take the tournament circuit by storm.

"Everything we do has purpose... and it is based on offense, counter-offense or re-counter-offense. Defense is the other guy's concern."

In a bladed art, you never want to be on the receiving end!

Guro Apolo

MABAGSIK's curriculum is based on Grandtuhon Gaje's Pekiti-Tirsia Kali System, and it is comprised of four primary disciplines, which will be expounded upon in the upcoming Legends of Kali Seminar II. They are as follows: empty hands, ground fighting, edged weaponry and impact weaponry.

Empty Hands

The indigenous traditional Filipino Fighting Art otherwise known as "Pangamut" or open hand is the exact interpretation of the blade. All of its uses represent a deadly impact that involves striking, guiding and immobilizing with the hands and arms; Sikaran, which incorporates kicking, and leg clearing; and Dumog, which uses takedowns, breaks and ground-fighting.

The Pangamut is just as deadly as the two edged weapons, in that a tempered hand is as effective as tempered steel. Pekiti-Tirsia tempering techniques are one of the secret formulas that make this system superior and effective.



Ground Fighting

Dumog (i.e., grappling) employs a variety of takedowns and throwing techniques, and can be practiced with or without weapons. Dumpag is the ancient indigenous fighting art of the aborigines of Negros and Panay Islands of the Philippines. It is an art of open hand techniques (slapping, hacking, finger jabbing) and the use of elbows and legs for limb destruction. Dumpag short destruction kicking techniques are "unpredictable" that are released during the "counter on motion" - before "attack time" combat.

These techniques are highly destructive, as they focus is on the inner thighs and major legs arteries during a rapid exchange of attacks and re-counters. Its primary objectives are to destroy any hands, feet, and neck and as they come within the perimeters of safety and control, during medium and close quarter attacks.

Impact Weaponry

The impact weapon of Pekiti-Tirsia Kali includes the iron stick, iron pipes, baseball bat, long and short sticks, kicks, elbows, head-butts, and other non-bladed weapons. These weapons have the power to destroy and break the attacker's weapon

during contact. Power development is the secret behind this PTK system that leads to its devastating impact and non-counter ability.



Edged Weaponry

The edged weapon system of the Pekiti-Tirsia Kali system presents a unique training technology of function ability, operability and non-counter ability. The artistic values of each movement are based on geometry and require a high degree of analytical and executory skill. In this way, during the exchanges of offense and counter-offense, there is no gap between slashes and thrust; making each attack efficient, effective and deadly.

The Brother's Daga Philosophy

Footwork is the most important factor in an effective offense/counter-offense/re-counter-offense. In order for any of these techniques to be effective, the proper footwork is essential, especially when dealing with edged weapons because it keeps you one step ahead of your opponent. These principles can be applied to blade, sticks and empty hand attack scenarios.

The way you position your body and blade will dictate the way the opponent “attacks” you. The way you move your feet and body with an edged weapon will help your flow, and prevent you from telegraphing your offense/counter-offense/re-counter-offense. For every action, there is a reaction: No wasted motion!

Double-blade Pakal Counter-Offense #1:

1. - Attacker (Guro Bobby - GB): Right diagonal downward strike.



2. - Counter (Guro Apolo –GA): 45 degree side-step to left; left diagonal downward *strike* with left hand, *inside slash* with the right (also referred to as “gunting”). Left hand stays at center of chest as preparation for any “counter” offense.



3. - Attacker (GB) jabs with left, while GA counters by bisecting the attack and parrying with the left, and then lashes upward with right, with footwork; then switch to right parry.





4. - Counter (GA): Left blade to back of attacker's left tricep, while parrying with the right to lock the attacker's arm.



Front



Back

5. - Attacker (GB) attempts to thrust with free right arm and Counter (GA) hooks the neck and slides the left leg back to immobilize him (while cutting).



Front



Side



Side



Back

Double-blade Pakal drill #2:

1. - Attacker (Guro Apolo - GA): Right diagonal downward strike.



2. - Counter (GB): Side step and prepare counter-offense.



3. - Counter (GB): Bisect the thrust and parry.



4. - Prepare “Re-counter-Offense”: GB’s left blade cuts GA’s bicep



5. - Re-counter (GB): Bend right arm to hook (around the neck) and pull attacker’s neck straight down, causing him to lose his blade.



6. - Finishing Move: GB executes finishing move and prevents him from using the other hand.



Maryland Pekiti-Tirsia Kali Pitbulls

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Atienza Kali

By Carl Atienza

www.atienzakali.com

The respected Grandmasters from the Philippines developed their systems by facing challenges in their environment and finding combative solutions for them. In the same tradition, the Atienza family worked for decades to find their strategies and techniques that derive from centuries of blade warfare in the Philippines. The result is a solution for the combative problems now faced in their adopted home of the United States. This is Atienza Kali.



Guro Allain Atienza



Guro Carl Atienza



Guro Darryl Atienza

“We peer out of the second story window of our house, our sights scanning back and forth, hopping from chest to chest of the twenty three men across the street as one of them starts to cross the street to talk to my father Butch and my older brother Allain. I track the man crossing the street, my compound hunting bow at full draw, ready to release if this guy pulls any weapon. Darryl, the youngest of the three of us, keeps his crossbow on the main group. I don’t know what is going on- I was just awakened a few seconds before and told to grab projectiles- but I keep my sights set on the man talking to my father. As my vision adjusts to the dark I notice that my father has a blade in left hand and my older brother Allain has an unsheathed Bowie in his right.

Apparently my older brother (Allain, 16 years old) just fought off an attack by these men, managed to get away from them, ran back into the house, grabbed a blade and called my father for help. Fortunately my father simmered the whole situation down. We all knew we couldn’t get into that kind of a fight in front of the house.

This may sound like an event from the dark ages or something but this was on the corner of 168th place and 88 Avenue, Jamaica, Queens 1984. There was always stuff like this going on and involving big masses of people that the family might haven to fight We handled it the way we trained- two of the youngest would projectile the attackers, work

the long range, while the oldest of the family would fight hand to hand. A day in the life of my family, the Atienzas."

- Darry Atienza -

This was just one of the many situations that helped to develop Atienza Kali by the Atienza family- a system developed to address masses of people whether it be one person fighting a mass or a few family members fighting a mass. The solution is a system that utilizes blades of all sizes whether held or thrown. Also a major requirement of such a system would be footwork that would keep a blade user moving when attacked by a mass of people, as he can stay in one spot for only a limited amount of time when facing multiple opponents.

Basic Footwork - All the combative footwork used in Atienza Kali is derived from and trained within the hourglass pattern. A beginner in Atienza Kali will run the hourglass and its many variations of combative footwork patterns during warm ups. The main focus of this is to have the student develop the necessary muscles to keep him light-footed and mobile.

Basic Blade Work - The basic curriculum in Atienza Kali starts with the bolo (short sword) and the small knife. Students will learn basic angles of attack along with different ways of doing them. Long slashes are taught mainly as finishing moves, short slashes are taught to be non-telegraphed and usually done as the initiating attack. Chopping trains the student to chop into the target and retract. Hacks are attacks that leave the blade in bone. These can be all done with different parts of the blade. The first four inches of a bolo would be used in conjunction with shorts slashes, chops and hacks to hit small targets like the eyes, jugulars and fingers. The first half of the blade would be used to hack right through a forearm or wrist. The part of the bolo closest to the hilt would be used in close quarter hip slashes where the AK practitioner would be very close and places the blade (portion of the blade a few inches from his fist) right on his opponents' body then spins his hips out 180 degrees, using the entire length of the blade, from hilt to tip, to cut the entire midsection of his opponent.



There are three types of thrusts in Atienza Kali. The straight thrust, which basically puts the point into an opponent, paying very close attention to targeting. Tearing thrusts that use the back edge of the point to tear the opponent or in the case of a knife, hook into joints so the opponents body can be manipulated. Twisting thrusts are thrusts that enter an opponent and then twisted while in the body then withdrawn.

All blade movements are taught to move in conjunction with body mechanics for maximum power delivery and maximum control of a heavy blade without damaging the joints of the practitioner. Pivoting of the body is used in conjunction with the movement

of the blade so that the practitioner develops power and decreases target opportunity to his opponent by standing in a slimmer profile after the strike.

Hourglass and Blade - This exercise is one of the most important in the beginning stages of an Atienza Kali student. It incorporates the hourglass training and the basic blade movements to create an exercise called the “Atienza Kali Hourglass and Blade”. It teaches the student to efficiently pivot and strike while being mobile within the hourglass training pattern. This is very hard to do in the beginning of training and an Atienza Kali practitioner will do this exercise for years to master the movements. The skills developed in this exercise is mandatory if the Atienza Kali practitioner wants to be proficient in mass attack exercises and survive mass attack scenarios he may encounter on the street.

Atienza Kali combat methodology - Atienza Kali practitioners train a short non-telegraphed first attack called the Force Anchor Initiation (FAI). The idea here is to move undetected so the first attack strikes its intended target successfully. There two ways the fight can go from there.

First option - is the FAI is successful and the AK practitioner can finish the exchange with quick killing follow up tactics.

Second option - the FAI is successful but the opponent still counter attacks even if he is hit. The idea here is that an injured person will not react within his skill set but in a reaction that is in panic. This is usually in a very basic attack that can be countered very easily by the AK practitioner.

What if the opponent successfully defends against the FAI? The term “force anchor” needs to be explained to understand this portion of the combat methodology. Anchor points are tracking points used by AK practitioners to “observe” which angle of attack an opponent is about to use. Chambering and loading are commonly used terms. We say “observed” because with enough training the tracking of a blade through anchor points becomes conditioned to a point of no thought.



Atienza Kali practitioners don't say “our opponent countered our FAI” but rather have the mindset that we just “forced the opponent's anchor point” which allows us to get a basis on what angle of attack he will use on his counter and how we will in turn counter that attack. That mindset is very important in Atienza Kali. That way the mindset of “defending ourselves”, which is very common in today's world, is cast away. This is called the Atienza Kali Force Anchor Strategy (FAS).

FIGHTER TYPES

Fighter Types is a term used in Atienza Kali to catalog the different types of techniques that an AK practitioner will use in a blade exchange. Fighter types can be used in attack or in counter.

The AK practitioner executes his FAI and it is countered, that counter can be categorized in a fighter type immediately. This is better explained by example.

Examples of fighter types

2 count - this counter is done by either pulling the hand away (if the hand is attacked) or by pulling the body away (if the head or torso is attacked) then counter striking immediately.

1 count - this is a counter that happens simultaneously with the opponents attack or in one count. Intercepts to the weapons hand, evading the attack and attack the body simultaneously with thrust or slashes all fall into this fighter type.

Details of a typical blade exchange:

- 1- AK practitioner FAI to his opponents' fingers in his blade hand. (right hand for this example)
- 2 - The opponent counters by pulling his hand away (fighter type: 2count) to his right side setting an anchor point for an angle one attack (forehand attack).
- 3 - Opponent sends an angle one long slash to the AK practitioners' throat.
- 4 - AK practitioner counters with a short slash intercept, while slightly retreating, to the opponent's brachial plexus. (fighter type: 1 count)

This is a typical entry that an AK practitioner would use. It also demonstrates what the AK practitioner sees in a blade exchange.

Atienza Kali Evoltuion



Since the core and success of the Atienza Kali blade exchange is based on fighter types there has to be a training method that teaches a student how to defeat each fighter type with other fighter types. This is what the Atienza Kali Evolution does. An Evoltuion is a two-man exercise that interacts fighter types and teaches a student how to defeat an opponent's fighter type. Unlike a traditional drill that recycles a series of counters and maneuvers the Atienza Kali Evolution doesn't run the same move twice in a row and eventually end with a final kill.

Atienza Kali combat phases :

An AK practitioner sees a successful entry to kill in phases.

Phase 1 - is what was just discussed. The FAI and the FAS. This also includes the use of projectiles for entry, which is the favored entry for most of the more experienced AK practitioners.

Phase 2 - taking behind the elbow control (BEC). BEC allows the AK practitioner to secure the motion his opponent after entry and still have sensitivity for any counters that his opponent may try to execute. This is a transitional phase, happens very quickly.

Phase 3 - the weapon hand is completely controlled with locks and holds. The blade is still constantly working here to bleed out the opponent. Body shielding is done in this phase in mass attack.

Phase 4 - an optional phase in Atienza Kali. This where the opponent is thrown to the ground and controlled where the final bleed out is done. We say optional because in a mass attack situation phase 4 may not be done.

AK practitioners understand that the opponent will not fall immediately unless the brain is separated from the central nervous system. Most of the time the opponent must be bled out, that takes time. If your opponent is armed with a blade or firearm he can still kill with the time he has left. That's why phases are used in Atienza Kali. This is to make sure that there is complete control of the opponents' weapon hand until the kill is successful.

Réal Combat Exercice

Once the student learns the evolution, the isolation of individual techniques from the evolution begins. One way to do this is through Real Combat Exercises (RCE's). Once the techniques are nearly perfected in form and footwork, a specific technique are isolated and fed in real time. When we say real time we mean real energy and real intent. Atienza Kali Chiefs instructors find that this training gets the student ready for the real energy and mindset of an actual violent encounter. In their opinions most attackers are successful against martial artists because the student wasn't shown the reality of a violent attack. By taking what they have experienced and putting them into RCE's the student is on the way to having the proper mindset.

Atienza Kali Mass Attack training

Mass attack training is introduced fairly early in the curriculum. In the beginning of a student's mass attack training, techniques are isolated from the evolution and attempted in the mass attack exercise. The added stress of multiple attackers serves to magnify any weaknesses in the student's form. At the same time, it introduces him to how a mass of people move, allowing him to develop the proper movement and footwork needed to clear the attack. This results in the refining of both the specific technique and the student's performance against a mass attack.

Atienza Kali Mass Attack scenarios

Since it was such a common occurrence, the Atienzas very early on categorized the many different ways a mass can attack. This eventually was called Atienza Kali Mass Attack Scenarios. They categorize 5 different scenarios.

1. Forward rush - attackers move in a straight rush overwhelming the AK practitioner
2. Sacrificing the one - one of the attackers in the mass tie up the AK practitioner so the rest of the mass finishes him.

3. Closing circle - one of the mass attackers takes the attention of the AK practitioner while one or 2 attackers try to position themselves behind the AK practitioner.
4. Closed circle - the circle of mass attackers just closed now the AK practitioner has to fight out
5. Clearing hell - the AK practitioner has to clear mass attackers who are using Atienza Kali reverse mass attack strategies. The hardest and one of the most impossible to clear since the mass is now tactically organized. Projectiles are a must in this scenario.

Atienza Kali Mass Attack Strategies

These are the actual strategies that Atienza Kali practitioners use to clear the mass attack scenarios. All require and aggressive offensive mindset and exceptional footwork.

1. Body shielding - using the next attacker as a shield from the last attacker you the AK practitioner just engaged.
2. Mass attack in sequence - using some sort of bottleneck (doorway, parked cars etc.) so mass attacker move in a straight line momentarily. The mass attackers are dealt with one at a time as they come at AK practitioner in sequence from bottleneck.
3. Attack the wall - AK practitioners are taught to deal with a wall of attacker momentarily until they can get back to body shielding.

There is a brief overview of what the Atienza Kali family system entails. Currently Allain, Carl and Darryl Atienza head Atienza Kali since the death of their father "Butch Atienza" in January of 1999. Since the introduction of Atienza Kali to the public in 2002 Atienza Kali training groups have started all over the U.S. and in Europe with Atienza Kali Instructor candidates in the same locations.

Atienza Kali blade work has also made its way into educating military and law enforcement about the destructive capability of the blade and has given the military and law enforcement community solutions based on Atienza Kali blade principles.

In November of 2005 a New Jersey police officer new to the force thanked the Atienza brothers for their Atienza Kali blade awareness class done at the Passaic county police academy. The officer claims that the information from the blade awareness class saved his life against a knife-wielding suspect.



Check out some of the Atienza Kali videos: ([Click Here](#))

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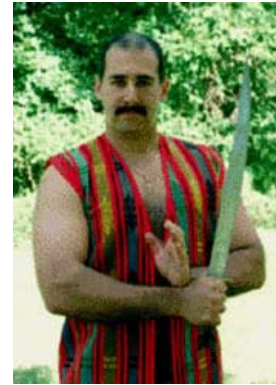
Zach Whitson

By Zach Whitson's
Full Circle Martial Arts

Zach Whitson is highly respected as a practitioner and instructor in the blade art of Pekiti-Tirsia Kali and the empty hand art of Ed Parker's American Kenpo. Zach Whitson is a sought after seminar instructor, known for his exceptional teaching talent, and his ability to bring new depth, insight and dimension to traditional training. Due to his extensive knowledge of edged weapons, law enforcement professionals also seek Zach Whitson's instruction in edged weapon defensive tactics.

Mr. Whitson began his extensive training in Pekiti-Tirsia Kali in 1990 and in August 2004 completed all testing requirements of Pekiti-Tirsia International. Zach Whitson currently holds the rank of Mataas Na Guro (Master Instructor) under Tuhon Guro William McGrath.

Adapting the "flow drill" concept from his Pekiti-Tirsia Kali background, Senior Professor Whitson has devised a set of drills that explores the counters and re-counters inherent in the base moves of standard Kenpo techniques. This method teaches students to understand Kenpo techniques from every angle and in every contingency, giving them the ability to strategize "three steps" ahead of their opponents. Students learn to control the direction of a fight by "leading" their opponents down a specific "reaction pathway."



Tuhon Guro
William McGrath



Zach Whitson, Bill McGrath and
Jerry McCleary

Counterpoint training sessions involve rapid and constant repetition- a marked improvement over the traditional Kenpo technique line in terms of quickly and effectively developing reaction pathways and muscle memory. Counterpoint training develops high-speed position recognition and spontaneity.

Zach Whitson is the creator of the innovative training method called Kenpo Counterpoint. The Counterpoint method conditions the martial artist to tactics needed to spontaneously counter and re-counter Kenpo fighting techniques.

The initial steps of each Counterpoint drill consist of slow, rhythmic repetition, as both training partners learn to recognize and address angle and timing changes. The speed and intensity of the drill are increased as the student's skills improve, developing the ability to react instantly. The drill encourages students to develop strategic counter-offensive action as opposed to self-defensive reaction.

The term counterpoint is a term used in music to describe the way one melody lays over another in order to develop a more sophisticated harmony. The element of counterpoint in music is both natural and necessary in composing a sophisticated sound.



While listening to his favorite Eric Clapton cd, Zach will hear counterpoint in action. With a drum and percussionist keeping time a bass guitar is heard then a rhythm guitar, lead guitar, keyboard also a harmonica and perhaps a saxophone. The melody played by the bass guitar is very different from the saxophone and the lead guitar is a bit different from the harmonica however with counterpoint they all exist harmoniously.

Essentially Kenpo Counterpoint was designed using the self-defense techniques of Ed Parkers American Kenpo with the strategic counter and re-counter drill concept of Pekiti-Tirsia Kali. The musical term “Counterpoint” has been applied to this training method for several reasons. One is because the training is comprised of two very different martial disciplines that exist in harmony. Second is the concept that every technique has a counter and re-counter based on timing and position.

The Counterpoint training method develops the student’s ability to recognize position and develop timing in order to change and flow spontaneously in order to achieve the objective. Based on timing and position every technique has counters and re-counters. As the human body moves through the motions and positions of combat the opportunities for countering continuously change and evolve.

A relevant counter in one position may not be practical or possible in a slightly different position. The point or place where a particular counter occurs is called the “Counterpoint”. With missed opportunities there does come a point in time and position where the chance of countering is no longer available, this is called the ‘point of no return’. For example the point of no return can be demonstrated in lock flow. At the beginning stages of any given lock are certain opportunities for counters. As motion continues and positions change slightly some options are lost while other new ones present themselves. As the joint manipulation moves to its final stages the joint reaches that position where pain is overwhelming and providing that all other counters are checked there is no escape.

Counterpoint removes the tendency to analyze and think so the process is more dependent on feel and automatic reaction to the counters that are offered. As the skill level increases, the student is prepared to lead his opponent into a chosen pathway. For example, each move in a technique has at least three counters and each counter holds at least three re-counters and from that point you have at least three counters to the re-counters. With the ability to automatically respond this way you can actually begin to act three steps ahead of your opponent.

The term “Reaction Pathway” refers to those automatic responses to action that open the way for countering. Having extensively explored the possibilities you can actually use your action to lead your opponent in the direction that you want him to take.

In leading your opponent in a given direction he may find and take another path but your familiarity with the new direction allows you to take a short cut and again step ahead and lead. This concept requires a “give and take” attitude, the effective use of timing and a willingness to yield. Instead of opposing force you allow your opponent to take his chosen path. For example, you deflect an oncoming punch and respond with a straight-arm bar, he gives resistance and you counter with a figure four-arm lock. He again resists your lock but without becoming caught in a power struggle you stay relaxed go with his motion and re-counter with a bent arm bar.



The idea of a “reaction pathway” can also be applied to the concept of fakes, baits and deception. This is used tactically to set up or arrange a reaction. Transcending the self-defense concept of block and counter the reaction pathway employs the concept of strategic counter-offense. Strategic counter-offense allows you to engage targets and while your opponent presents automatic defensive reaction his efforts are manipulated strategically to leave you with superior

position and target options.

Largely, the counterpoint method is a study of timing. Based on timing each move or position of a technique has several possibilities for a counter. If you are consistently missing an opportunity to counter, one of the first things to analyze is your timing, as a large percentage of botched counters are due to timing issues. Using the counterpoint method you must play timing in order to effectively counter your opponent’s intentions.

You can be early with your timing giving your opponent an advantage or you can be late leaving an opening or totally missing a workable counter. In the more advanced stages of Kenpo Counterpoint, counters are based on full, half, third and quarter beat motion. As motion is sliced into smaller pieces of time the countering becomes increasingly sophisticated.

It must be understood that speed and timing are two very different elements; you can be very fast but have bad timing. Also, as we age our ability to generate speed diminishes, however our ability to develop timing is possible much later in life. A case in point, Grand Master Cacoy Canete, of the Doce Pares Eskrima System, at eighty-five years old does not appear to be blazingly fast, however his ability to time counters and re-counters is phenomenal. His development of timing and knowledge of countering allows him to control much younger, stronger and faster opponents.

In the beginning stages, Kenpo Counterpoint is to be practiced with an emphasis on learning the counters by recognizing margin for error positions and reading motion. To achieve this, the drill must be done at a slow, relaxed pace avoiding competition until both partners are able to act and react to the



Zach Whitson and
Grandmaster Cacoy

variables given. If one partner is missing counters and hesitating with a response then the drill must be slowed until the motion is read and understood allowing for a viable counter. As both partners understand the tactics that set up reaction and after the many pathways are experienced, the drill speed and intensity can be increased.

Counterpoint is a proving ground for the “rules of motion”. All the rules can be tested and/or discovered here. In practicing Counterpoint you will soon come to realize that the rules are there for a reason and if applied correctly work well. You can understand the rule, explain the rule, teach the rule and expound on the rule until you are blue in the face, but if you haven’t internalized the rule into flow then the benefit of the rule is lost. This is another good reason to do the drill at a relaxed, slow pace at first if you go too fast in the learning stage you will start to lose the rules that make your counters effective.



Zach Whitson and
Grand Tuhon Leo Gaje

A valuable saying in Pekiti-Tirsia goes like this, “learn the drill, drill the drill and then forget the drill”. Grand Tuhon Gaje also says that “we learn to forget”. This is a very important point in the flow drill concept. Because of extensive practice and drilling you execute your counters and re-counters without thought or hesitation. With a drill that incorporates countless counters and re-counters you cannot become locked into one response. You must be very flexible in your ability to counter until you have found the intended targets.

With a very large drill that includes an endless supply of technique the training has a feel and look that has a life of its own. It is a method to develop your technique so that it is functional at speed and is spontaneous. In advanced terms the drill resembles sparring and the conditioning allows you to execute techniques based on feel and timing not memory. At this stage the drill is completely free form and anything can happen. If you have a method to develop your technique for sparring then you are more likely to have the skill to pull off a complex technique while sparing.

I use the term “counter-ability” meaning a techniques inherent counters or possibilities for counters. Some techniques by design are harder to counter than others based on the level of counter-ability but, all things in nature have an opposite and reverse. That is why the concept of yin and yang has been around for about four thousand years. This was also discovered over four hundred years ago by Sir Isaac Newton with the third law of motion that states “for every action (force) in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction”.

Counterpoint develops the entries and counters not from being open but from the margin for error position where each partner has multiple options for countering. The only openings are the ones used to bait or draw an attack.

From basic drills Counterpoint progresses with advanced concepts, techniques and tactics pertaining to empty hand, stick and knife. The idea is to learn the concept and training method only to explore the reaction pathways and develop your own strategies and tactics. This is the key to truly developing the attribute of spontaneity. Having many

transitions or pathways to bridge or graft techniques prevents you from becoming locked to a particular action or response. If you become too rigid in your ideal response you lose the flexibility to flow with the changes and you will always be one step behind.

Besides conducting martial arts seminars Zach Whitson owns and operates Iron Mountain Knives. Zach Whitson designs and manufactures hand made tactical, martial arts, hunting and utility knives.



Iron Mountain Knives

At Iron Mountain Knives, they only create “custom” knives that are meticulously handcrafted according to the customer’s specifications. Because of their specialized approach to custom knife making and design, there are some things one should consider before ordering their custom designed, handcrafted knife. The materials used for the knife itself, the handle, the sheath, and

decorative elements of the knife should be considered before ordering.

Iron Mountain Knives takes a handcrafted, high quality design approach to knife making, and each and every knife that leaves the shop is a uniquely personalized creation. The Master Craftsman, Mr. Zach Whitson, has years of knife making training and experience, and is an authority and instructor in combat knife fighting tactics. He has worked in some of heavy industry’s most challenging environments. His experience in knife craft as well as his knowledge of knife utility places the Iron Mountain Knives products among the finest in the world. Take a look around the Iron Mountain Knives website, then contact them about creating an uniquely original knife that will be an extension of your skills and personality. They guarantee you will be satisfied!



Doce Pares Training Seminar with Grandmaster Cacoy

For more information about Mr. Whitson's Counterpoint videos, seminars or hand made knives go to **Zach Whitson.com**, **Iron Mountain Knives.com**, **Kenpo Counterpoint.com** and **Full Circle Martial Arts.com**.

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Silat Combat Academy

Silat Mubai Australian Training Group



Silat Mubai is one of the most complete REAL FIGHTING SILAT systems in the world, focusing on Zahir (outer) development of Combat grade Silat and Batin (inner) development of the human being to attain higher understanding of the self. Mubai is short for Mubarazaad, which is Arabic for "fighting with weapons".

Silat Mubai focuses primarily on the real world usage of empty hand combatives and weapons in close quarter fighting. The techniques and principles of the system are mainly derived from the strong Martial culture of the Muslim people in the Malay Archipelago and the personal experiences of Ustaz Hussein Udom. He is the founder and Khalifa (keeper of the system) of Silat Mubai. In addition, non South-East Asian martial skills have been introduced to enhance and preserve the warrior techniques of other past empire states such as the wrestling of the Ottoman Yeniceri (Janissary) corps and the energy training methods of the Chinese Muslim fighting arts. The system emphasizes functionality in real conflict and through the training of combatives (armed/unarmed), tactics, and mindset, trains the murid (student) in offensive and counter-offensive action.

Silat Mubai is concerned with confronting, controlling and directing extreme violence through offensive or counter-offensive action. The system has been refined and continues this process in order to maintain the best cutting edge reality combat system by blending traditional Warrior mentality and lessons learned with modern tactics and research.

The objective of the Silat Mubai murid in a conflict situation is to end the problem in as short a time as possible and establish control of the situation in his favor or to help a third party. The principles, techniques and mentality of the system integrate and allow the natural development of an all round fighter capable of fulfilling that objective.



Training of the murids (students)
at the Silat Combat Academy.

Unarmed Against Knife

Silat Mubai is a system that achieves results quickly and the training regimen is not needlessly complicated. It is suitable for men and women and results in increased reflex action, maneuverability, leverage, evasion and the mastery of mind body and spirit. You should note the average size of your South East Asian is not huge and bulky nor physically intimidating, yet their history in fighting foreign invaders, and each other, speaks for itself. Therefore, when size and strength are added to the natural lethality of the Silat arts a powerful and very formidable mix occurs.

In Silat Mubai we take full advantage of the added potential strength and size bring into the theater of real world altercations.

Silat Mubai claims its descent from the various Muslim tribal and national systems, and there can be no denying the enormous influence the Muslim Warriors of the Southern Philippines have played in the development and proliferation of bladed combat arts worldwide. Whilst these voiceless warriors with forgotten names and unmarked graves have not been given the respect and gratitude from the world martial fraternity they deserve, their influence is pervasive. From the Moro weapons plaques that hang in many clubs and associations worldwide, to the choreographed knife fighting scenes in many action movies, and to the resolve of the military men who preserve and nurture the continuation and development of bladed combatives, the legacy continues. Nobody can deny the influence of the Muslims in the development of the modern Kali, Eskrima and Arnis systems. Many in fact do not. For instance it is no secret that Dante Illustrisimo learned a major part of his blade art from his time in Sulu and likewise Juan Lacoste was immersed in the Muslim fighting systems of the Bangsamoro. One of the most honored historical events of the Philippines is the battle of Mactan which was fought between the Spanish forces led by Magellan and the native forces led by Lapu-Lapu, a Muslim Tausug, an expert in Silatan (Tausug martial art of swordsmanship), and a warrior of the sultan of Sulu. Mactan was the seat of the kingdom and he was the Sultan's representative ruler in the Visayas area.

The Silat Mubai understanding of what is “REAL” is translated into two words, ‘ Self-Preservation and Victory.’ And can the combination of various techniques and mindset against an enemy that knows no rules and has no limits achieve this self-preservation and victory?

Sadly the news is that there is no perfect technique(s) used in isolation or as a rapid series of motions that can handle a life and death scenario as one complete perfect solution. The situation and the environment will dictate the techniques, the force level required and the post-conflict course of action. If violence is random, then the response to random violence will also be random. The brain is incapable of switching to cognitive thinking about which series of techniques will be utilized once an ambush/attack has commenced and is in progress. Essentially a street attack is an ambush, not a duel. This is why Silat Mubai emphasis’ violence as the prime response to successfully answering violence offered. This falls clearly in line with the Military principle that when ambushed, forget defensive action and go on an all out offense to match and overtake the enemy's violence level. This is the clearest and simplest way to win.

Everyone is capable of learning how to perform a variety of techniques. It is only when the pain and pressure of a rapid and unrelenting assault is assumed that it becomes obvious that years of incorrect training have resulted in failure. The problem lies not in

learning techniques or even in understanding the techniques. The problem simply is that restraint; hesitation, fear, and indecision lie at the core of the conscious and subconscious mind. As law-abiding citizens and descent human beings we are conditioned from an early age to regulate our behaviour and to contain ourselves to accepted norms.

These rules constrain and suppress the natural animal instinct of the human to be capable of truly aggressive and unconstrained acts of violence. These rules are necessary for the smooth functioning of our society and that is why the police force exists, in order to regulate, restrain, and punish those who have stepped outside the structure, i.e. the law.

“Unlearning” constraints placed upon your training is the key to developing the superior fighter.

The Silat Mubai murid must be capable of switching this unrestrained fighting capability on and off at will. If the criminal attacking you already has that capability without the moral justification and ethical values you posses then the battle will not be a level playing field unless you are also capable of inflicting and in fact exceeding the capability of the aggressor without hesitation. This is where correct training comes into play. The mindset provides the platform with which the combatives can function in the real world, and understanding the tactics necessary to employ them efficiently perfects the combatives. Victory is the objective. Silat Mubai provides the tools with which one can achieve that objective.

The edged weapons component of the Silat Mubai curriculum is encompassing. In fact without the knife Silat Mubai would not be recognizable. It is in the firearms and bladed weapon components of Silat Mubai in which the lethality of the art is most observable.

One can observe worldwide a growing trend of many Instructors incorporating edged weapon training in their regimen. This trend has its origins in many military individuals entering the private martial arts business scene and sharing their knowledge with civilian



Emir Ekrem passes the blade to apply an arm bar then executing a knee kick to attackers head.



Emir then yanks the arm back to cause further pain and distraction.



Shifting the body to execute a circular takedown.



Then as the attacker falls Emir Positions his body to thrust the opponent's knife into his throat.

instructors and students. As well as the growing awareness of the Malay Archipelago knife cultures among training groups worldwide.

As in all businesses though, charlatans are a norm and the practicality of what is being taught is questionable. Set patterns and dead drills taught to take up seminar time result in sophisticated fighting exchanges with jams, passes, wipes and blows usually very fast and complex but lacking in killing intent and violence of action. In Silat Mubai emphasis is on simplicity over style and pure aggression and dedication to the assault over individual technique and drills. This is one of the clear points of difference that distinguish truly combative methods of blade craft from other more recreational methods, the intention and mindset trained with the drills.

The Silat Mubai knife fighter is trained in the physical anatomy of the human body and is therefore aware of what part of the body a thrust is most effective and when also to execute the slashing techniques. At all times remaining opportunistic and determined to defeat the opponent with techniques, strategy, and tactics.

Using a knife for offensive action requires simplicity and ingenuity. Whether the slashes or thrusts are delivered from the saber or reverse grip the emphasis should be placed on the most direct route to the vulnerable parts of the body's anatomy.

In counter offensive action one should use the hands to protect and counter strike whilst the footwork ensures that the body remains out of the trajectory path of the attack, always being aware in positioning ones own body in the correct zone to facilitate counter-attack.

Slashing is generally executed by sweeping the arm forward on linear, horizontal and 45-degree angles, whereas thrusting or stabbing intentionally seeks to commit to a fatal target. Slashing seeks to open up the arteries whereas stabbing seeks to damage the major organs.

Knife on Knife

The lethality of the Silat Mubai bladed system is further highlighted in the integration of blade work, firearms and empty-hand combatives. Mostly we like to think of our primary weapons systems in stand alone terms however when entering into real world conflict any combination of weaponry must be used appropriately to neutralize the enemy. One may start empty-handed, and then draw the blade and transition to the enemy's firearm to engage incoming hostiles. A good understanding of weapon transitions is vital to survival in modern street altercations where criminals can be armed with any variety of weapons and sometimes the proper training/experience to use them very well. For example Latin drug gangs have been known to send their members or recruits to join the military in order to gain training in the use of firearms and knowledge in close quarter battle. This knowledge is then disseminated to other members upon that person's re-entry into the gang.

This type of enemy, sophisticated, functional, and extremely violent, is what the curriculum and spirit of Silat Mubai focuses on teaching people how to handle and survive. Through the proper training of mindset, tactics and Combatives, God Willing we will be able to share useful knowledge to dedicated people and hopefully save lives.



Typical non-ambush position "The Duel".



Ustaz executes an outside entry with a knife.



Arm is then pushed down and he stabs the throat.



The arm is wrapped and a knee kick to the head is executed.



With a classic pufer kapala the enemy is down.



Ustaz opens the line to the artery.
A lethal stab to the artery.

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Philippine Blade Work

By Guro Kurtis Goodwin

The blade work of the Philippine martial art systems comes from centuries of battlefield proven methods. The fighting styles of the Philippine islands are directly responsible for the US military to end the use of the .38 caliber firearm and favor the use of the .45 caliber since the Spanish American war at the beginning of the 1900's. During World War II the US military incorporated the use of Filipino hand-to-hand techniques and blade work due to its overwhelming nature and pure effectiveness.



Guro Kurtis Goodwin

I have had the honor to know a few Veterans of that era. When reflecting back to that time even after many years later, tears still came to their eyes in remembrance of the Filipinos that put their lives in front of our forces to save them from death at the hands of the Japanese invaders. Grand Master Cacoy Canete himself at the age of 87 gave accounts to us of his experiences during that time in history, picking up machine guns as the guerillas ran, out numbered, as he fought off Japanese paratroopers, mowing them down with gun fire as they touched the ground.

Checking back further in the earlier history of the Spanish occupation in the Philippines numerous accounts of incredible bloodbaths bear witness to the authenticity of how fierce the people of the Philippines are. Look at some of the crests of these styles. A crescent moon serves as a reminder of a time when the uttering of words Arnis, Kali or Escrima was a death sentence. Today the battles continue in Mindanao and other resort islands in the Visayan belt. Our U.S. military presence is still felt there.

The Philippine martial arts we are taught today come from that time. If asked what is so impressive about them? My answer would be is that the Blade arts from the Philippines are some of the most dynamic of any system I have studied. I have spent 26 years of my life in the practice of these arts and have studied with many great men. Their names are known to many and they are part of living history.

I have already mentioned Grand Master Cacoy Canete of the Doce Pares system, but most of my training has been through the Presas lineage. I am a certified instructor and Black Belt of all three Presas Brothers, Grandmaster Remy Presas, Grandmaster Ernesto Presas, currently represent Grandmaster Roberto Presas and continued my training with top students of these men (Datu Kelly Worden and Guro John Daniels). I have also cross-trained in the systems that are represented from Guro Dan Inosanto.

What impresses me most is the use of patterns in training. Where as some styles of martial arts focus on a single attacker, we do not. The use of one technique to a single strike is met with not one counter or attack but a barrage of strikes. The barrage of counter attacks is not random but precisely targeted to areas that support the body.

Cutting the ligaments and tendons render the attacker useless if not simply bled out. This is a must for battlefield techniques. You don't have time to slug it out in a conventional manner because many more are coming for you. If they are not killed they

are left on the battlefield incapable of continuing any act of aggression. Wrestling one guy at a time doesn't cut it here, "sorry for the pun."



Guro Goodwin and Guro John Daniels, attack begins.



Opponents strike/slash cut intercepted. Countered with cut to inside arm cutting tendons disabling opponent.



Opponents knife disarmed and (both knives) returned to senders throat, attacking arm controlled in a chicken wing lock.



Opponent is swept and he falls on both knives.

The patterns are simple. When practiced to a level of efficiency you stop thinking and feel your way through the chaos at hand. If you have to stop to think what you are going to do next, you can be killed pure and simple. Professor Remy Presas trained his students to think the stick or the weapon and translate it into the empty hand. To train hard so when it was needed in defense it was there by physical response as opposed to a brain reaction. I have had to defend my life once or twice and I agree without question.

On the other side of the equation, an attacker is usually single minded or lineal minded. A person can deal with one move at a time but when met with many at once the brain tends to flat line and becomes overwhelmed. How many people train to accept and defend being hit and cut in two or three different areas at once? The answer is not many.

If you haven't thought about it and aren't willing to take my word for it (and please don't) TRY IT. We get a lot of students that train in other arts. I believe all martial arts are worthy and worthwhile, but when you put a knife or a weapon in your hand your training hits a whole different level. My teacher Bapak Willem De Thouars has said when an untrained person has a weapon in hand they are just as dangerous as any Black Belt. I humbly agree!

Beyond the physical level when met with a barrage of moves the emotional and psychological areas of the attacker are challenged. Focus is easily broken and strategy

plans begin to fail and fall apart. How do you feel when you see your own blood spill? Generally not too good, panic and uncertainty ensue. Holding your weapon also becomes a difficult task and the fight isn't over yet. I have heard the winner of a knife fight is the guy whom dies last. Philippine knife fighters are known to carry at least three tourniquets so they can tie off the bleeders after the fight and get medical help if available. Sound heavy? It is and students need to humble themselves to the realities of what they are getting into. Do not take your training too lightly nor take yourself too seriously, life is long and I hope all my students never see or come close to having to defend themselves. A true warrior will see many battles in a lifetime but will die an old age with their sword in their scabbard. I don't mean to scare anyone off from learning bladed arts. They are wonderful for the development of eye hand coordination. The patterns are fun and challenging. I practice the preservation of war arts from a time in history so we do not forget and repeat civilization's mistakes in our or our children's future. Please take these as my opinions only as that is what they are.

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ARJUMANO
PHILIPPINES

Guro Jojo S Latorre

ARJUMANO is a combination of Modern Arnis (Filipino Art of Stick Fighting), Dumog (Filipino Ju-jitsu/Art of Grappling and Ground Techniques), Mano-mano (Filipino Art of Empty Hand Techniques) and Da-Ga (Filipino Art of Knife Fighting Techniques).

Guro Jojo S Latorre, Founder and Chief Instructor of Arjumano, Philippines, started his martial arts training by chance in 1985 during his college days. Having nothing to do after school he decided to look for something to occupy himself in my free time. And by chance Jojo came upon the Arjuken Club, which was headed by Grandmaster Ernesto Presas.

Soon after joining the club his martial arts life began to make its road to discovering the value of arnis. During his studies at the Arjuken club Jojo studied Modern Arnis, Karate, Jujitsu, and a little bit of Kendo. After a year of constant training he became an apprentice in the Arjuken club teaching arnis, karate, and jujitsu. Guro Latorre also trained under Grandmaster Remy Presas and was also one of the first

officer's of the organization of Modern Arnis Philippines.

After graduating from college Jojo training had to be put on hold, because he had to work. But his spirit continued in the desirer to train. So it was in 1993 that Jojo decided to continue his training and Arjumano was established in Alabang, Muntinlupa City at a basketball court near Guro Latorre's home and was held every Saturday, starting with only 10 small children. Guro Latorre also began to teach in the office where he worked for 13 years.

Arjumano is a combination of Modern arnis, dumog, mano-mano and da-ga. Learning the four theories of techniques is not hard, because of the practical system being used. Arjumano is a direct defense, all techniques, which that are used, is for street applications and of practical use.

Guro Latorre has combined mano-mano and dumog then added modern arnis and finally Da-ga. Arjumano covers from stand-up to ground approach. And our women students are to be paired with the male students. But all principle in the teaching of Arjumano is based on the movements of classical Arnis. Arjumano was created solely for the purpose of preserving the true identity of the Filipino in terms of the martial art.



Arjumano Group

About Da-Ga and the principle behind it and what it consists of:

Guro Latorre created a knife flow called Da-Ga, which can be applied to mano-mano and even dulo-dulo techniques. It only needs to be explained very well and to be understood and experienced by the student and only then it can be appreciated for its practicality.

Arjumano Da-ga consists of two ways of holding the knife, the standard and the reverse hold. It consists of five thrusting and slashing techniques in the standard hold method and five thrusting and slashing techniques in the reverse holding method. It also has counter-to-counter techniques on reverse and standard attacks. The target of thrusting and slashing techniques covers from the opponents' head to their feet. The idea of the flow is the exchanging thrusting and slashing with the opponent. The movements also involve extensive footwork, head and body maneuvers.

The application of the da-ga flow is random in any attacks that consist of thrusting and slashing. So the practitioner develops the sense and movement and reaction by instinct and not by memorization.

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Huncar Applied Natural Defense Systems Knife Training

By Joe Huncar

As a practitioner of the Filipino martial arts most of my training comes from Mati Arnis. However, Balintawak Cuentada Eskrima now plays a huge part in what I teach; in fact it has become the core of my curriculum. Urban Survival Systems and Ikatan Kali have also heavily influenced me. Huncar Applied Natural Defense Systems (H.A.N.D.S), is not my personal style or system; it is just the label I use for my club. This way I can be pretty free with what I teach from day to day.

When I was taught Mati Arnis the main focus was on the single stick. Sometimes Guro Norm or Ross would later show how to transfer those skills to knife or empty hand. In fact, when I first started training in arnis there had been many times when I bought a knife training video and was disappointed by the fact that the drills shown were the same drills I had learned from my Guro. In my ignorance I labeled them “stick drills”. I soon realized there is very little difference between stick, knife and empty hands. It was just a matter of understanding the underlying concepts, adaptation and playing with the proper tools.

When it comes to the blade I usually will ask my students to consider why they want to learn how to handle a knife. For some it might be because they carry a folded knife for self-defense and want to learn how to use it. For others it might be the love of the art in itself. Some might simply want to learn how to defend against the blade. There

are many excellent and valid reasons to train knife-handling skills, even if it is a simply reason such as the student finds it a lot more fun then taking up bowling.



Weapon hand being grabbed by opponent.



Joel Huncar counters by flipping his machete blade on top of the opponents exposed arms.



And following through with a reinforced cut to both of the opponents arms and can continue with further action if needed.

every year there are people being put into their graves by angry neighbors and drunken friends or family members. If at all possible allow the authorities to take care of these potentially volatile situations.

Survival self-defense" on the other hand, is the type of situation when using a weapon is arguably a reasonable response. These are situations where your life is in immediate danger. A few examples might be fending off rapist, attempted abduction, being assaulted by an armed attacker or a multiple attacker scenario. Even if I feel

One I thing I like to pass on to my student is the fact that learning how to use the knife is important for defending empty hand against the blade. Also the decision to actually carry a knife as a self-defense tool requires a lot of sober thought and speculation. This is not a decision to be made lightly.

Knife training is one of the three building blocks of learning improvised weapons. The other two are the baston and the staff or dos manos stick. By learning these three weapons you can pretty much be sure that you will be able to adapt to most improvised weapons.

Specifically knife training teaches how to use many small hand held weapons. Pens, screwdrivers, wrenches, small sticks, small flashlights, beer bottles, glasses and just about any small hand held items can be used much the same as a knife.

One of the most important concepts I like to get across to my students is to understand the difference between "annoyance self defense" and survival self defense.

"Annoyance self-defense" is a situation like when you are dealing with a friend who is drunk and aggressive or a neighbor who wants to fight you because of something silly like you asked him to turn down his music at 3AM.

These situations are not the times you want to be using deadly force as your first option. However these situations should never be handled lightly because

justified in using my knife, my objective would always be to get away safely or if I am with my wife or child to let them get away safely.

"Reasonable Force" must always be your guideline. However in the chaos of a survival self-defense scenario what is reasonable may be the last thing on your mind. Survival will be all that matters.

Also there are people who carrying a weapon gives them a false sense of security. I believe you should never put yourself in places that you know are dangerous because your blade gives you the confidence to go there. In fact if as student told me that carrying a knife made him feel more confident, I would strongly warn him that this feeling of confidence can be a trap. If you avoid a certain pub, a certain part of town or a certain group of people, such as a local motorcycle gang, there is probably a good reason. Just because you feel confident in your ability with a knife does not mean that you should put yourself in situations where you might have to use it.

One benefit of learning the use of a knife is that it allows a practitioner to realize the true danger of a knife. When a student sees how easily, he can be cut by another student, even a student who is less experienced than him, he will be less likely to want to engage a knife wielding attacker.

It is very important to me that my students should not have naive ideals when it comes to facing a knife wielding attacker. The trained knife handler knows that without an equalizer he is at a huge disadvantage against an armed opponent. Even in the hands of a child a knife can be a deadly instrument and can instantly negate years of hard training.

When you begin training as a combative knife handler you should remember you don't want to be a one trick pony. Train your empty hands as well. Even if you carry a knife there are no guarantees you will want to use or even be able to get it out in a conflict.

I like to do a drill progression that teaches students how to access their knives while under stress. I think these types of drills are very important to any serious student of the blade.

The first type of training drill is what I call 'confusing the draw'. What I do is have the students bring their EDC (every day carry) knife to class and while we are doing drills with the stick or going through some empty hand drilling I will give the signal to draw their knife. It really makes it hard to be concentrating on one skill set then suddenly have to do something completely different. This is a great way to start building your knife access skills.

You can also have the students doing burpies, push-ups or some other form of heavy anaerobic exercise. This really makes drawing the blade quickly very difficult. Also the intense level of breathlessness and energy depletion is a good simulation for battle stress. To do this solo you can work on your striking or be doing bag work. Have an alarm set and as soon as it goes off, get your knife. I do this type of training with throwing knives as well. To do this I simply throw a set of throwing knives quickly at a target then go for my folder. It just adds some confusion to your knife draw.

The next drill is a bit more fun, but you need to use dulled folders for this drill. A replica of your EDC knife would be best. What I have my students do is have them both armed with their dulled replicas then go into Thai neck wrestling. At my signal they both go for a quick draw. I usually will let the students get really winded first.

As the students get better at this drill I will have them progress by taking one of the practice knives so only one student has the knife. Then once the students are really into their neck wrestling I will give the signal and one student tries to draw the knife while the other one tries to keep him from accessing his blade. This is excellent training for both students.

You can do these drills from Hubad or Cadena de Mano or any other close range Filipino martial art drills. Also have your students grapple on the ground, then give the signal. I like to mix it up and make it fun.

Also counter trapping drills like the lifting and clearing drills from Balintawak are excellent practice. I really enjoy working from a tie up position where both partners have their knife hand grabbed. There is much that can be done from this position. It is very important to teach the student to move quickly and decisively if their knife hand is grabbed.

To train how to handle impact we often use a target to strike with a knife that gives good impact. At first this should be done with a dulled practice knife, but as a student improves he should move on to the real weapons. Targets such as a pugil post, a wall mounted tire and a hanging cross will do much to develop a good grip as well as excellent targeting and range awareness. The hanging cross is especially good because it bounces around and is unpredictable. This makes for some fun and challenging training.

When it comes to live steel cutting I prefer to use a stick wrapped in cardboard and have a training partner move it around while I cut it. This makes an excellent target because it is mobile and unpredictable. Use a long stick or staff so there is no chance of hitting your partner's hands when he is holding the target. This helps a student learn how to cut deeply.

The traditional Filipino arts offer lots of excellent flow drills and skill building sets that are the true basis of our knife training. There are many give and take type drills in the Filipino systems that develop excellent skills. We use the "dangerous play" drills



Jon Reed demonstrates the same type of technique except he comes underneath the arm forcing the blade against the wrists of his opponent.



Again from the tie up position Jon Reed demonstrates one of the simplest counters to being grabbed.



Simply switch hands.

from Ikatán Kali, the inside fighting drill from Matí Arnis, the Retiradas from Ilustrísimo Kali and five angle attack and defense as the basis of much of our knife training. Of course Hubad and Cadena de Mano drills are also a big part of our knife training.

However the bulk of our knife training is basically simple sparring. That is simply because knife sparring is simply a lot of fun and it develops quick reaction time, range awareness and quick footwork.

While sparring is very important: it is equally important to keep it realistic. I want students to aim for causing lots of damage to an opponent while minimizing his own damage. While much of our sparring is spent at largo range sniping each other's hand, legs and bodies, I also emphasize taking control of an opponent's weapon while you stab multiple times. This requires us to be very practiced at trapping and limb control. We spend a lot of time developing live hand skills.

If sparring is done right it will build mechanics for combat and develop a great sense of timing. However I do not want students to develop a sparring mentality by always training as if an opponent will be armed with matching weapons. I enjoy developing training drills to face opponents armed with larger weapons, multiple opponents and even unarmed opponents. (Yes knife against an unarmed attacker, while this would not be reasonable force, sparring this way is excellent for the unarmed party to see how precarious it is to fight against a knife-wielding attacker). It is important to drill in such a way that you will be prepared to react instinctively to any situation.

I really have a hard time separating stick, knife and empty hand training. All Filipino martial arts training in my opinion leads to transferable skills in knife, stick and empty hands. I try to teach my students not to become fixated on what a drill looks like on the surface. I try to encourage them to see what the underlying concept to a technique or drill is. This way they are simply learning how to fight, not some specific type of fighting skill.

However a student still needs to become confident with his weapon. Therefore it is important that a student use a training blade that closely matches the knife he carries. One danger of training with the wrong equipment is if an arnisador trains with a 7-inch training blade and carries a 3-inch knife his range will be off by 4-inches when it comes to cutting.

One of the most important lessons I try to impart to my students is that strategy is the most important element of self-defense. Good strategy can overcome stronger and faster opponents. With good strategy you can take away any advantage opponents might have, even superior numbers and better weapons. This has been proven over and over again in battlefields all over the world.

With this in mind my students should be prepared to use dishonesty, subterfuge and feigning co-operation in a conflict where it is appropriate. There is no honor when it comes to survival, just doing what it takes to come out alive. Knife fighters need to think with a guerilla fighter's mindset. In my mind, training with the blade is not about the field of honor; it is about self-protection and survival.



Guro Joel Huncar doing some machete training with Dennis Eisenhauer.
A true friend, comrade in arms and partner. Dennis will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Huncar Applied Natural Defense Systems

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DeCuerdas-Diestro Fighting Systems

By Bee Landreum



Sometimes in the world of martial arts you hear about a system, or person with outstanding skills that has been hiding in the shadows – only to be discovered at the right moment, Grandmaster Arthur Gonzalez is such a person and Decuerdas-Diestro is such an art. Grandmaster Gonzalez was taught by the late Great DeCuerdas Grandmaster Gilbert Tenio and Chief Master Instructor Juan Eliab.

On July 18th 1986 Grandmaster Gonzalez was given his Senior Master's degree from his instructors, after the passing of both Grandmaster Tenio and Master Eliab. His son Richard Tenio at the request of his father headed the system. Grandmaster Richard Tenio retired in 2003 and handed the system over to

the next highest-ranking student, Mr. Arthur Gonzalez. He received the title of grandmaster and leadership of the system on July 18th 2003.

DeCuerdas is a unique system from the island of Bohol, Philippines.
DeCuerdas is a system that primarily teaches by Concepts and Principals.

The thought was if you were given 70 soldiers to teach in a period of one month.

What would you teach them?

What if you had only two weeks?

What if you had only one week?

And at the end of that time, they were going to war. If they died it was your responsibility.

This idea changes EVERYTHING! How can you teach a lifetime in one week!

DeCuerdas has 19 systems combined together and funneled into 6 key words (or sub-systems).

- 1.Striking
- 2.Locking
- 3.Throwing
- 4.Grappling
- 5.Choking
6. Sweeping

These keys can be deployed by weapon or empty hand. Plus, assist by minor key words.



Practitioners of DeCuerdas are taught Hilot (a Filipino Healing Art) in order to better understand the anatomy of the body and its relationship to movement and structure. DeCuerdas practitioners are taught to attack muscles, joints, and vital organs and that you cannot touch one without affecting the other.

The system also works on Weapon Rhythms and Beats – 0, 1, 2, and 3.

0 - Total evasion and hit.

1 - Hand parry and hit.

2 - One had parries and the other hits at the same time.

3 - Universal time- tie and untie – parry, grab and hit, if they block you tie and hit. If they tie you, untie and hit.

The following is an outline of some of Grandmaster Gonzalez's curriculum Escala Teaching Method.

1 - First step you will learn is a concept.

- 2 - Second step you will learn is the principle skill that relates to that concept.
- 3 - Third step, you will practice the mechanics of the skill.
- 4 - Fourth step you will learn to train in true time.
- 5 - Fifth step you train under duress and enter the adrenaline state mode.



Escala Process

- We teach the top half (upper body) in phase one then the bottom half (foot work) in phase two.
- We train with weapons to understand the empty hand concept of defense. What are important are the body mechanics and the weapon works. We teach a response to a particular attack. The response has the purpose of creating a flow of sensitivity and angulations.
- We will teach the same concept in the six sides of standing, kneeling and prone positions.
- We teach the concept in single and multiple opponent scenarios'.
- We change the response slightly to match the angle or

intensity of attack.

Escala Adrenaline State Training

- Our goal is to condition your subconscious with clear and easy responses.
- We believe in keeping it simple by learning one response and changing the attack scenarios.
- We condition the brain by repeated encounters and increasing stressful circumstances.
- We adjust the reaction to the adrenaline state during a real sparring session.
- You reflect and receive this information and incorporate it into muscle memory.

Escala Keep It Simple Rules

Learn it - Drill it – Do it.

Re-learn it - Re-drill it – Re-do it.

Understand it- Drill it – Move on!

These are just a few principles used in the DeCuerdas - Diestro fighting system. Grandmaster Gonzalez teaches civilian, military and police. His teaching style, personality and skill are unparalleled. His Knife and hand techniques are easy to learn and effective. We are lucky to have such a teacher who is willing and capable of sharing so much.



Grandmaster Gonzalez is available for worldwide seminars and classes.

Please, feel free to contact him - **Click Here** or cell phone - (209) 481-1904

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Espada y Daga Techniques of



San Miguel Eskrima

and



Pekiti Tirsia Kali

By Stephen Lamade and Wes Tasker

Wes Tasker and I met a couple of years ago at Tuhon William McGrath's monthly seminars on Pekiti Tirsia Kali in Fishkill, New York. I had trained in Pekiti Tirsia briefly in the early '90's before I started to learn San Miguel Eskrima from Tom Bisio, and I was curious to learn more about Pekiti Tirsia's espada y daga system; Wes is a long-time student and teacher of Pekiti Tirsia Kali under Tuhon McGrath. As Wes and I started to train together we both noticed that although both Pekiti Tirsia Kali and San Miguel Eskrima use what appear to be different ranges, techniques, footwork, and body mechanics, they are often both trying to accomplish the same goals with different weapons. We have concluded that, generally and for the most part, the weapon defines the stylistic characteristics of a weapons-based martial arts system. One does not usually, for example, use largo mano techniques with a short weapon and corto mano techniques with a long weapon - although obviously there can be exceptions to the rule, such as using the puno with a longer weapon and attacking the limbs at largo range with a shorter weapon. In general though, a weapons-based martial art takes advantage of the unique characteristics of the weapons that are specific to the art. In this article, Wes and I are going to describe how the daga in each of our respective martial arts is used to monitor and control the opponent's weapons.

Consider how the daga is used in San Miguel Eskrima's "Counter to Angle 1." After parrying a horizontal strike with the stick and monitoring the opponent's stick with a long, double-edge daga, you are now free to attack the opponent's high line with your stick (the stick may continue all the way to the ground as it covers the opponent's torso and daga hand). As you return your stick to the original parrying position to monitor your opponent's stick, you are now free to thrust with the daga to the opponent's torso. But what if you have not hurt your opponent and he counter-thrusts at the same moment? You may have accomplished your goal but so has he - I like to call this "mutual death" when I teach Counters to students. In other words, a committed attack with the daga to the torso should occur after the way has been cleared with the longer and heavier stick (considered

a surrogate for a bladed weapon such as a pinute) and the opponent has been rendered helpless - but this has not yet happened if the opponent is able to counter-thrust. San Miguel Eskrima recognizes this contingency (actually, a mistake on your part) and teaches a re-counter to your opponent's counter.

As soon as he counter-thrusts you take a small step with your left foot and right foot laterally to your right that gets you slightly off-line of his attack. You also move your daga laterally to your right to attack his forearm with the tip or edge of your daga, and your daga ends up on the outside of your opponent's forearm. Since you now have contact with his forearm with your forearm, you are able to monitor his daga and react appropriately to his subsequent movements.

This is a perfect example of a *largo mano* technique that takes advantage of the point and edge characteristics of a long, double-edge daga. Important factors to success with this technique are that movements with the daga remain small, precise, and linear, and there is no attempt to overpower the opponent with arm and shoulder strength. Furthermore, the daga does not withdraw but remains extended as subtle forward pressure is generated with the legs and waist, and structural integrity is maintained with the upper body to ensure that the daga's position does not collapse. When it is used in this manner, the daga functions as a sort of antenna that monitors, checks, controls the opponent's weapons. It can also pick away at the hands, wrists, and forearms until the opponent finds it difficult to use his weapons effectively.

In this respect, some have suggested that Momoy Canete may have reinterpreted the *tapi-tapi* that he learned from the Saavedras to allow a subtle yet more aggressive role for the daga in San Miguel Eskrima. The daga techniques that share the characteristics described above occur in the "Counters to the 12 Angles of Attack," "Espada y Daga," and "Palusot" drills of San Miguel Eskrima. As these drills can be also be done effectively and appropriately with such Western weapons as rapier and daga and sabre (and daga), they may thus reflect the influence of European sword upon San Miguel Eskrima.



The attacker has stepped forward with a palm-down thrust but is met by a palm-down thrust by the opponent.



The attacker keeps his arm extended and turns his waist as he converts to a palm-up thrust over under the opponent's daga arm and steps forward to drive the thrust home.

San Miguel Eskrima - Stephen Lamade

Sequence 1



The attacker (left) has thrust but so has the opponent (right). The attacker moves his daga over to cut his opponent on his forearm as he starts to move forward and laterally to the right.



Contact with the opponent's daga arm is maintained by the extended daga arm as the attacker continues to move forward and laterally to the right and slashes down and across the opponent's torso with the stick (or sword).



Having finished his downward cut with the stick, the attacker is free to attack again with the stick. Contact with the opponent's daga arm is maintained by the extended daga arm.



The attacker continues to maintain contact with the opponent's daga arm as he cuts again to the torso with his stick (not shown.) The attacker could thrust with the daga but as a safety measure he brings his puno up and over his opponent's daga arm just above his elbow to check and collapse the arm.



The daga is now free to thrust to the opponent's throat. The half-diamond or "Zig-Zag" footwork shown in Pictures 1-5 is a characteristic pattern of San Miguel Eskrima.



An alternative finish is to place the stick just above the opponent's elbow to check the arm and turn his body. The daga is now free to thrust to the opponent's lung or armpit.

Sequence 2



The attacker has stepped forward with a palm-up thrust but is met by a palm-up thrust by the opponent.



The attacker keeps his arm extended and turns his waist as he converts to a palm-down thrust under the opponent's daga arm.



The attacker steps forward to drive the thrust home...



...and finishes in an extended position. Notice how by stepping back in form the opponent has a chance to recover.

Sequence 3



The attacker has stepped forward with a palm-down thrust but is met by a palm-down thrust by the opponent.



Sensing that he will not be able to convert to a palm up thrust (or that the opponent will successfully counter him) he decides to retreat by stepping



He whips his head around and steps behind his left foot with his right foot (San Miguel Step). Notice that he “retreats behind his weapon” by cutting with a flywheel...

away from the opponent with his left foot.



...and a media (half-strike) at largo range.

Pekiti Tirsia’s use of a smaller daga (around 8 to 9 inches) in espada y daga is indicative of its close range strategies and tactics. A blade this small is not able to use slashing to a great degree so the offensive use of the blade is limited to thrusts – usually straight, forehand, and back hand. Both San Miguel and Pekiti Tirsia will use the daga as a finish, but even here the strategies are very different. In San Miguel, a finish with the dagger is only used at the very end when “the coast is clear” so to speak, and the opponent is disabled enough for its safe use. Pekiti Tirsia will often use the dagger in the beginning, middle, and end of a technique to bait, attack, and move between ranges etc. Again, these strategies are based on range preference and the overarching strengths of the tools used - Pekiti Tirsia using a smaller dagger and a smaller sword (ginunting) with San Miguel using a 12” dagger and larger sword (espada or pinute).

Another difference between San Miguel and Pekiti Tirsia’s daga use is that the daga in Pekiti Tirsia is never used to monitor the opponent’s stick. Rather it is used almost as one would use their open hand to grab and control, but with the edge taking away the opponent’s function of that hand. When held in sak-sak (hammer grip) the edge is facing towards the user. The edge is also in when held in pakal (reverse grip). In keeping with Pekiti Tirsia’s name (close-thirds) the daga is used to both “clip” an opponent’s daga or stick arm, and of course to finish techniques at close range.

The sak-sak “clip” is used to a great extent in the espada y daga version of the Pekiti Tirsia drill “Dakup Y Puno” (tapping on 5-8-9). The opponent initiates a #5 thrust. The defender sidesteps and receives the attack with a point down stick deflection. The daga is brought under the deflection, and by having the thumb parallel to the blade; the defender clips the opponent’s wrist between the sharp edge of the blade and the thumb. The stick can then be brought down in a vertical strike to the opponent’s head, and then continues on to hit the opponent’s clipped arm down causing a pull cut across the wrist. This then opens the opponent up to further offensive measures. The sak-sak clip can be used to great effect on the opponent’s daga hand as well, often used to grab the wrist in

blade reversals and/or disarms. The grab is especially effective as it is done with the edge of the knife against the inside of the opponent's wrist.

Steve Lamade and I, when we started training together, were both struck by how Pekiti Tirsia and San Miguel sought the same goals in their espada y daga, but went about it with very different means. Looking further into their strategies and mechanics we saw that the factors that made them different were more due to weapon type, which dictated the actual strategies. As an experiment we performed a San Miguel drill with Pekiti Tirsia weapons (ginunting and a shorter daga), and then a Pekiti Tirsia drill with San Miguel weapons (a training rapier and a larger training dagger with a bell guard). The results were very interesting, as both drills completely fell apart and just did not work.

The Pekiti Tirsia weaponry was unable to support the largo type monitors and checks inherent in the San Miguel drill, and the San Miguel weaponry rendered the Pekiti Tirsia close-range strategies untenable at best. In the case of these two arts' approach to espada y daga, it is not a matter of which is better, but more of an exploration as to why they have the strategies they have. In exploring these things, we both have come away with a deeper understanding and appreciation of both arts.

Pekiti Tirsia Kali - Wes Tasker



The attacker has started with a #5 thrust which the defender has side stepped and deflected.



Reaching under the stick, the defender clips the attacker's wrist between the sharp part of his blade and his thumb.



While maintaining the clip, the defender strikes the attacker with a vertical, which also covers the centerline and protects against any attacks from the attacker's left hand.



The vertical travels down where the puno then hits the attackers arm down, causing a pull cut across his wrist.



A #2 backhand diagonal is met with a #2 umbrella and a left hand tap



The defender's left hand taps the attackers arm down, which opens the line for a horizontal backhand stick strike to the head.



The left hand continues to bring the attacker's arm around until the edge of the knife is pulling against the inside of their wrist, as the defender's stick chambers for a vertical.



The attacker stabs with a tight #9 thrust to the head which the defender side steps and blocks down with their puno as they hit the head with a simultaneous #1 diagonal forehand.



The defender then clips the attacker's left wrist between the sharp edge of the blade and his thumb, and stabilizes the wrist on his right elbow.



Pulling against the wrist the defender executes a blade reversal.



A close-up of the blade reversal.



A backhand pakal thrust is met with a vertical stick block as the defender steps back.



The defender then steps forward and clips the opponent's wrist with his own blade held in pakal, braced against his stick for a pressure cut/disarm.



A #1 diagonal forehand is met with a #1 strike, a break-out, and a #2 backhand follow-up.





The defender then taps the attacker's right arm down with his blade.



Once the opponent's stick arm reaches center, the defender's punyo bolsters the other side of the wrist, as the blade is pulled up for a pressure cut/disarm.

Promotional Note: A 2-DVD set that compares and contrasts the espada y daga techniques of Pekiti Tirsia Kali and San Miguel Eskrima (and which contains video of the techniques described above) has been produced and will be available in a couple of months. The DVD's are of "seminar quality" but have been well edited and contain almost three hours of information about Pekiti Tirsia Kali and San Miguel Eskrima. Cost will be \$35 for the set plus \$5 S/H.

A video clip from the DVD set is available: ([Click Here](#))

Further information about Pekiti Tirsia Kali and San Miguel Eskrima is available at the following websites:

Pekiti Tirsia Kali ([Click Here](#))

San Miguel Eskrima ([Click Here](#))

If you wish to be placed on a mailing list and notified when the DVD set is available, please contact:

Steve Lamade - [Click Here](#)

Wes Tasker - [Click Here](#)

Sonny Umpad - Visayan Corto Kadena

He has avoided Black Belt, Inside Kung-Fu, and others for years

By Thomas Nilsson

From: Fighter Magazine

Some characteristics of Sonny Umpad's approach are its deception, speed and short-range power. It is effective at long, medium and short ranges. A key principle is economy of motion. This means that no motions are wasted; there is no "wind up" to generate power.

These strikes are faster and more precise, and Sonny has created five basic striking methods to achieve his goal of combat effectiveness.

Both the body and weapon are in continuous motion. This makes the fighter a more difficult target to hit and makes his offense more deceptive. Defense and offense are blended together so the fighter is always protected. "Sloppy" strikes, which leave the practitioner wide open, are not acceptable. Every strike develops tremendous power due to Sonny's innovations. The accurate, astute strikes must hit hard enough to disarm or stop the opponent if necessary. The Visayan Corto Kadena is an endless process of self-development and cultivation.



Sonny Umpad is probably unknown to most martial artist even though we are talking about a living legend. A man of few words, reserved, and very humble. He avoids the media, doesn't give interviews, and is happiest when he gets to train and develop new techniques in solitude. Umpad has few, if any, superiors in the world when it comes to the Filipino martial arts. His incredible speed is already legendary and so is his inventiveness - an inventiveness that resulted in corto cadena, a deadly variant of

the Filipino martial arts.

Meet for the first time ever the legendary Sonny Umpad in a candid interview. Sonny Umpad - the name and his reputation has haunted and enticed me for years but all research has given the same result: Sonny doesn't give interviews and very few has been lucky enough to train with him.

The first time I managed to get any information about the man behind the legend - and see him in action, even if it was only on video - was in Seattle several years ago. Our mutual friend Jesse Glover met Sonny during a seminar that Glover did at Wally Jay's school and the two immediately became friends. Jesse put in a videotape and I was almost shocked from what I saw - Sonny demonstrated several classical, and modified, Filipino stick and knife techniques with an amazing clinical perfection and at an incredible speed. I don't think I have ever seen anything like it.

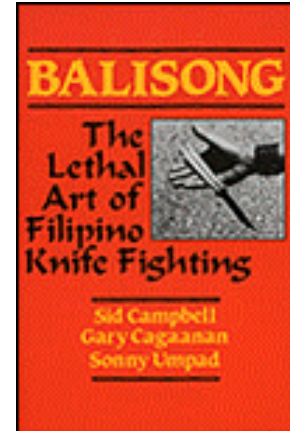
I had never thought any human could move that fast. Sonny's feet seemed to hover above the floor and his hands moved out from the body with the power of highly tuned reaper, and so fast that it was impossible with the naked eye to see what was happening. For an opponent it must be like facing a ghost. It was even more exciting to see it in person a few years later. I still couldn't see his movements, only feel the gust of wind. Bruce Lee was famous for his so-called "non-telegraphing" movements - the ability to deliver a strike or a technique without the eyes or body revealing the attack or its intended target - and if there were ever any doubt that the people describing Lee's incredible quickness were speaking the truth, this doubt is now definitely gone. Though, I can't imagine anyone that can move faster than Sonny Umpad!

I first met Sonny in San Francisco in 1997. Jesse Glover introduced me during a dinner in Chinatown and we talked a little, but nothing turned out from it. We met again one year later in Los Angeles. Jesse was there, and so was Sonny's good friend, student, and training partner Gary Cagaanan who was one of Bruce Lee's students in Oakland in

the 1960s. Together with Sid Campbell they also wrote the book "Balisong - The Lethal Art of Filipino Knife Fighting" (Paladin Press, 1996).

The interview took place at Holiday Inn in Torrance a few miles south of Los Angeles. Late one evening, after having loaded up on ice-cold coke from a vending machine in the corridor, we settle down in his room. He is strangely enough a chain smoker and he apologizes for the smoke before he opens the window. The night is cool and a cool wind makes the smoke drift out of the room in this late hour.

Sonny answers my questions thoughtfully and concisely in the beginning, but he opens up more as the interview progresses. The interview becomes a journey into an incredible life. Time flies and it's after 5 in the morning when I returned to my room.



Interview

It was during a visit to your home in the San Francisco Bay area that Jesse (Glover) talked you into giving your first seminar and this was only a few years ago?

- Yes, he came down before he was doing a seminar to see how I was doing. We ended up talking to 4 in the morning. He convinced me to get with him and teach, but I said that I didn't know how to do it. "I have never given a seminar before." "That's no problem," replied Jesse. "Just show the students in the same way as you showed me, there is no difference."

We talked earlier about how hard it is to teach someone how to defend against a knife attack...

- It's very hard, especially since you can't use a real knife. The drills will therefore not be really realistic. There is also another problem. I wouldn't recommend anyone to even try to go for the "knife hand" - a person who really knows how to use a knife is almost impossible to disarm or defend against. You simply won't have the time, especially when he delivers at least 5-7 attacks in a single movement. That's how quick it is. A knife expert is lucky if he can disarm an opponent like that and only sustain 3 cuts. It's impossible to walk away completely unharmed from a knife attack if the opponent knows what he is doing.

Can you tell something about your background? Do you remember the first time you experienced the Filipino martial arts for real?

- I was just a little boy when I one day saw an older Escrimador defeated a considerably younger, faster and stronger opponent in a fight in the jungle. It made a very strong impression on me.

I was born and raised and started practicing Escrima in a small town by the name of Bogoto in the Philippines. When I was 11-12 years old we moved to Cebu City, which was and is a very hard city. There I continued to practice and research Escrima, but I didn't belong to any particular school or group. I lived on the streets and fought, sometimes for my life. Life was very hard. I practiced and learned a lot from my friends and from my best friend's grandfather.

Escrima can usually be traced far back in most families' in the Philippines...

- I didn't even know it in the beginning but when I started researching I discovered that my grandfather was said to be one of the most feared in the Bogo area. I never met him and my father never told me anything about him. I never even knew what his name was. In my family we would never talk about anyone who practiced Escrima. I hope that I one day will get to know more about my grandfather, about who he was and what he did....

It's usually impossible to get an Escrimador of the old school to tell what his style called or get him to teach you...



- It's true. It's not what someone talks about. It was only when one sparred together that one would get some type of instruction. Today you would probably call it a "duel." At that time, you would never hold back, all strikes were intended to hit, and people were occasionally knocked out. A class was like real combat. All the instruction was more or less secret, especially in Bogo. You kept your style within the family and it was almost impossible for an outsider to gain entrance to the inner circle. Every family

was very secretive about their style. It was, after all, a matter of their survival.

I assume that there were many challenges and street fights when you grew up?

- We were like most kids there. I clashed and we fought. It didn't take very much to escalate a conflict. One time I was challenged by a kid my age and after I defeated him his older brother suddenly showed up and wanted to take his place. I was barely able to hold my stick by then so I had to run with the whole gang after me.

When you first started learning Escrima you started out learning the sticks and did not get to the knife until after a long time....

- Yes, a knife fight is almost always a matter of life and death. There are instances where it can be enough to show what you can do with a knife - knife manipulations - to get an opponent to back down. To make him see that you master the art of the knife. This has happened to me many times and the opponent has backed down.

Sonny got the opportunity, during the years in Cebu City, to sharpen his techniques under Masters of Doce Pares and Balintawak. The knife arts have been developed over the course of 400 years in the Philippines and many techniques have been closely guarded family secrets for almost as long - a tradition that went from generation to generation. It's really only in the later years that Filipino Escrimadores that have immigrated to the USA have begun sharing these ancient traditions.

You have over the years been further developing your knowledge of Escrima, Kali, and Arnis and created something you call "corto cadena." Can you explain what this entails?

- A knife fighter isn't considered complete without a sound philosophical base. The Balisong knife carries a long tradition that is based on that it carries the triangular forces -

a force that is also called gunans. A Filipino martial artist is convinced that these triangular forces influence the practitioner's mental, physical, and spiritual actions with the knife. In short, the use of a blade, a balisong blade, is comparable to a religious act. These three forces, according to an ancient Vedic philosophy, manifest the source of creativity, movements, and action - all of which are symbols of the sacred qualities that are embodied in the art of studying, practicing, and applying the just balisong knife. There is a group of knife fighters called the Visayan. They are exceptionally skilled but still relatively anonymous because their early spiritual training taught respect and humility towards the art and the knowledge to extinguish (an opponent's) life. This is a humility that many mistake as weakness. But that is a deadly illusion and those who have made this mistake have met their maker too fast and too early.

The knife is not introduced to late in the training...

- Not until the person is considered to fully master the stick techniques will he be allowed to learn the knife. Longer sticks and swords have a longer range and more power than a small weapon like the knife. The old Visayan masters feel that a weapon like a knife with its short range is not sufficiently effective if the student has not been properly trained. The Visayan style is unique and is very different from other Filipino stick and knife styles. This is mainly because the style is much more adaptable to the individual.



Corto cadena is the fifth and last step in the Visayan knife curriculum. Just a few, carefully selected individuals get access to these techniques. Corto cadena means something like "short, on the inside, chain, or an unbroken series of movements" (corto) and "movements" (cadena). In short, it is usually considered to be a system that prefers "in-close combat." The system is different from other similar knife styles. It is not until the hands, arms, body and weapon have become "one" and the person is fully synchronized that one is "finished" - maximal speed makes all the techniques flow together into a single quick movement, which is impossible for the opponent to follow with the naked eye. The techniques follow each other in a long chain and it doesn't matter whether the practitioner makes contact with the opponent - the chain remains unbroken.

It is safe to say that you have developed your own style?

- Yes, I have studied Arnis, Escrima, and Kali since I was a child and have continued to experiment with my own experiences. I didn't even know that I had created a new system until someone pointed it out for me.

Now you are living outside San Francisco. When and why did you move to the United States?

- It was 1969. I was an American citizen since birth because my father was an American and was working in the American Navy. When I turned 18 I was forced to move here otherwise I would have lost my American citizenship. I traveled alone but my brother arrived not long after. My mother was ill and couldn't go and my father died. The martial

arts were becoming popular at that time, mainly due to Bruce Lee. But I didn't like going to the movies back home so I didn't even know whom he was when I came to San Francisco. My main interest, besides Escrima, was music. I played in a band as a bass player but I was never a professional musician. It was just something that most high school kids did.

When did you begin teaching the Filipino martial arts?

- It took a long time. I never planned to dedicate myself to Escrima fulltime. I got married; we got two children, Brian and Jackie. I started teaching in 1976 and it was entirely in private like now. I really dislike teaching. I don't like standing up and talk in front of people. It's probably what you would call stage fright. Jesse has been helping me getting more used to it over the year. It's different now. Now I feel a certain satisfaction from seeing how people I teach develop and find their own way. I'm just a guide helping my students on the way. They are individuals and must find their own way. I give them the material and then they teach themselves. But there was a time when I stopped doing the martial arts for a fairly long time.

What happened? What made you to take up Escrima again?

-The turning point was after the divorce with my wife. I felt lost, angry, and frustrated and needed something to get me back on my feet again. I needed something to focus my thoughts and emotions on so I started training again. At that point I had a few students I could throw ideas at, and spar against. I started experimenting and slowly but surely did the pieces fall into place.

I have on several occasions heard from people that have trained with Sonny say that he is impossible to keep up with, even when he is teaching. This because his teaching is part of a long creative process - in short, Sonny continues to develop new variations of techniques whether he is training at home by himself or teaching students at a seminar. He often doesn't remember how he did a certain technique, parry, or attack because he is acting on pure instinct - Sonny doesn't think about techniques, everything is ingrained in the nervous system and new variations of old techniques comes out automatically almost on reflex. Like a subconscious signal. He reads you immediately and acts long before you yourself know what you where thinking.

This is what makes Sonny Umpad so unique - and so frightening!

Your experimentation is purely instinctive. Do you always remember how you did certain techniques?

- I didn't in the beginning but now I can do the same variation of a particular technique two or more times in a row if I should suddenly come up with something new. It's a physical reaction and I have the habit, or rather the bad habit of teaching things too fast. Many of my students are complaining and I'm trying to change but isn't easy. I can't really control the process. As soon as I pick up a knife or a stick things start to happen.

Have you done any research into the philosophical aspects of Escrima?

- That is a good question. I have, after all, never studied martial arts in any school so my experiences is mainly based on what I have picked up on the streets. You can say that I

have my own philosophy. I have found the answer to many of my questions through my martial arts.

Presently you have a small group of students that come to your house for private training.

- That's right and I have found an arrangement that I'm happy with. It feels, from a martial arts point of view, like I have found the answers to many of my questions in private. I don't claim to have the answers to everything but I feel content with the knowledge and experiences that I now possess. I struggled and searched and finally succeeded to get so far that I touched onto "the truth." But I do not aim to reach "the top," I'm happier "down here". There is nothing to aim for if you reach that point. There would be nothing more to search for and I don't want to live like that.

How many students do you have today?

- 8 to 10. I usually film them so that we can look at the tapes together and study their movements. Sometimes they will get a tape with them home so that they can practice on their own. It has turned out to be very effective.

You have never really given any interviews before. Why is that?

- There was an article written about me a while ago but I didn't know until one of my students told me. I prefer being anonymous and doing my own thing. I'm always surprised when people talk about me, know who I am, and even come over to say hello. It's always nice when that happens so publicity can be both good and bad.

How much time do you put down on your own training?

- All my time goes into training, except for when I'm teaching my students.

The FMA Digest wants to thank Cris Suboreau for writing this article, and Pierre Hartmann for permission to include it in this Special Edition.

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What MantasDaga Is...

MantasDaga (*Man'Tas Dag'a*) - a ferocious knife; violently cruel in nature; uncontrolled and intensely eager; very wild and disastrous, causing great harm, damage, grief.



Mantas (*Man'tas*) - The word Mantas was used during the tribal war of the 6th-12th century (Sri-Visayan and Madjaphahit era) this is a Pre-Visayan term applied to the fearless chieftain and to the furious blade warrior of the clan.

Mantas -(*Mantas*) "People who think of the topmost point of everything". "A man with an extreme survival prowess". "One who posses the greatest degree of ingenuity".

Tas (*Ta'as*) - a Visayan term for height.

Daga (*daga*) - (dagger) "A short weapon with a sharp point used for stabbing.



MantasDaga's History

The MantasDaga's of the Philippines are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the Filipino people. They are the products of a highly developed civilization, which flourished long before the arrival of the West upon its shores, and of centuries of warfare against a variety of oppressors. Both these factors are responsible for the highly technical and pragmatic outlook of the Filipino martial arts.

The Maharlikas was the original name of the Philippines before the coming of the Portuguese and Spanish in the 15th and 16th centuries. The general consensus among scholars is that the first settlers in the Philippines were the Negritos of prehistory. It is theorized that these small dark-skinned people traveled by land from Central Asia, perhaps via an ancient land bridge. They brought with them the short bow and later developed the long bow.

This process was followed by a series of Malay migrations from what is today known as Southeast Asia and the Indonesian Archipelago. The first of these began before the birth of Christ. These taller seafaring people brought with them the first bladed weapons as what we called the MantasDaga's or the Kalis.

In the 5th and 6th centuries in Indonesia and Malaysia a huge empire was formed due to the migration of the Hindu tribes of India to Sumatra and Java. The Srividjayan Empire, as it came to be known, eventually spread as far as the Philippines. Their martial arts skills, advanced weaponry, and superior organization made it possible for them to conquer the earlier settlers. Some fled to distant islands, others stayed and the two cultures merged. The Srividjayans were the ancestors of the Tagalogs, Ilocanos, Pampangos, Visayans, and Bicolanos. The area of the Central Philippines where these people first landed is today known as the Visayan region. It is thought by many Filipinos that the island of Panay, the most western part of the Visayan Islands, was the birthplace of this MantasDaga's or Kalis— as the Filipino martial arts were known at that time. The Srividjayans brought the influence of Hindu and Indonesian religion, philosophy, arts, and combative forms to the Philippines and this is Kali (Arnis to some), Silat and MantasDaga.

How it was Re-Organized

It was a rainy season of 1999 and an on the spot gathering of the frustrated, depressed, and oppressed individuals in one of the coffee hang- out in the city of Bacolod. Most are members of the prominent fraternity and street gangs that have been involved in most of the gang wars, chaos, and disturbances around the city.

Samuel Ibe being in the Martial Arts for a long time, heard the discussion of the group on how to take revenge for there 2 injured brothers and immediately joined the topic and give some suggestions on how to make it. Samuel had found out that we all have the same thinking, philosophy and mentality and that is survival! But the top most we all have in common is this KILLER MENTALITY.

The group had attentively focused about the topic that Samuel feed them and brilliantly amazed on what he was talking about and decided to make him as there Combat Adviser. Now, it came to Samuel's knowledge, that the group was mostly abandoned by their individual parent and guardians. Samuel Ibe decided to adopt the group and imposed on them the Martial Art discipline and on how to survive at all cost.

Being a Martial Artist, Samuel knew that he had an obligation to teach and guide these individuals to get on the right track and never again be involved in any fight without a cause, which to this day they have followed.

Samuel Ibe introduced them to the importance of the long lost culture of the Filipino Fighting Arts, but most of them were already familiar in the use of edged weapon as it is there immediate equalizer during the street gang fights. It was agreed by all to call themselves MAPINTAS, which later became a registered name as the **MANTASDAGA** base on the original Pre-Visayan term for PINTAS. The group started with 9 individuals. From then on, it has expanded and has gained respect from the different Martial Arts Organizations.



The main reason of MantasDaga existence is to promote the street combat realism using the knife or any edged weapon for survival and to share the technology to those who have the hunger for knowledge.

This group is now actively training individuals and selected Military camps from different parts of the globe without asking for any training fee or seminar fee. MantasDaga's purpose is to promote friendship, brotherhood and camaraderie and not to merchandized the Filipino Culture.

Contact Samuel Ibe: dmantasdaga@yahoo.com

Carlito Bonjoc Mata Sa Bagyo

Written by Bee Landrum



Carlito Bonjoc Jr. is a very unassuming individual, always ready with a good word and a smile. Carlito was born with Spina Bifida and later lost his right leg. He walks on crutches or rides a wheelchair. But, he is one of the most knowledgeable people in the Filipino martial arts community. The following is a sample of his knowledge.

We use concepts from three styles of Filipino Escrima. The first style is Talawan, favorable for it's distance and evasion, second Serrada for the entry. Lastly, we use Cadiz Lapu-Lapu for close and finishing range.

First of all, I would like to stress, one should always avoid confrontation, especially if the opponent is wielding a weapon. Verbal Escrima can go a long way. I feel that one of the most important things to consider when defending against the knife is - Position, Distance, Timing and footwork are key to controlling the fight. When you first sense danger- you must always look for an exit. You must try to avoid being in a position where there is nowhere to run. If you find yourself in a position that you must fight and an attacker is coming at you, one must recognize that an aggressor has a tempo of attack. Assess the situation, is he coming fast or slow. Based on an attackers pace you can place yourself in a better position for success. If your opponent's attack is slower or more cautious, then there are more options for controlling the outcome of the fight. If the attacker is faster and more skilled, then you may only be able to focus on blocking until a more decisive option presents itself.

Next, proper footwork and exact timing must be used to either escape or engage. If one chooses to escape the rest is easy - Run, like hell after successfully maneuvering. But, if you are unable to escape and your attacker's timing triggers an engagement reaction, there must be no hesitation. You must be swift and precise. Attempt to recognize targets of destruction as they present themselves at long range, these usually become available as your opponent thrusts and slices at you. At medium to closer range, the closer you are to your attacker, the more target area becomes available. Some advantageous targets are the lungs, liver, kidneys, throat and heart to name a few. Your intention should never be to kill your attacker, but to stop the attack. Your job is to preserve your life; therefore you must do whatever is necessary to stop the attack. Once the aggression stops and he is no longer a threat, then you must stop. The fight is over.

One may have noticed that the lungs were listed first. This is because a knife fighter/assassin I met in Cebu in the Philippines stated that this was his favorite target. If you "Can't breath, [you] can't fight." Once a sharp object is inserted into the lung, the trauma causes it to collapse. This results in a "controlled" situation. This also holds true if one does not wish to cause such distress to the vital organs of their adversary. A knife fighter does not have to focus on the "center mass" to end a conflict. Other accessible targets of opportunity include, joint areas, limbs and muscles. As we discussed in the

beginning of this article, I cannot stress enough the importance of conflict avoidance. In our situation as martial artists, it is important to realize that an encounter can quickly degenerate into a life or death situation. Once you have taken a life there is no way to give it back. This is why a peaceful solution should always be sought after.

I should say that in order to use the theories mentioned here successfully and safely. One has to have a lot of practice. And then have more practice. Then don't forget to practice, practice!



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Kali Sikaran - Blades and Empty Hands

By Johan Skålberg



Punong Guro
Johan Skålberg

The Martial Art of **KALI SIKARAN** has its roots first and foremost in the Philippines but the style is also heavily influenced by arts from other South East Asian countries. Punong Guro Jeff Espinous and Punong Guro Johan Skålberg are responsible for the development of Kali Sikaran and their ambition is to create an open and dynamic style that is suitable for self-defense, sports and a style that is giving an authentic representation of the Arts and History of the Philippines.

Kali Sikaran is a proud member and one of the principle styles of the **IKAEF**, the International Kali Arnis Eskrima Federation. IKAEF includes several FMA styles Arnis, Kombatán, Kali and

Eskrima, Silat to mention a few. The idea of creating the IKAEF as an organisation that promotes and spread the FMA started 15 years ago. IKAEF has today members, clubs, and organizations in over 25 countries. IKAEF welcomes all other Martial Arts who has interest in learning about FMA and Filipino fighting, its members includes several Japanese, Chinese and other South East Asian fighting arts.



Punong Guro
Jeff Espinous

Uniqueness of Kali Sikaran

Kali Sikaran includes Panantukan, Sikaran, Stickfighting, Daga, Kadena De Mano and Dumog. In Kali Sikaran these fighting styles are woven together into a complete and very effective fighting system. Any improvement in one aspect of the system will immediately enhance the abilities in another. In a combination of empty hand training and weapons training, the practitioner will develop speed, coordination, stamina, strength and reflexes that support self-defense and fighting skills. The Kali Sikaran practitioner is trained to be able to adapt, react and control any given situation.

Why Kali Sikaran

Reasons for training any Martial Art varies very much. One student want physical training and fighting, another is interested in history and arts, and a third is looking for an effective street adjusted fighting defense, the list can be made very long... In Kali Sikaran we want to meet our students demands, to answer their questions, but we will always stay real. We never compromise on effectiveness or give anyone the illusion of being able to handle something they do not. This pushes our staff to always adapt to all kinds of questions and providing proper information and as effective techniques as possible to the student. A lightweight person will not respond or fight the same way a heavy weight will. Our organisation is always learning and adapting, testing

theories...but the foundation and the basic building blocks is kept simple and effective for best outcome.

Training methods

Building confidence is important in Kali Sikaran training, seminars and classes are in the beginning of training constructed to build up a basic technical level and the confidence needed to defend or fight. For the more advanced students instant adaptability is the method used to be able to adapt to any situation and circumstance. Once passed the basic training it is time to show what you've learned under pressure and stress. Our advice: get out of your comfort zones to develop your skills!

Sustainable development. The ambition of Kali Sikaran leaders is to train, guide or coach our members to grow as Martial Artists and as persons. Our staff and our advanced students is encouraged to take new steps, to push the limits, to set new standards for themselves. We need our instructors to be more than great fighters. We want passionate and encouraging teachers who can carry our logos and our name. Anyone can hit hard, we want to hit at the right moment as well...

Blades and Knives

The Kali Sikaran includes blade and knife training. The idea of training bladed arts is to provide an effective fighting and defense system. The training of knife fighting and knife defense is questioned and debated heavily in many countries; nevertheless situations occur on the street where skills against the blade are required. Some people need to be able to master knife principles for the purpose of their work; police officers, military, bodyguards. Other people may just be interested in the arts and history of the blades. Again the reasons for training varies very much...

Filipino knife fighting techniques have influenced police tactics and military knife defense strategies all over the world. The knife fighting instructors from Kali Sikaran has been working with different official units: German Police, Police Academy Prague, Swedish Armed Forces, Norwegian Police, Musado Czech Republic, Security Companies, Bodyguards and more...

Punong Guro Johan Skålberg and Jeff Espinous have put great effort and research in creating the Kali Sikaran Knife Program. All the techniques in this program are based on realistic attacks and situations. The training is performed in as many situations as possible, different angles, number of attackers, different weather and light conditions and so on, all to prepare the defender or the officer for a successful outcome.

The Training of Knife Fighting is first and foremost offered to official representatives that need additional understanding and skills with the blade. We train the client to be fast and tricky with a mix of technique, flow and reaction training to adapt with any means available. There are many exercises of *contra y contra* (one to one) to build the skill not to stop, keep the flow, and always counter and react to whatever happens. In this fashion we build up a progression, the beginners starts up easily and the advanced practitioner is taking the training from basic and flow to sparring and fighting on a high level.

Flow drills like "tapi tapi" and "loop drill" is emphasized a lot to bring the reflexes and reactions to the top level. In these exercises you learn to react instinctively and develop your senses to feel what's going instead of just trusting your eyes and your,

often to slow, consciousness. The progression of the training drills is made to bring both practitioners to the limit of their skill and raise it from there. The phrase “expect the unexpected” is used a lot to bring the defender and attacker the right attitude and focus into the training.

Distractions such as various blows, punches, kicks, feints, power, speed and controlling /checking, take downs and finishing techniques is always implemented to create stress and to make the training as real as possible. We always implement sparring training and participation in competitions to gain additional understanding of knife attacks, defense and stress.

Knife Defense is focused differently from the knife fighting program, in some cases people are not allowed by law to learn how to use the knife or don't have the time to learn even though it's the preferred way. The Knife Defense Program is divided in different blocks: Basic Knife Defense, Advanced Knife Defense, Expert Knife Defense and Knife Defense Instructor.

Basic Knife is designed to build up the instant reflex to protect “the box”, which is basically everything that is entering the surrounding space of your upper body. After that the defender trains how to create the opportunity to stop and control the situation with a few simple solutions depending on the task. For regular students in a Kali Sikaran Club they also add the disarm part to be able to get rid of the attacking knife or control it. For people who train the program as an intensive seminar, the focus can be different depending of the equipment they use (A.S.P, guns etc.) or the expected outcome of a situation. The goal is to make things as simple as possible - but still very effective.

Advanced Knife - is an extension of Basic Knife with more reaction and reflex training to manage an attacker more skilled or to find a solution under even more stress. Here there is a lot similarity's to the knife fighting training but the main focus is on the defence and how to connect it to the premier skill of the “Basic Knife”. There is also more focus of the understanding on distractions and disarms.

Expert Knife - is the third part of the program there you really work it all together and build up the concepts of the knife both offensive and defensive for the understanding how it works and to defend against it. Everything is implemented is from stress and situation training to sparring and even grappling with the knife and more.



Knife Defence Instructor - is for teachers who is running a club or trainers that want to conduct seminars from the Knife Defence Program at their work.

For being able to deal with knife situations we recommend working parallel with both the fighting and defensive parts and also connect it with the other ranges in Kali Sikaran. When it comes down to any kind of fighting situation it is about making the right choices, react properly, understanding the game and turn it into your favour with all means possible. To be able to understand and use your strong sides and find the weaknesses of your opponent and to have the necessary tools to protect and shield yourself and your loved ones from harm.

For further information regarding the style of Kali Sikaran or the International Kali Arnis Eskrima Federation (IKAEF) visit the websites:



www.kalisikaran.com

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The BladeMasters of Filipino Martial Arts in the U.S

By Jay de Leon

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For those of you that have recently seen the blockbuster Bourne Supremacy, you have probably noticed and marveled at Matt Damon's new-found martial arts prowess. What you probably do not know is that, for his action scenes in this movie and its prequel, The Bourne Identity, Matt Damon trained extensively in Filipino Martial Arts (FMA). Another major movie, the Hunted starring Tommie Lee Jones and Benecio del Toro,



Tommie Lee Jones and Benecio del Toro
in the climactic knife fight in "The Hunted."

showcased knife-fighting skills and techniques based on FMA. Students of my friend Tuhon Chris Sayoc of Sayoc Kali can claim credit for choreographing the awesome knife-fighting scenes in that movie.

It is no secret that FMA has one of the most effective knife-fighting techniques in martial arts, or in life-and-death combat, for that matter. So you're probably wondering, who are the top guros currently teaching knife-fighting skills (sometimes called blademasters or edged weapons experts)?

Here then are the top FMA instructors currently teaching edged or bladed weapons skills in the US.

Chris Sayoc

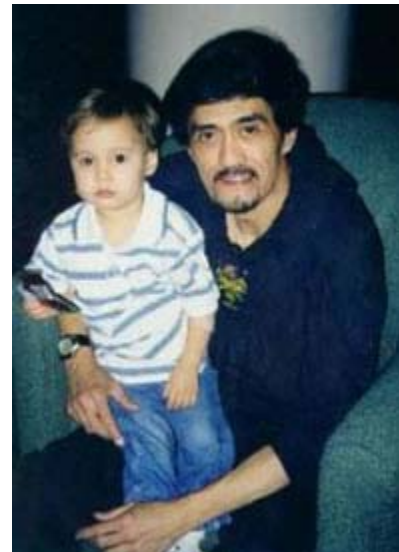


Tuhon Chris Sayoc is the inheritor and current head of the family system, Sayoc Kali, based in Philadelphia. His father, Baltazar “Bo” Sayoc, was one of the pioneers of FMA in the US, and now currently lives in semi-retirement in Cavite, Philippines. The Sayoc system is a blade-oriented system, and is characterized by the deployment of multiple knives in an encounter, and the use of “templates” in their training system. Chris Sayoc conducts seminars, tournaments and training camps all over the U.S., and is one of the designated grandmasters teaching the Dog

Brothers. His Sayoc instructor team is so deep and talented that his senior instructors rate mention as blademasters themselves, including Rafael Kayanan, Tom Kier, Felix Cortes and Jeff Chung.

Sonny Umpad

Santiago “Sonny” Umpad is probably the most low profile (some describe him as elusive) bladed weapon expert in the group, but one of the most naturally gifted and fluid fighters in FMA. His lethal system is a Visayan style comprised of elements from Moro-Moro, Doce Pares, Villabrille Kali, Serrada, Balintawak and Wing Chun kung fu, which accounts for some of the low stances he sometimes uses. To date, he has shunned any commercial products showing his art, but teaches individualized instruction and participates in Masters training camps like Dieter Knuttel’s seminar in Europe. He also co-authored a well-received book on the use of the balisong.



Sonny Umpad (right)
and young protégé
Chip Ellsworth



From the author's collection.
Includes some "tactical" folders designed for self-defense.

Christopher Ricketts

Christopher "Topher" Ricketts is the founder and chief instructor for Bakbakan, a designated grandmaster for Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo's Kalis Ilustrisimo, and a grandmaster of Edgar Sulite's Lameco Eskrima. He is also a law enforcement and military trainer, a fight choreographer and director in Filipino movies including his brother Ronnie Ricketts's movies, and an author of several books and producer of instruction videos. He has recently relocated to San Diego, California, makes periodic trips to teach at the Bakbakan headquarters in Lodi, New Jersey, and has hit the seminar trail here in the US including the Bakbakan and Tipunan seminars.



Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts (right) in a demo segment with actor son Bruce Ricketts at the "Tipunan sa Disneyland" seminar in Anaheim, California.

Mat Marinas



Amante "Mat" P. Marinas is the founder of the arnis system called Pananandata (literally, the art of weaponry), and one of the most prolific writers on FMA around. He has either written about or produced tapes on a whole array of weapons including blowguns, throwing knives, ropes, nunchuks, bolo, the 14-inch diameter ring, horsewhips, tonfa, chain and, of course, the balisong (Filipino butterfly knife). He is a true master of Filipino weaponry, including bladed weapons, and has been teaching, conducting seminars and writing for several decades now.

Felix Valencia

Felix Valencia is a senior instructor for Lameco Eskrima who has fought numerous full-contact fights at the Dog Brothers' Gathering using sticks. But his forte' is bladed weapons, which has served him well in his early days of bar bouncing and private security work. He is now one of the premier edged weapons training specialists in the country. He has provided defensive tactics training to numerous law enforcement agencies like the Los Angeles Police Dept. and Arizona Highway Patrol, knife companies like Cold Steel Knives and Trident Knives, and firearm/weapons schools, like Front Sight, Halo, Close Quarters Battle and Gunsite. He has also worked as a fight choreographer for action movies, and produced DVD's of his knife techniques. He was recently featured in the Feb. 2005 issue of Inside Kung-fu magazine along with senior students Allen Bridgeman and Jimmy Liu.



Felix Valencia (right) demonstrates a technique at one of his edged weapons seminars.

Ray Dionaldo



Ray Dionaldo is the founder of "Filipino Combat Systems" in Tampa, Florida. He has the rank of Tuhon in Sayoc Kali, as well as instructor rankings in Modern Arnis under Prof. Remy Presas, in Pekiti-Tirsia Kali under Grand Tuhon Leo T. Gaje, and in Arnis Tulisan under Ama Guro Raffy Pambuan. He has over 100 wins in local and international martial arts and weapons competitions. In addition to teaching FMA seminars worldwide, specializing in bladed weapons, he is an actual blade maker. He is the official knifemaker for the Sayoc Kali organization, and has recently designed a new "kerambit."

Kerambit designed by Ray Dionaldo



Nene Tortal



Grandmaster Jerson “Nene” Tortal, the nephew of the founder of the Pekiti-Tirsia Kali system, now calls his style Dekiti-Tirsia-Siradas. Just like the original style, it is a highly developed close-quarters in-fighting system, made up of complex sectoring tactics and combat elements with intimidating names like contradas, recontras, recontradas, etc. While Grandmaster Nene Tortal lives in the Philippines, he conducts year round training in the US, and also brings students over to the Philippines for training.

Graciella Casillas



Graciella Casillas was a pioneer of women’s boxing in the early 1980’s and held the World Women’s Boxing Association bantamweight title, retiring undefeated with a record of 31-0, with 18 KO’s. She has black belts in Tae Kwon Do, BKF Kenpo, and Kodokan jiu-jitsu. In FMA, she trained under Grandmasters Angel Cables, Dan Inosanto and Bobby Taboada. She has become a widely recognized defensive edged-weapon expert, magazine columnist, and knife designer. She designed the widely-popular Ladyhawk with women in mind, but this Master of Defense knife has become a favorite of men as well.

Masters of Defense knife
“Ladyhawk”
designed by Graciella Casillas



Raffy Pambuan



Ama Guro Raffy Pambuan is the fifth generation inheritor of a family system from Santa Cruz, Laguna, Philippines now called Pambuan Arnis Tulisan Caballero, a traditional and highly effective blade-oriented system. In 1983, Raffy Pambuan moved to Orlando, Florida and continued training with Grandmaster Bo Sayoc. & In 1996, he was inducted, and is a member of, the World Head of Family Sokeship Council. In addition to a FMA school he maintains in Gotha, Florida, he conducts many seminars all over the US.

Bram Frank

Bram Frank is a happy example of a martial artist who has blended wing chun, karate and arnis, stayed with arnis as a first generation student of Prof. Remy Presas (Modern Arnis), and evolved into one of the most respected and decorated blademasters around. He is known for improving edged weapon tactics, designing innovative tactical folding knives (such as the “Gunting”) and less-lethal control tools (such as the CRMPT, or the Close Range Medium Impact Tool), and producing first rate instructional videos on edged weapons. He has trained the U.S., Russian and Israeli security forces, law enforcement and civilians in the use of edged weapons and control tactics and tools, and is in great demand in the seminar circuit.



Bram Frank (left) poses with Modern Arnis mentor Grandmaster Roland Dantes during a recent visit to the Philippines.



The “Gunting” knife designed by Bram Frank

John Jacobo



A seasoned competitor in tae kwon do, kickboxing and FMA stickfighting tournaments, John Jacobo is a senior instructor and West Coast representative of **Bakbakan International**. In addition to countless seminars, his FMA training includes formal training in Grandmaster Mat Marinas’s Pananandata and Grandmaster Rey Galang’s Kalis Ilustrisimo. He currently teaches for his organization called “The School of Weapon Arts and Combatives” (**SWACOM**), which emphasizes practical self-defense. He has just completed two instructional videos titled “The Combat Principles of De Cuerdas” and “Dos Manos Methods” and is active in FMA seminars including the Bakbakan and **Tipunan** seminars.

Others teaching FMA blade arts considered for this article include Bill McGrath (Pekiri-Tirsia), James Keating (Comtech), Rey Galang (Bakbakan), Jeff Imada (for his

balisong skills), Michael Janich, Steve Tarani, Hoch Hochheim (Modern Arnis and Kombatan), Abon Baet (Garimot Arnis), Ron Balicki (JKD, Lameco), Roger Agbulos (Lameco), Blaise Loong, and Cass Magda.

A note on bladed weapons skill: If you ever see any of these ladies or gentlemen perform bladed weapon demos, either solo or with a partner, it is a thing of beauty. It looks graceful, sinuous, and deadly, even balletic. But a real-life knife fight is ugly, bloody, chaotic, scary, disgusting, and sometimes lethal. There is nothing beautiful or noble about it, except for the fact that it may have helped save your life, or that of another human being. Remember that it will probably be more your awareness, your wits, your will to survive, your resolve not to be a victim, your heart, than actual blade skills that will make you survive a dangerous situation.

To contact Jay de Leon, **Email** or reach him at 951-894-1452.

Visit his Websites – Filipino Fighting Arts - **Click Here**

Tipunan - **Click Here**



By Reynaldo S. Galang

From the combat tested and proven art of Kali Ilustrisimo is born the knife fighting art of Tulisan. Developed under the watchful and critical eyes of the late Grand Master Antonio Ilustrisimo of Kali Ilustrisimo and the art's Chief Instructor and Heir, Master Antonio Diego, Tulisan has proven itself a totally realistic, dynamic and practical knife fighting system.

The word Tulisan means "pointed" or "sharp-tipped" as well as "an outlaw". Tulisan's emphasis on thrust techniques and the general public's consensus that knife wielders belong to the less desirable social classes and to the outlaws makes any of these translations appropriate.

The development of multi-level fighting concept and strategy is the emphasis of Tulisan. Realizing and accepting the fact that the most vulnerable moment is during any transition and in the early stage of an attack, a Tulisan practitioner is constantly aware of the traps and pitfalls that lurk at each level of an armed encounter. Honed in maneuvers and drills that prepare against a multitude of variations, Tulisan wallows rather than sinks in the unexpected.



Masters Tony Diego and Christopher
Ricketts
in a classic **SABAYAN**

The art of Tulisan emphasizes the basics of knife-handling and blade edge awareness. The popular concepts of triangle footwork, both male and female, are thoroughly ingrained into its foundation drills. The practitioner is cautioned again and again, that the first and foremost action should be evasion with parry and counters only of secondary value. Each of the form and drills build upon each other, reinforcing and cultivating awareness and sensitivity to the nuances of the edge weapon.

Beginning with the basic form of Alas, the novice is introduced to the concept of Tagis-Talim (encounter with the blade). The beginner learns to accept and explore the versatility and limitation of the bladed weapon. Keeping the opponent in constant guard and anticipation by the positioning of the wielded weapon, the Tulisan fighter learns to control and dictate the flow of combat. The on-guard thrust position that is unique to Tulisan is designed to intimidate the opponent and controls the centerline of combat. It is also a strategic position from which an attack or parry can be easily and efficiently launched.

In espousing the concepts of Tagis-Talim, the knife fighter learns to become both efficient and effective in the use of the blade. The aspirant learns of the advantage, the limitations and the misconceptions between thrust and slash attacks. The enlightened pupil learns of the lethal aftermath that can result from a thrust even with an improperly honed or badly abused weapon. In the same vein, the practitioner discovers the diminished effect of a slash or cut against heavy clothing even when using a well-maintained weapon.

Trained through Sinawali to use both hands for weapons usage and control, the Tulisan fighter's Bantay-Kamay (guardian or alive hand) assists in parrying and controlling the enemy's attacks as well as in delivering coup de grace thrusts from the unexpected weapon transfer and switch (Lipat-Palit) technique of Tulisan. Training sessions in Bakbakan Kali always begin with Sinawali or double stick drills. This guarantees that the practitioner is constantly trained and prepared to use any weapon ambidextrously. In the art of Tulisan as well as in Solo Baston, the Bantay-Kamay becomes a vital defensive tool.

In the drills derived from the form Lengua de Fuego, the Tulisan practitioner is immediately absorbed in the nuances of simultaneous parry and counter. Beginning with the initial retreating step from the Maharlika (lit., noble or nobility. An stylized beginning or ending position that is more of a ritualistic nature rather than of any strategic plan or advantage.) the practitioner retreats into a defensive position to gain distance and to move out of range from a sudden attack, the student learns to parry and deliver a simultaneous counter against an independent or follow-up thrust using the technique of Lagusan (tunnel thrust). In this particular technique, the Tulisan fighter learns to dodge and parry the thrust attack and to control and occupy the centerline to win the encounter and survive. First and foremost, however, is to make sure that one is outside or off the line of direct attack. Footwork, along with the requisite hand and body coordination, is

practiced as a total strategy rather than separate entities. This prepares the knife fighter to move and defend against any sudden and unexpected attacks or combinations thereof. From the initial counter attack using the Lagusan technique, the classic thrust and cut technique of (Saksak-Hatak) flows smoothly as the Tulisan fighter steps forward at an angle and keeps blade and point towards and against the opponent. The advantageous and strategic positioning of the knife's edge is never lost even when reversing the blade's direction from a backward to forward motion.

Palis-Tusok , a lateral parry and thrust technique first encountered in Alas and subsequently emphasized in Lengua de Fuego and other advanced forms has proven itself many times over in competitions and even in actual confrontations. In executing the Palis, the practitioner has the option of executing a simple parry or a well positioned and timed hand-cut. Executed with a simple parallel evasive movement, Tulisan practitioners recognize the critical importance of timing and footwork. Combined with the knowledge gleaned from experience and a thorough study and analysis of combat, the Tulisan expert anticipates the targets of opportunity that are exposed after each attack.

The Palis-Tusok technique is always executed with the body executing a sideways dodge and parry while delivering a cutting parry against the opponent's extended weapon arm. Without hesitation , the parrying weapon continuous its circular path and ends in a thrust aimed at the opponent's neck. A back parry, known as Sima, is used to deflect the opponent's thrust marginally away from the body. This nullified attack is then followed back to its source with classic Tulay (bridge) technique, minimizing if not totally eliminating, the possibility of a defense or counter.

The Sima, also known as Pasungkit or Palis-Likod, is a backhanded parry that is used effectively with and against both long and short weapons. A simple and effective parry and maneuver, the technique of Sima gives the defender the opportunity to deliver a parry and a cut or thrust with the same weapon, along the exact same line as the invalidated attack, giving the opponent little or no option for defense.

A simple linear Hatak-Talim (a parry or counter that executes a single linear cut) completes the sequence of actions thus far. This is followed by a sequence of Saksak-Hatak (thrust and cut) techniques. The last Saksak-Hatak of the set is executed in the Makata (Poet) fashion. The technique of Makata hides behind its beautiful execution the deadly and lethal precision of its strategy. Incorporating the principles of Praksion (from "fraction", a concept that espouses being a fraction of a beat ahead of the opponent), this technique slides in-between the opponent's attack and delivers its deadly counter-attack within the narrow leeway created by the attack.

The technique of Tiklop (lit., to fold) is used to parry a singular, straight thrust. A versatile technique, Tiklop enables the Tulisan knife fighter to assess and reprise with a variety of options against the opponent's negated attack. In this particular case, the Tiklop becomes a Dukot-Likod (under hook arm trap) that exposes the opponent's torso to a well-positioned thrust.

Although not a favorite of Tatang Ilustrisimo, Hawak-Baligtad or reverse knife fighting grip is an option to be learned in order to understand its limitations as well as its covert uses and advantage in combat. In Lengua de Fuego, the Hawak-Baligtad is used to define the perimeters of defense as well as targets of offense. In a herringbone fashion, the areas of defense as well as the opponent's exposed flank are singled out and defined with unwavering precision.

Using the reverse grip to execute a reverse vertical outward parry, the Hawak-Baligtad's blade is used in a very speedy and lethal fashion to deliver a deadly cut at the opponent's exposed neck. The Bantay-Kamay is used to intercept and stop any protective or defensive move of the opponent.

In the final movements of Lengua de Fuego, the knife grip is changed from reverse grip back to saber grip. This switch, executed hidden from the opponent, restores the weapon's lost reach while it was held in the reverse grip. This last thrust is executed in an extended Makata (Poet) pose. A pull and cut motion brings the weapon back to its Maharlika starting position.

The breakdown of Lengua de Fuego, or for that matter, any of the forms in the Bakbakan Kali Ilustrisimo curriculum, into manageable and practical drills has long been a signature training method of Bakbakan. The timeless training concepts of Dr. Guillermo Lengson have been and always will be the foundation of the training structure of this elite organization. The blending of the tested, effective and efficient training methods of Dr. Lengson with the awesome repertoire of weapons techniques, concepts and strategies of Grand Master Antonio Ilustrisimo has given Bakbakan its international reputation for weapons expertise.

The technique of Saksak-Hatak (thrust and cut) and its variations best exemplify the concept and principle of Tagis-Talim. Tulisan trains the practitioner in using the knife optimally and effectively. A parry against a thrust is immediately penalized with a simple twist or repositioning of the blade to deliver a reciprocal slash.

Hawak-Baligtad (reverse grip), also known as Pakal or Susi, is also introduced in Lengua de Fuego. Despite its limited range and diminished versatility, the reverse grip is a deceptive form of weapon handling and can be used to great advantage during combat with Lipat-Palit (transfer and change) strategy. Applied covertly, the opponent's parry against an anticipated thrust can result in a debilitating cut as the intercepting hand encounters the weapon's turned-out blade instead of the expected wrist and forearm.

The optimum range for Hawak-Baligtad is in close quarters combat where proximal body contact and veiled shifting thoroughly utilizes the weapon's lethal potential. Cuts and slashes can be delivered without any pronounced movement or chambering. The weakness of frontal thrusts in the reverse grip is a minor loss and sacrifice compared to the multitude of subtle and covert slashes that can be delivered from a broad range of angles. Tulisan practitioners refrain from delivering overhead and back thrusts in reverse grip as the risks outweigh the advantage of using such techniques.



Rey Galang
Tulisan Knife Fighting System

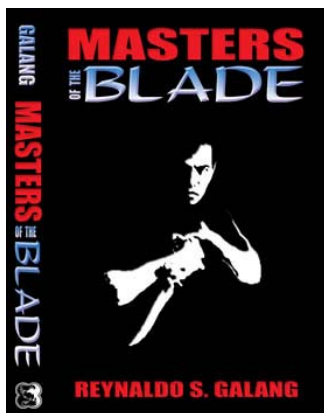


Tulisan training at BCI, Garfield
mid-1990s

The development and evolution of the knife fighting art of Tulisan owes much to the constant refinement and testing of its techniques. This is achieved through regular sparring and constant emphasis on the reality of the knife. Once the practitioner becomes skilled in the use of the weapon, the techniques of Kisap-Mata (blink of an eye) are introduced. In this phase, the Tulisan practitioner, now fully aware of the potential as well as the limitation of the knife, is required to fight and defend without a weapon against a skilled and armed training partner. It is at this point that true knife fighting and the dawning of a blade master begins’.



MASTERS of the BLADE

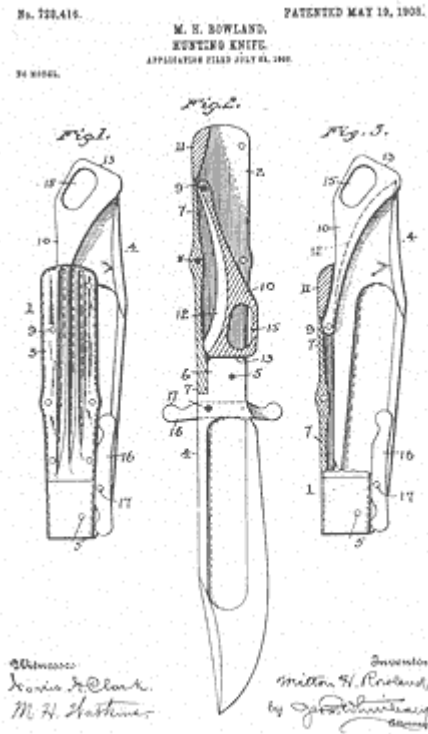


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Knife Terms & Definitions



- **Bail** - A loop at the end of some knives; used to clip and carry the pocket knife. ie key ring loop.
- **Barong** - a knife resembling a cleaver; used in the Philippines.
- **Bayonet** - A knife that can be fixed to the end of a rifle and used as a weapon.
- **Blood Groove** - (AKA Fuller) The grooved channel down the blades on

some swords & bowie knives.

- **Bolo** - A long heavy knife with a single edge; of Philippine origin.
- **Bowie** - James Bowie, (1796 - 1836) famous for the 1827 bloody brawl near Natchez, Mississippi (The Sand Bar Fight), where several men were killed and Bowie was wounded. Bowie's knife became famous as the knife used at the sand bar fight and has been copied ever since although the original Bowie knife has never been found/documented. Col. James Bowie was also a defender at the Alamo.
- **Choil** - The choil is the small indented (usually semi-circular), unsharpened part of the blade - close to the hilt (where the blade becomes part of the handle).
- **Clasp** - A style of jack knife where the blade curves upward at the tip.
- **Crink** - A crink is a bend at the beginning of the tang that keeps multi-bladed pocketknives from rubbing against each other.
- **Dirk** - (AKA Dagger) is any short double-edged bladed stabbing weapon.
- **Escutcheon** - is a small pin or piece of metal attached to the handle for engraving, branding, or just decoration (AKA Name Plate).
- **False Edge** - is an additional bevel on the back of the blade

enhancing the blade's point. This edge can be sharpened or not. The false edge can also be used for heavier cutting that might be damaging to the cutting edge.

- **Guard** - The guard is usually a piece of metal between the blade and the handle to protect hands from the knife edge.
- **Gurkha Knife** - a curved steel knife with a razor-sharp edge used in combat by the Gurkhas.
- **Hilt** - The entire handle, including the butt/pommel and the guard.
- **Jigged bone** - Bone that has been given a textured finish usually from gouging or grinding troughs in the handle scales.
- **Jimping** - Crosshatching, notches, or bumps on the knives back spine for extra grip ability for the thumb.
- **Kick** - The kick is found on a pocketknife, and is the projection on the front edge of the tang, the blade rests here in the closed position and keep the front part of the edge from hitting the back spring.
- **Kris Blade** - The kris blade is identified as one that is wide on the base and double edged. It is capable of delivering both chopping and slicing cuts. While many assume kris to most often have wavy blades, the half-waved half straight, and fully straight blades are more common, as straight blades were more practical in combat. The Kris is common in the Philippines, but, it is most associated with Indonesia.
- **Liner** - The interior part of a knife frame located between the handle and blade edge.
- **Liner lock** - A locking mechanism incorporated into the liner of the handle.
- **Long Pull** - An extra long nail mark/nick that runs the length of the back of the blade.
- **Master Blade** - The largest blade in a multi-blade pocket knife.
- **Nail Mark** - (AKA Nail Nick) is a semi curved slot cut into the blade used for opening with a thumbnail.
- **OTF** - Out-The-Front. A knife that houses the blade in the handle and deploys the blade out of the front (AKA Stiletto).
- **Parang** - a strong, straight knife native to Malaysia and Indonesia.
- **Pick Lock** - A type of switchblade knife where you have to release the blade lock by "picking" it with your thumbnail.
- **Pommel** - The very end of the knife. Some flat metal pommels are good for hammering. An example would be a pointed metal pommel, known as skull-crusher pommel used on combat knives.
- **Quillon** - (AKA quillion) is a french word for the guard of a sword or dagger designed to protect the hand. A quillion can be either straight or curved.

- **Ricasso** - (AKA Tang). The ricasso is the flat section of the blade by the guard , usually where the tang stamp is.
- **Scales** - (AKA Slabs) the handle material pieces. i.e Mother of Pearl Scales.
- **Shield** - (AKA Badge) The metal inlay on the handle of a knife.
- **Slip joint** - The term used for a folding knife that does not have a locking mechanism.
- **Snickersnee** - A knife resembling a sword. Archaic The act of fighting with knives.
- **Spine** - The thickest part of a blade, the blade spine would usually be at the back (top) of the blade. For double-edged blades, the blade spine is found right down the middle of the blade.
- **Swedge** - A bevel on the back of the blade.
- **Tang** - (AKA Ricasso). The flat(unsharpened) part of the blade next to the handle. Usually has a tang stamp or makers mark.
- **Walk and Talk** - Describes the actions of a pocket knife when opened and closed. The walk describes the feel of the blade as it moves along the spring when opened. The talk refers to the sound of the knife when the blade is closed. A well adjusted knife has a nice strong snap and has blades that slide smoothly across the springs (nice "Walk" & "Talk").



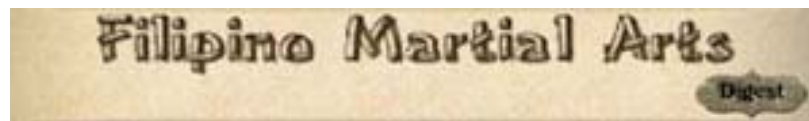
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