

# Filipino Martial Arts

## Legends of the Filipino Martial Arts Digest

Special Issue  
2006



Gran Maestro Antonio Ilustrisimo  
Kali Illistisimo



Grandmaster Venancio Bacon  
Balintawak Eskrima



Grandmaster Jose Caballero  
De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Original



Ama Maestro Saturnino Fabia  
Estrella Sinkatan Arnis



Grandmaster Jose Mena  
Doble Rapelon



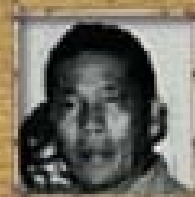
Grandmaster Floro Villabrille  
Villabrille-Largusa Kali System



Grandmaster Julian Goe-ong  
Abanico De Vertical



Grandmaster Vicente Carin  
Doce Pares



**Publisher**

Steven K. Dowd

**Contributing Writers**

Celestino C. Macachor

sfma Int'l

Filipino Martial Arts Academy

Kali Association of America

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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.

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## From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

This is the second Special Issue about the Legends of the Filipino Martial Arts. These practitioners have left their mark with the people that they have taught. These teachers are historical in the sense that they brought their fighting art to the world, sharing with others the techniques, philosophies, attitude, and part of a culture that represents the Philippines.

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

The legends in this special issue are not in any order, for all were most notable in their style.

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

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

Maraming Salamat Po

## **Grandmaster Venancio "Anciong" Bacon**

Founder Balintawak Eskrima  
(1912-1980)

Balintawak International Self-Defense was founded in 1957 with Venancio Bacon as its grandmaster. Grandmaster Bacon later formed another style under his own name, but Balintawak International continues on.



Jose "Joego" Milan and Venancio "Anciong" Bacon

## **Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero**

(1907 – 1987)

De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Orihinal



Grandmaster Jose D. Caballero was born on August 7, 1907 in barrio Ibo, Toledo City, west of Cebu Province. In his early youth he used to go from barrio to barrio to watch eskrima exhibitions during fiesta celebrations. These demonstrations were more of a cultural presentation than a display of real fighting. The exhibitions mostly pre-arranged sparring called de Cadena was far from the real combat that the young Caballero was doggedly searching for. From his observations of these exhibitions he later modified the moves with emphasis on three striking levels: the eyes, hands or elbows and knees. He later named the method as De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Orihinal.

The name of the method was derived from his middle name Diaz and his surname Caballero. He also postulated that when lifting heavy objects, it is usually accomplished at the count of three as in "Uno Dos y Tres!" A rabid fan of western movies, he likens his style to the quick draw. Whoever lands the first strike in a stick fight, wins!

Grandmaster Caballero served in the Philippine Constabulary and was once assigned in the hostile Moro country of Lanao province. After his retirement from the Constabulary he continued to teach his brand of Eskrima, and at the same time the challenges that was part and parcel of the art continued to hound him. One of his most memorable matches was in 1936 when he fought an eskrimador named Anoy from the nearby town of Tangub. During the match the hometown crowd rooting for their challenger, cheered as Grandmaster Caballero dodged, backpedaled around the tennis court. In a flash Grandmaster Caballero unleashed his trademark one-two three strikes and sent the opponent's stick flying into the air. The challenger, hands and pride bleeding surrendered. The crowd not seeing the blurring combinations of Grandmaster Caballero thought the whole match was fixed, shouted "TAYOPE!" (fixed) In his prime Grandmaster Caballero was the vaunted Juego Todo (All Out, no holds barred) champion and beat famous Eskrimadors like Simeon Saavedra of Talisay, Balbino Mancao, Vicente Labor, Juan Carolla of Ilocos, Alfredo Macalolan of Negros, Tanciong Lopez from Cebu City, Salomon Canonio and many lesser known challengers to his crown.

His most illustrious students were PG Edgar G. Sulite founder of Lameco Eskrima International, his brother Helacrio Sulite, Jr. and favorite protege Ireneo L. Olavides. Never realizing his dream to gain the recognition like the more popular "Doce Pares" and "Balintawak" methods, the old warrior died on August 24, 1987.

### **Julian Goc-ong**

Abanico De Vertical

By: Celestino C. Macachor



He is the quintessential World War II hero that would have made a perfect model for Tom Brokaw's best selling book- The Greatest Generation. He is the embodiment of the good old virtues and discipline of a truly great generation that fought with blood and guts for peace, freedom and democracy. An epitome of machismo, he is endowed with extraordinary strength and pure courage. Manoy Julian is third in the line of succession of an archaic eskrima that traced its lineage to Pablo Sabanal the legendary eskrimador of Southwest Cebu also known as Amboy Kidlat. Amboy Kidlat was the grandson Laurente Sabanal an 18th century pioneer of Moalboal that was reputed to have repulsed Moro invaders with his magic cane and orasyon.

When Manoy Julian was interviewed for this article he was very explicit in telling us that they do not have a name to their style of eskrima. It was simply called eskrima, however for purposes of making a distinction of their system from the others and it being the dominant technique of their methodology, he calls it abanico de vertical which is just one of the styles they practiced along with the florete, fraille, juego literada techniques.

The horseback riding Amboy Kidlat roamed the rugged mountains of Central Cebu Province and taught eskrima after the Philippine American War in the early 20th century. His favorite sanctuary cum spiritual retreat is the famous Sudlon Mountains - considered as the last bastion of Cebuano resistance against Spanish and American colonizers.

The only person known to have inherited directly Amboy Kidlat's eskrima was Felix Goc-ong the granduncle of Noy Julian. Felix or "Titi" trained with a certain "Tiboy" and migrated to Hilo, Hawaii in 1920 as a contract worker. A contemporary of Moro-Moro stylist and fellow town mate Telesforo Subing-subing, "Titi" joined a labor strike in the Hilo plantation where he once worked. An American officer on horseback tried to break the picket line, but "Titi" did not budge an inch and instead hit the horse with a powerful punch on the face knocking it down and its American rider. The incident earned him the respect of the American plantation official who later became a matchmaker of juego todo (no holds barred) fights. Titi beat the Hilo Eskrima Champion and later killed an African American in a fair duel. Titi was reputed to be very fast with his hands that he could catch a live fish in the shallows barehanded.

The other styles that comprise Abanico de Vertical are:

- Fraile- basically kulúb- hayáng (pronation-supination) and ginunting, espada corta, punta y daga techniques.
- Florete- basically double stick.
- Juego Literida- akin to Lastico technique to counter aggressive opponents.
- Cadena de Pasa- a fluid motion of continuous double stick strikes starting from the lower extremities to the head or vice versa.

Julian started learning the art of eskrima as a teenager with a certain Himaya as his first instructor who taught him the first the double stick florete technique. When Felix "Titi" Goc-ong arrived from Hawaii in 1922, he gathered all his nephews to train in eskrima.

Julian along with cousin Dalmacio "Maciong" Goc-ong trained with their Tio Titi in Barangay Nanca during moonlit nights. Eskrima in the old days was taught at night to maintain secrecy. The highlight of these nocturnal workouts was the triangular footwork



drill. The exercise requires alternate stepping on three coconut shells cut in half to develop balance and body angling.

They started with slow bansay-bansay sa sagáng (defensive blocks) and ginunting (scissors) blocks of the Florete style. In one of their Hagad drills Titi hit Maciong with a wayward strike on the shoulders. Accidental injuries sometimes resulting in sprains, bruises and fractures were not uncommon in the old days when armor was not yet available. To test his hitting accuracy, sometimes Titi would let the two of them bite pakaw (corncoobs) and hit them with fast witik strikes. Unlike Julian who loosened his bite at the moment of impact, Maciong bit the pakaw so tight and almost lost his teeth in the process.

Titi's advice for the hotheaded Maciong to control his temper fell on deaf ears. Thus, it became apparent later on that the levelheaded Julian would one day inherit the eskrima of Pablo Sabanal a.k.a. Amboy Kidlat through the guidance and tutelage of Felix "Titi" Goc-ong. Julian also trained and sparred with other eskrimadores in their Barangay like Abon Agbay and Cadio Arcilla.

In his old age, Felix Goc-ong continued to give private lessons to prominent figures of their town like Judge Tumulak. Judge Tumulak took pity of Felix's Goc-ong's asthmatic condition and requested for a proxy training partner and dummy. Felix did not hesitate to recommend his favorite nephew Julian.

Julian encountered a cocky Boca de Leon (Lion's Mouth) stylist who bragged killing three dogs with one strike with his favorite amara technique. He challenged the best eskrimador in town and without the slightest hesitation Julian took his challenge in a hagad sparring drill. Julian fed the fighter with a slow wetik to the crown but was countered by a fast sneaky strike that he blocked with an agak (check) with his left hand. Julian goaded him: "Can I see your amara, so I will have an idea how you killed three dogs with it". The man quickly obliged but warned Julian: "I will but I have to warn you that this is going to be very fast", by which Julian retorted: "You be careful too and promise not to get angry with my block and counter." Not even halfway to the amara, Julian hit the left crown with a doblete strike and the boca de leon eskrimador left town humiliated with a bad gash on his head

Julian Goc-ong was born on Oct. 18, 1925 in Balamban town west of Cebu province. He joined the renowned Philippine Scouts then trained by the U.S. Army and became a decorated World War II veteran. His favorite advice to eskrimadores is to stay cool and composed in a lethal confrontation and treat it like "sayun kaayo" (piece of cake) but nonetheless to always keep a high level of alertness.

His archaic form of eskrima is heavy on triangular footwork with a good dose of disarming in his repertoire. His disarming skills was put to good use when a certain Esing Laron, a deranged man, went amok armed with a sapang a short spear about 42 inches in length. Twenty-two of the town's best eskrimadores of came to encircle Esing who was cornered but none can get close because of Esing's extraordinary strength and the sapang that he brandished with a tight grip. A more daring eskrimador Ingko Genio tried to tackle Esing, but he was no match for the agitated amok who was able to escape his dumog when both of them fell hard.

Francis Sereno went to Julian to seek assistance in pacifying Esing who was still armed with the sapang, only this time even more agitated and very violent. Julian approached cautiously and cajoled him into putting down the sapang to shake his hand.

Esing agreed to shake hands without laying down his sapang. Julian took the opportunity by offering his right hand and simultaneously executed an elbow lock using his left hand from below the weapon hand of Esing and swiftly when the weapon fell locked the right wrist of Esing and successfully subdued and locked him into confinement.

Another challenger Guillermo "Emot" Villamor tried to test Julian's skills. Prior to the fight Emot bragged that a fledgling chick (alluding to Noy Julian) is no match to a seasoned fighting cock. The town officials sanctioned the fight with the protagonists offering their sticks in the altar of San Antonio in Celestino Subing-subing's private chapel. It was the town Fiesta in honor of San Antonio. After the prayers and rituals Emot deceptively picked up Julian's gu-od (thick rounded bamboo) stick while Julian reluctantly picked up Emot's lipák. Emot's first strike broke Julian's stick in half in the first round. Emot bragged to break Julian's head like a coconut in the second round. Forewarned by spectators of Emot's treacherous plan Julian anticipated his head strike with a sumbrada (umbrella block) that he converted to a punyo (butt) strike to the face of Emot. Emot grimaced in pain with a bad cut stretching from his right forehead down to the bridge of the nose to his left cheek.

Noy Julian is also famous in the town of Balamban for restraining or in extreme cases killing mad dogs on the loose. In one incident Noy Julian noticed a commotion while taking a bath and immediately sprang into action. Before the rabid dog could attack more people Noy Julian killed it with his kabò (dipper). Most of the time he used latigó to subdue rabid dogs. His latigó techniques also came from the legendary Amboy Kidlat.

Another altercation almost turned to a lethal confrontation when Manoy Julian got into a heated argument with a neighbor who was encroaching into his land. The trespasser who was caught plowing Manoy Julian's field was armed with a pinuti. Sensing an imminent bloody encounter was brewing, one of his sons rushed to their home to get the bahì stick of the unarmed Manoy Julian. Like a cliffhanger scene from an action movie his son threw the stick to Manoy Julian who caught it and with a blinding speed hit the man's scabbard separating the handle from the blade while in the motion of drawing the sharp pinuti. Now his enemy was only armed with nothing but the wooden handle of his blade that already fell off from his waist. The helpless farmer fell to his knees to asked forgiveness from Manoy Julian.

He passed on his eskrima to his prodigious son Pat Goc-ong a Nestle sports executive and two-time Philippine weightlifting champion in the bantamweight division. Manoy Julian Goc-ong passed away in February 19, 2003.



## **Grandmaster Antonio "Tonyong Moton" Ilustrisimo**

[1904 - 1997]

Kali Ilustrisimo



Antonio Ilustrisimo was born on Kinatarcan Island, Santa Fe, Philippines, in 1904. He began learning the art of eskrima at the age of seven under his father, Isidro Ilustrisimo, and his uncle, Melecio Ilustrisimo. Among his earliest recollections is his "calling" to go to America. By the age of nine, he was determined to do just that. Along the way, he encountered martial arts masters from around the world and fought in more patayan (death-matches) than perhaps any other Filipino master. He is among the most respected and revered masters that the Filipino martial arts have ever known, as indicated by his nickname, "Tatang" (a Tagalog term of respect).

Kali Ilustrisimo is the system of combat practiced for centuries by the family of the very great master fighter, Grandmaster Antonio 'Tatang' Ilustrisimo.

The Ilustrisimo clan has a long history as warriors and "men of power" (mystics or medicine men if you like) that continues unbroken to this day. Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo was the head of the style. The previous head was his uncle, the great Melecio Ilustrisimo, who was famous and dominant in northern Cebu (north coast, Bantayan and Bohol islands) in the early 20th Century.

Another famous relative was the great mystic Agapito Ilustrisimo (grand uncle?), who was active as a fighter in the revolutionary Katipunan.

## **Ama Maestro Saturnino Quinto Fabia**

[1915 - 2005]

Estrella Sinkatan Arnis



Inheritor of Estrella Sinkatan Arnis from Ama Mauricio Fabia (Father)



Ama Maestro Saturnino Quinto Fabia born on November 29, 1915, is one of the legendary Masters still living today at the age of 89 yrs old.

After the death of his father, Maestro Mauricio Fabia, Ama Maestro Saturnino Quinto Fabia became the successor of the family system of Estrella de Estoque. Only family members interested in the Art practiced the Estrella system quietly and secretly.

The Cinco Tiros style is Maestro Fabia masterpiece. His father taught him the Cinco Tiros system after mastering

the Ocho Tiro Orihinal.

Maestro Saturnino Fabia is also known by his father's legendary nickname "Langka." He describes his art as a survival self defense, used only to protect yourself, your family, and those who cannot protect themselves. In the sixties and seventies, the Estrella system remained unknown due to the influence of Karate, Kung Fu, and other systems. The younger generation was drawn to these different styles because of Western influences. It was unknown until 1986 when Maestro Bernardo Fabia Salinas started to research his family's forgotten art, Maestro Salinas is now introducing this art in North America and United States for all students and practitioners who wishes to learn.

Ama Maestro Saturnino Quinto Fabia is recognized as one of the most respected master's alive today, and is the leader of the Sinkatan-Arnis Estrella system. Maestro Fabia is a very traditional and humble man, a dedicated practitioner, teacher, and a true master of Filipino Martial Arts.



## Grandmaster Jose G. Mena

[1917 – 2005]

Doblete Rabilon

Grandmaster Mena was the very first Arnis teacher to open a school in Manila (Tondo), in 1951. The Tondo Arnis Club was situated in the notorious and dangerous area of the Manila Docks.

He taught his family style from Ilo-Ilo that was handed down in his family for over three generations. He made many additions to the style based on his own experience. He was a legendary fighter, and friend to many Arnis legends such as Antonio Illustrisimo, Floro Villabrille, and Felicisimo Dizon.

Grandmaster José Mena is famous in the Philippines because like most Arnisador from his generation, he has accepted all the challenges and street fights since 1934. His experience is based on survival, duels and war.

Grandmaster Mena went thru WW2, the Japanese occupation and rebellions in a century full of violence and fury. He descends from a lineage of Eskrima Masters from Ilo-Ilo in the Visayas and do owe his life to his knowledge in Arnis Kali Eskrima. Grand Master Mena likes to remind that he had only one teacher: His father, Professor Patricio Mena.

His father started to teach him the family style when he was 10. As a kid, he remembers his father training with some neighbors and friends of their village and his grandfather teaching Patricio Mena in the family backyard. Back then Doblete Rabilon was just a self-defense and survival art.

In 1934, as he was only seventeen, he is taken in hostage by Muslim pirates from the Sulu Sea in southern Philippines. At that time, the authorities do not control the



region at all: The Sulu islands are still under the control of several warlords. He is then sold to a Sultan who quickly discovers his fighting abilities. Each new moon, a gladiator tournament is organized and sultans send fighters to represent them in death matches. Combats are held in an arena and bets are the rule. Barong's blades are coated with cobra venom, to make it more spectacular and exiting.

José Mena does not have any choice: To fight or be executed. During his entire captivity, he had to eliminate his adversaries to save his life in death matches before being declared winner and earn his share of gold and jewels. They treated him as a hero and he received the title of Datu (war chief), but remained a slave under strict surveillance until the next tournament. After more than a year in captivity, he finally found a way to steal a boat and escape.

During the years, José Mena worked in Manila. Curious, he studied Boxing, Karate and Ju-Jitsu or (Combat Judo) as it was called at that time. During WW2 he fought against the Japanese who occupied the Philippines and continued to perfect his art of Arnis in duels and guerilla fights.

He has fought against other Masters of Arnis Kali Eskrima, Penchak Silat and Japanese Kendoka to measure his Arnis against other systems. He engaged in many Arnis full contact tournaments and built a reputation as a fierce fighter. This image of Grandmaster Mena is still present in the memory of today's Arnisadors.

Grandmaster José Mena received the title of Grandmaster in Arnis Kali Eskrima from the son of President Marcos in the presence of four Pilipino Generals. Today, he is granted the ultimate title of Supreme Grandmaster.

Like most Arnis Master, Grandmaster Mena was a close-combat instructor for the Police and the Philippines Army Forces as well as the US Army based in the Philippines.



Grand Master José Mena  
demonstrating with  
Master Dani Faynot

His expertise and knowledge in combat is universally recognized by the community of Masters of Pilipino Martial Arts throughout the world and many federations of Kali Arnis and Eskrima. In 2001, he received a nomination in the Martial Arts Hall of Fame in the USA. Grandmaster Mena appears in numerous books and articles: "Arnis and Filipino Martial Culture" by Mark Wiley and "Masters of Kali Arnis Eskrima" by PG E. Sulite.

Aside from being an exceptional expert and skillful fighter, Grandmaster Mena also possesses a good level in education and this allowed him to organize his system, and to classify the techniques and elaborate a teaching progression with 52 steps. His proficiency in English had a positive impact because he was able to share his knowledge with many foreigners and martial art experts who came to the Philippines to study under his guidance.

It is regretted however that Grandmaster Mena never put any formal organization together to develop his system to an international scale. This task will be the responsibility of his students so that the art can be preserved and make the best of his lifetime's contribution to the Pilipino Art of Arnis Kali Eskrima.

## Grandmaster Vicente "Inting" Carin

1921 – 2003

Doce Pares



Grandmaster Vicente "Inting" Carin holds an 11th degree black belt in Doce Pares and, was also the vicar of the organization and had served with the Cebu City Police force. He is especially renowned for his knife fighting techniques. In his lifetime, he has had over 20 'Death Matches' with no



defeats, but his most memorable challenge was the time he survived a multiple knife attack where he ended up killing three of the attackers and wounded the rest. The legendary grandmaster survived the ambush by at least 10 men at the grounds of the Mabolo Parish Church in 1951 while attending a fiesta celebration. The assailants, led by four brothers, ganged up on Carin's friend. Carin tried to help and got the brunt of the blows.

Barehanded, he withstood the attackers armed with knives until rocks and benches rained on him. And when the dust settled, two of the attackers were dead, while the others scampered away. He was wounded several times in places that should have been fatal to most people. In fact he was brought to the morgue and pronounced dead. He soon woke up in the morgue and asked for water because he was thirsty.

It was Grandmaster Diony's father, Eulogio Cañete who had him quickly brought to the hospital that saved his life. Carin miraculously survived and was never again challenged after the incident.

Up to Grandmaster Carin passing away, no eskrimador has equaled his feat. Grandmaster Vicente Carin is survived by his two sons Fredo and Vicente "Jun" Carin Jr who carry on his teachings.

### Vicar Self Defense Club

23 – ET Abella St.

Cebu City, Philippines 6000

011 [6332] 413-1559

## Grandmaster Floro Villabrille

[1912 - 1992]

Villabrille-Largusa Kali System

Grandmaster Floro Villabrille is the undefeated champion of countless Kali and Eskrima stick fighting death-matches in the Philippines, Australia and Hawaii. In the 1930's, Kali and Eskrima stick fighting matches were full-contact bouts where the combatants were not aided by



the use of body armor, pads or headgear. Combatants used the stick in the right hand and punched with the left hand. In close quarters, grappling, sweeps and throws were used. It was similar to the no holds barred fights of today except that victory was only declared when one of the combatants was either slain or demobilized.

Floro Villabrille was born February 18, 1912 in Cebu, Philippines. He began his martial arts training at age 14, studying Eskrima from his uncles and kung fu from his grandfather.

In his hunger for more knowledge, he traveled the entire Philippines studying the many forms of Filipino martial arts from various masters. His three most influential instructors were his uncle, Leoncio Villagano, Master Pio from Masbate Isles, and Princess Josephina from Gandara, Samar.

His favorite instructor was Princess Josephina, who was the blind daughter of a village chieftain of Gandara on the island of Samar. When Villabrille first arrived on the island, he wasn't immediately taught Kali. Only after passing a series of initiations that displayed his loyalty and sincerity to learning the art, Villabrille was assigned to the chieftain's daughter. At first thought, Villabrille was insulted that the chieftain assigned his blind daughter to teach him, but his resentment quickly turned to respect. Blind since birth, Josephina developed an extraordinary sixth sense that Villabrille said allowed her to feel what direction and angle the strikes were coming from. Villabrille was amazed by her prowess and lived on the island for 2 years learning under her direct tutelage.

By the age of 17, he was fighting in death-matches. July 4, 1933 was Villabrille's last fight in the Philippines. His opponent was Elario Eran, a Moro Datu (Prince) from the island of Mindanao. Elario was an expert in Silat-Kuntao another form of Indonesian/Filipino martial art. People warned Villabrille that the Moro Prince was quick and better than him and suggested that he cancel out of the fight, but he ignored the pleas and refused to bow out. At stake was the National Grand Championship of the Philippines. According to Villabrille, the Moro Prince was highly skilled and they traded blow for blow until the 3<sup>rd</sup> round when Villabrille felt a hit bounce off his skull. At the same time, Villabrille's bahi stick struck Eran on the neck causing instant death. At the end of the bout, then U.S Governor-General Frank Murphy of the Philippines presented Villabrille with a certificate making him Philippines' Grandmaster of Martial Arts. That same year, he stowed away on a ship to Oahu, Hawaii, later settling in Kauai, Hawaii.

Villabrille fought several more matches in Hawaii. In 1948, he fought his last match and shortly after, the death-matches were banned. Villabrille pooled his knowledge of the various styles in the Philippines and along with his combat experience in the ring developed his own system of combat known as the Villabrille System of Kali. His foremost student and personally chosen successor, Grandmaster Ben Largusa systemized and broke down Villabrille's System and put into place the theories philosophies that complement the art. Today, the art is known as the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System.

In some parts of the Philippines, Grandmaster Villabrille is considered a national hero. At the municipal museum on Mactan Island, Cebu, Philippines, Villabrille's original certificate from Governor-General Frank Murphy hangs next to a statue of Lapu Lapu, the man who is credited for killing Magellan and stopping the Spanish invasion. In 1992, Grandmaster Villabrille passed away at the age of 79. His wife Trining, and their three sons, Kenneth, Floro Jr. and Ralph survive him.

## **Grandmaster Louis Lagarejos**

[1935 – 2004]

Sikaran



When Grandmaster Louis Lagarejos came to the United States, he brought with him all of the original Sikaran techniques and there were few knowledgeable people left in the Philippines to carry out the art and it seemed to have died out. Some attempts have been made to revive this lost art. However, it has been alive and well in the United States for over 50 years.

Started in the jungles of Luzon in the Philippines, Sikaran is the only classical Philippine style of karate. Much of the original history is lost, however, Sikaran did exist when the Spanish discovered the islands in 1521.

It is a style of karate in which the legs are very strong. There are several kicks, which have earned Sikaran the popularity it enjoys and are responsible for the strength of the legs of its participants. The biachi (similar to a hook kick) and the batamba (flying spinning back kick) are deceiving to an opponent trying to block them. The front kick, roundhouse kick, and the side thrust kicks are executed in such a manner that the knee does not snap (which causes much of the damage to that joint seen in martial arts today). There are also many types of flying and spinning flying kicks.

The hands are used to block and parry and there are some hand strikes used only by Sikaran practitioners. These techniques include pangahilos (paralyzing blocks, strikes, and kicks) followed by pamatory (potentially fatal blows).

Sikaran is a tough style with its roots going back to ancient tradition in the Philippines. One of these traditions involved dating. If two young men wished to woo a young lady, they would place their sandals on her doorstep. If she wished to accept one of them she would bring his sandals inside. If she would not choose, the two men would fight to the death with their wrists tied together by a cord and a balisong (butterfly knife) in the other hand. Often the winner was in no shape to claim her hand. Fortunately some of the older traditions have been omitted.

Under Marcos' rule, the balisong was outlawed in the Philippines, but its study is included in the Sikaran schools in the United States along with the other classical weaponry. The Sikaran style today includes all of the traditional Philippine weapons including sticks, balisong, kris, etc.

Under Spanish rule, laws were passed outlawing the study of martial arts and it was necessary for the practitioners to hide their study of the art. This is why there are no shouts in the Sikaran system to this day.

### **Code of Conduct**

- Sikaran is our way of life.
- We shall always practice humility.
- We shall always practice gentleness in our relationships with others.
- We shall always practice and display proper respect to the other martial arts.
- We shall always practice good sportsmanship in competition.

- We shall always practice patience, never to use our knowledge to abuse others except in defense of our loved ones, the weak, and ourselves.
- We shall always keep the fighting spirit of Sikaran.

## **Grandmaster Bernardino Gallamo Tanique**

1933 - 2005

Arnis Grandmaster Tanique dies at 72 Grandmaster Bernardino Gallamo Tanique of Tanique Arnis and Combat Club (TACC) passed away last August 14, 2005 in Granada, Bacolod City due to a long-standing illness.

He was 72. Born in 1933, Tanique began training in arnis (espada y daga format) under his uncle, Marcos Garcia when he was 14 and started teaching seven years later. He had studied arnis under four professors, all of whom specialized in espada y daga.

Tanique had taught arnis in Granada and Bantayan, Kabankalan City among other places and together with other Bacolod arnis grandmasters, taught five foreigners, including Krishna Godhania of the UK, at the invitation of Grandmaster Abner Pasa of Cebu City (Balintok Escrima) in 2002 in Badyan, Matutina, just outside of Cebu.

Grandmaster Tanique is a nephew of yaming Grandmaster Fortunato "Atong" Garcia and the godfather and teacher of Trese Grabes Piga-Piga system Grandmaster Felix A. Guinabo.

Grandmaster Tanique has nine children, all of whom learned arnis from him. The most active are Grandmaster Gilber and Arman Tanique. Meanwhile, Grandmaster Tanique's elder brother, Grandmaster Timoteo Tanique also passed away last Aug. 15, 2005. Their remains were laid to rest at the Granada Cemetery.



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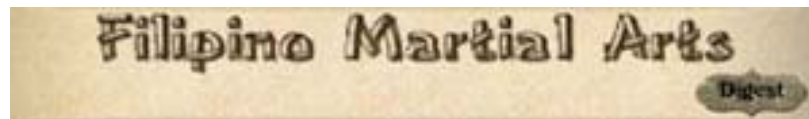
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