

# Mataw-Guro

Notebook

Informative Issue No. 1  
2011



## Will Total Unity in the Filipino Martial Arts Ever Be A Reality?

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**Legends** who have unfortunately and with sadness passed away. However they are practitioners that have inspired others, in sharing their philosophies, skills, and knowledge with their students, who continue to share what they have learned with others who are interested.

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Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano

Ok you may ask, what is an Informative Issue? Well it will be in magazine form on a particular subject for information purposes to bring about knowledge on a particular asset, history, or view point about the Philippine martial arts and culture. If studying a Philippine martial art one should know the culture and some of the history about the arts of the Philippines as a whole, not just the art that one is training in.

In this first issue starting off is; “Will Total Unity in the Filipino Martial Arts Ever Be A Reality?”, this covers some of the history of Alliances, Federations, Organizations etc., that when brought together united many of the Philippine martial arts, but as time passed dwindled and disappeared or are just hanging in there.

With the Arnis Bill being signed on December 11, 2009 making Arnis the country’s national martial art and sport it has been a question at least outside of the Philippines what is going on? Are the Philippine martial arts uniting or trying to? Has an executive board been established? Is there one set of rules that is fair to both traditional and modern tournament competition? It has been almost 2 years and maybe within the Philippines something is on the move, but outside the Philippines little or nothing is known on what is transpiring. So what is written as the article transpires is what has been heard in trying to unite the Philippine martial arts and hopefully will carry on outside the country.

Continuing on are practitioners who have unfortunately and with sadness passed away. They are legends in that they are practitioners that have inspired others, in sharing their philosophies, skills, and knowledge with their students, who continue to share what they have learned with others who are interested.

Many of these practitioners in some way contributed to the different Organizations in the Philippines and outside of the Philippines in trying to bring the arts together.

The Mataw-Guro Notebook would like to thank the FMA Digest for its cooperation and permission to use some of the material in this issue.

Respectfully  
*Mar Angeles*  
Publisher

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## Will Total Unity in the Filipino Martial Arts Ever Be A Reality?

Throughout the history of the Philippines, there have been fighting arts for survival. This is prominently noted during the time the Spanish dominated the Philippines, along with World War II with the Japanese, and even when other countries had tried to control the Philippines, like the Portuguese, Dutch, and Americans.

Once the Philippines gained their independence fully, still the Filipino art known as Arnis (Kali or Eskrima in some areas) was still not taught publicly, staying in the province, backyard, indoors, underground etc.

Throughout the history of the Philippines the fighting arts have been for village survival etc, but as time progressed their art became refined to their heritage and surroundings. Many had to take their art underground or disguise it in a dance form during the time the Spanish ruled, and also during the Japanese occupation.

It is in just the last century that the Filipino art of Arnis has come out somewhat and has been taught to fellow countrymen and foreigners. Some of the legends which have passed away such as: Venancio "Anciong" Bacon of Balintawak Eskrima, Jose D. Caballero of De Campo Uno-Dos-Tres Orihinal, Filemon Canete of San Miguel Eskrima, Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo of Kali Ilustrisimo, Benjamin Luna-Lema of Lightning Scientific Arnis, Jose L. Vinas of Lapu-Lapu Vinas Arnis and the list goes on, did not leave the Philippines, and were known but unfortunately became well known after their passing through their students dedication

and teachings. Other legends such as Remy Presas of Modern Arnis, Eduardo J. Pedoy of Derobio Eskrima, Angel Cabales of Serrada Eskrima, Leo Giron of Giron System of Arnis Eskrima (BAHALANA), Isidro Pambuan of Pambuan Arnis Tulisan Caballero and others left the Philippines bringing their art with them and sharing it in the country that they resided in. Also one must not forget the practitioners that head their systems and are still alive and well and sharing their knowledge in the Philippines and also outside the Philippines.

### December 11, 2009

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri who, along with Representative Henry Teves and George Arnais, authored the law making Arnis the country's national martial arts and sport. The Arnis Bill of Law, Republic Act No. 9850, an act declaring Arnis as the National martial arts and sport of the Philippines was signed by

President Arroyo on December 11, 2009, a move that was welcomed by Senator Zubiri and the countless Arnis practitioners throughout the country.

It's quite ironic that Arnis, the traditional martial arts, is being practiced more in other countries than inside Philippines.

In Thailand they have Muay Thai Boxing, in Korea they have Tae Kwon-Do and in Indonesia they have Pencak Silat, now the Philippines; has Arnis as the national sport

The long wait is over for Arnis, the traditional Filipino martial arts, has become the national sport. And it took a Senator and Arnis experts as well, to give the sport, around the world, the recognitions it deserves.



Senator Zubiri spoke in front of the Arnis Grandmasters from different styles, clubs, and organizations from across the country as they paid a courtesy call on Philippine Sports Commission Chairman Harry Angpin.

S. No. 3288  
H. No. 6316

## Republic of the Philippines Congress of the Philippines

Metro Manila

Fourteenth Congress

Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-seventh day of July, two thousand nine.

[ REPUBLIC ACT No. 9850 ]

AN ACT DECLARING ARNIS AS THE NATIONAL MARTIAL ART AND SPORT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to inculcate patriotism, nationalism and appreciation of the role of national heroes and symbols in the historical development of the country. Furthermore, the State must give priority to education, science and technology, arts and culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

SEC. 2. *Definition of Arnis.* - Arnis, also known as Eskrima, Kali, Garrote and other names in various regional languages, such as *Pananandata* in Tagalog; *Pagkalikali*, Ibanag; *Kabaraon* and *Kalirongan*, Pangasinan; *Kaliradman*, Bisaya; and *Didja*, Ilokano, is an indigenous Filipino martial



art and sport characterized by the use of swinging and twirling movements, accompanied by striking, thrusting and parrying techniques for defense and offense. This is usually done with the use of one (1) or two (2) sticks or any similar implements or with bare hands and feet also used for striking, blocking, locking and grappling, with the use of the same principle as that with the canes.


SEC. 3. Arnis is hereby declared as the Philippine National Martial Art and Sport. The official adoption of arnis as the national martial art and sport shall be promulgated by inscribing the symbol of arnis in the official seal of the Philippine Sports Commission and by making it as the first sport competition to be played by participating teams on the first day in the annual Palarong Pambansa. The Philippine Sports Commission shall be the lead agency to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. The Department of Education, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine Sports Commission shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule or regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.


SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

  
PROSPERO C. NOGRALES  
Speaker of the House  
of Representatives

  
JUAN PONCE ENRILE  
President of the Senate

This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 3288 and House Bill No. 6516 was finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on October 14, 2009.

  
MARILYN B. BARUA-YAP  
Secretary General  
House of Representatives

  
EMMA LIRIO-REYES  
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: DEC 11 2009

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO  
President of the Philippines

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## Unifying the Filipino art known as Arnis

With the coming of the Americans, in the beginning of the 20th century the Filipinos were taken in with this new culture, that most indigenous cultures were relegated almost to oblivion. The Filipino art known as Arnis, the Filipino martial art, almost suffered the same fate. Once the martial art of the pre-Spanish natives and the ilustrados of the Spanish era, Arnis almost disappeared in the urban areas and were mostly preserved in the provinces.

The rise to popularity of various non-Filipino martial arts such as Karate, Judo, Kun Fu, and Tai Chi brought the local martial art into the limelight. Suddenly,



The PKA a dominate martial art Organization during the early 70's while President Marcos was in office.

interest in Arnis began to surge. Popular practice of the art of Arnis however, also had its share of problems. For one, there was a dire need to consolidate the various forms, styles and strains of Arnis. Arnis is not just one technique nor just one school, it is as varied as the islands of the country, with its more than eighty (80) languages and about one hundred forty-two (142) dialects in an archipelago of seven thousand one hundred (7, 100) islands. Furthermore, there was also a need for a strong leader-

ship to hold such schools or group together, to steer it towards a direction, so as to prevent Arnis from slipping into oblivion.

In 1975, the National Arnis Association of the Philippines (NARAPHIL) was formed by Gen. Fabian C. Ver. This Organization acted as the first National Organization for Arnis in the Philippines. Its existence however, faded after the radical change and total revamp in the Philippine government caused by the Philippine Revolution of 1986.

In the meantime, in many



parts of the world, popular names and groups had been busy propagating the Filipino martial arts, pushing their teachings and techniques. Some people successfully made their way into martial arts schools, police academies, military schools, educational institutions, government agencies, and even in the entertainment world.

On July 11, 1986, Mr. Raymond Soriano Velayo, a young civic-minded and noted sportsman, convened a group of men truly devoted to the art at the Sulu Restaurant at Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. They formed the Philippine Arnis Federation, which was later renamed as Arnis Philippines (ARPI). Succeeding meetings saw the joining of more distinguished men who were bent

on making Arnis a pillar in the world of martial arts.

Because of the vacuum and taking advantage of the much preferred democratic space and of course, the renewed enthusiasm of the Philippine society, these Founders decided to bring together the various Arnis clubs and styles in the spirit of unity. This was preceded by the observation that Arnis, which was fast becoming a dying art in the country, should be revived and promoted. Thus, with the firm objectives of promoting, propagating and preserving the Filipino martial arts, the Philippine Arnis Federation was born.

On August 20, 1986, the Organization was formally recognized as Arnis Philippines Incorporated. Arnis Philippines received immediate recognition from the official sports bodies in the Philip-



ippines. On January 12, 1987 Arnis Philippines was solely accredited Arnis arm and association in the Philippine Olympic Committee and was accepted as the 33rd member of the said Olympic Committee.

Also to note; always one to contribute and assist in the preservation and promotion of the Filipino martial arts, Roland Dantes held the position as Chairman of International Affairs of

Arnis Philippines, and the International Arnis Federation, Arnis Philippines for those who do not know, are the official governing body recognized by the Philippine government are in fact the 33rd Member of the Philippine Olympic Committee. As the Chairman of International Affairs Roland Dantes worked not just with Organizations within the Philippines, but also with different countries to promote and bring unity to the Filipino martial arts.

With the Southeast Asian Games being held in the Philippines in 2005, a historic event took place for Arnis/Kali/Eskrima it became an official event and not simply a demonstration sport. So this in its self was a monumental moment and is noted in history. This came about not only through the efforts of Arnis Philippines and its President, Mr. Raymond S. Velayo and all officers and staff. The 23rd South East Asian Games were held in December 2005 in



Manila and other locations, all around the Philippines.

For Arnis they had six events, namely: men's full contact sparring (up to 71 kg), women's full contact sparring (up to 52 kg), men's anyo one stick individual (single stick forms), women's anyo

one stick individual (single stick form), men's anyo two sticks team (double stick synchronized team forms), and women's anyo two sticks team (double stick synchronized team forms).

With the conclusion of the 23rd South East Asian Games as time passed, many practitioners moved on their own way, not being a part of Arnis Philippines and instead continued to support their art, club, organization etc. Arnis Philippines is still in existence but the unity cannot be noted as when first started.

Roland Dantes passed away March 16, 2009, leaving the Philippine Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters without a figure head of his capabilities and it is still not widely known who has taken the reins and is in charge of the Organization. It is hoped that the Organization will continue with the same spirit that it was formed with.

What is the purpose of the Arnis Bill besides bringing recognition and establishing the Filipino martial art known as Arnis? As has



A gathering of Grandmasters and Masters with Roland Dantes and the author. This was the afternoon of March 15, 2009 in Manila.



been put by several sources it is to promoting, propagating and preserving the **Roland Dantes**

In Roland Dantes quest to bring together the Filipino martial arts throughout the world he formed The Philippine Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters.

The Philippine Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters was incorporated under the laws of the



Republic of the Philippines in 2005 and registered with the Securities Exchange Commission (Registration # CN200519278).

Filipino martial art known as Arnis. It is to bring together and unify all Filipino martial arts of Arnis / Kali / Eskrima and establish a uniform set of rules and regulations for competition.

The Bill is also to establish an educational program for schools from elementary to universities that are of the basics of Arnis that does not single out a particular art, but will teach the basics and leave it to the student if desired to seek outside the school if interest is of a particular style.

Now there are programs established already in some of the schools of the Philippines; however they are of a particular style or system and not of the pure basics of the art. These programs have been in existence for many years, and that are also in certain colleges and universities and are accredited.

But what must be done as stated before is to establish an educational program for schools from elementary to universities that are of the basics of Arnis that does not single out a particular art, but will teach the basics and leave it to the student if desired to seek outside the school if interest is of a particular style.

One such program is the School of Arnis Professional offered by Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (University of the City of Manila) over seen by Professor Armando C. Soteco Director, S.A.P. and Dr. Alejandro L. Dagdag Executive Director, NCPE.

It was in the mid of 1971 when Professor Armando C.

Soteco, met Grandmaster Remy A. Presas, the “Father of Modern Arnis” at San Beda College, Mendiola, Manila, Philippines.

Sometimes, all it takes is a chance encounter between two people to impact on each other’s lives. The lessons they learn from each other are lasting remembrances that they surely makes one beautiful story of friendship and benefits the other way.

In their spare time, especially during weekends, Grandmaster Remy Presas, personally taught Professor Armando C. Soteco the art of Arnis, from the most basic to the most complex.

But, there was a passing of touch of some sorts when Grandmaster Remy Presas migrated to the United States in 1975. He left to him the responsibility of propagating all the more the art of Arnis while he was doing his part of introducing the Filipino version of martial arts in the United States and other European countries. When he appointed him as President of the Modern Arnis from 1975 to 1977, he also passed to Professor Armando C. Soteco his teaching load at the National College of Physical Education, wherein Arnis is a required subject for teachers taking up P.E. major, the teaching at the Armed Forces of the Philippines where Military Police took Arnis lessons and Police Officers around the country.

He is also instrumental in the inclusion of Arnis in Physical Education curriculum in High School students and supported the addition of Arnis in the College program when he participated in the 1989 Consultative Seminar Workshop of then Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS), Bureau of Physical

Education and School Sports (BPSS), whose aim is to make definite and concrete P.E. activities for P.E. 1, 2, 3, and 4. The BPSS officials approved that Arnis be included in P.E. 3, with course description as Individual/Dual Sport.

Because the seed of love for Arnis, that planted in his heart as insatiable, he thinks of the growth and development of Arnis. Thus, in 2003, he organized and put a School of Arnis Professionals at the National College of Physical Education, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (University of the City of Manila) in Intramuros, Manila, Philippines.

Professor Soteco was designated as Director of this seminar type course by Dr. Alejandro L. Dagdag, Jr., the Executive-Director of NCPE.

The program was designed to prepare professional Arnis Instructors and P.E. teachers by providing scientific know-how in teaching/coaching and managing Arnis competitions. Included in the Arnis Professional Course are some theoretical subjects like:

- Sport Science (Biomechanics)
- Physiology of Exercise and Physical Fitness
- Traumatology (First Aid)
- Sports Psychology (Teaching Methodology)
- Nutrition and Drugs
- Sports and Recreation Management

However the program though covering a wide range of basics and valuable information for practitioners was dominated by Modern Arnis.

November of 2008 and as strange as it seems the Mataw-Guro Association had an eerie

start, for it was at the wake for Mark Lledo, son of Louelle Lledo when the idea of an association to strengthen the position of teachers of Arnis de Mano as educators in the Filipino martial arts educational system was born.

To offer their condolence, the group of Roland Dantes of the Kali, Eskrima and Arnis Masters, Atty Salvador Dimaisip, President of International Modern Arnis of the Philippines, and Professor Armando Soteco, Training Director of the School of Arnis Professionals, motored to Indang, Cavite at the residence of Louelle Lledo.

While watching Louelle Lledo, conduct his class at the Cavite State University, the group agreed that a standard program of instruction was necessary to upgrade Filipino martial arts to the level of an educational curriculum. One thing led to another. Although nothing concrete came out of the talks, the framework for an association of educators was established.

The need for a term to convey the meaning of a high standard teacher of the martial arts in the academe environment became necessary. The term Mata-Guro, coined from Mataas na guro was suggested. But the word did not have the “ring” or the “backbone” required. The term was later changed to Mataw, which was coined from mataas ang tanaw (high standard). Thereafter, the title Mataw-Guro (knowledgeable teacher or master teacher) thereafter was chosen as the rank of the highest level in the academe.

With the title and the need to form an association of educators agreed upon, it became imperative to set down the qualifications and requirements to be a member. This task fell on the shoulders

of Louelle Lledo. He selected the teachers he knows who have a successful program of instruction.

So it was on February 12, 2010, the Mataw-Guro Association was formally established, composed of the 17 founding members and 2 posthumous members.

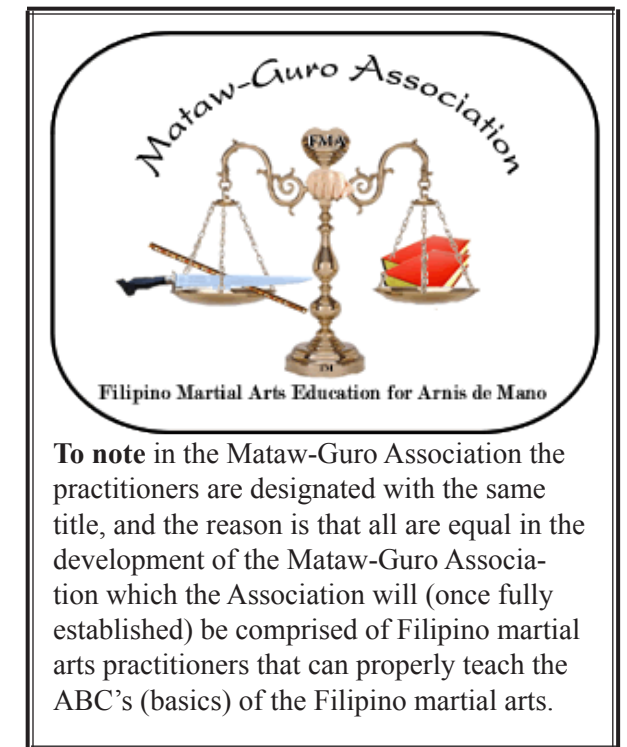
On March 6, 2010 at the Joy Tsin Lau Restaurant, 1026-2B Race St., Philadelphia, PA., where the United Fellowship of Martial Artists was holding their first Hall of Fame Banquet. With the cooperation of Dr. John Lee the head of the United Fellowship of Martial Artists, Punong Mataw-Guro Louelle Lledo was able to commence forming a foundation for his dream of uniting the teachers of the Filipino martial arts.

In this a category for the main body of Mataw-Guro-s (Master Teachers) was formed and recognized.

Since that time The Mataw-Guro Association and School of Arnis Professionals have come inline offering the basics of the Philippine martial arts.

In regards to Sports Arnis one of the oldest established Organizations is WEKAF.

The World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) is an International Organization of like minded martial artists, including teachers, students and practitioners who share a common enthusiasm for the Filipino martial



arts. WEKAF is one of the largest organizations in the world, with members in over 25 countries.

WEKAF contributes to the Filipino martial arts community by organizing regular tournaments, including invitational events and qualifiers for the World Championships. WEKAF holds the World Championships every 2nd year, and regularly hosts some of the largest Filipino Martial Arts tournaments in the World.

WEKAF was founded with the goal of organizing a set body of rules and conventions under which practitioners from various traditions could come together and safely compete in Stickfighting and Forms. This gives practitioners a chance to showcase their skills and







WEKAF was envisioned by one man. His initiative and work at bringing people together was responsible for its inception and continued growth.

Grandmaster Dionisio Cañete -  
Doce Pares International Chairman  
Emeritus - WEKAF

highlight their Art on a Regional, National and International level.

WEKAF is open to all practitioners of the Filipino Martial Arts, all traditions and styles are welcome. The rules are set up to emphasize and maintain the safety of its participants, accommodate techniques common to most systems of Filipino Martial Arts, and to insure exciting action and powerful demonstrations of skill and ability.

The history of WEKAF dates back to 1975, when Dionisio Cañete met with Dan Inosanto, Richard Bustillo and Fred Bandalan. Together they agreed to combine their efforts in promoting the Filipino Martial Arts. Cañete convinced the Masters of the Doce Pares Organization (led by his father, Eulogio) to standardize and promote a format for competing in the Filipino Martial Arts with a

focus on increasing its appeal as a spectator sport. Cañete also worked to draft rules for tournaments and to design protective sparring gear for these events, enabling competitors to safely compete in a full-contact format.

In 1979, the first National Arnis Championships was held in Cebu City on March 24. During this event, leaders from the National Arnis Association (NARAPHIL), Cebu Eskrima Association, and others present agreed to launch a worldwide promotional effort. The need for a world governing body became quickly apparent, a body which would be centered on promoting and supervising the growth of the Filipino Martial Arts in teaching and in competition.



**Dionisio Cañete**



**Dan Inosanto**



**Richard Bustillo**



**Alfred Bandalan**

### International interest in the Filipino martial arts

In August of 1987, Cañete invited Masters and notable instructors from outside the Philippines for a seminar in Cebu City. Seventeen people from USA, England, Australia, New Zealand, and Guam attended the 5 day affair, which was called the 1st World Instructors' Arnis Seminar.

Those who attended left energized, excited about the future of the arts. Many of the participants would go on to play key roles, representing the WEKAF organization in their own countries. Among others, participants at this event included Bobby Breen (England), Sharon Burns (Australia), Greg Henderson (New Zealand), Arif Shaikh (India), and Tom Sipin (United States).

It was at this gathering that the formation for the World Federation was crystallized, and the group agreed to meet within two years to finalize and implement the plan. Cañete was elected as chairman of the organization, provisionally titled the World Arnis Federation.

In 1988, the goal of hosting competitions outside of the Philippines was realized as the 1st USA National Eskrima Arnis Championship was held in San Jose, California. Thanks to the combined efforts of Alfred Bandalan, Arnulfo "Dong" Cuesta and Dionisio Cañete, the tournament attracted more than one hundred competitors from various parts of the United States

This event was also the first time in many years that the top three Grandmasters of the Filipino arts living in the US were in attendance together at the same event Grandmaster Ben Largusa (Vilabrille-Largusa Kali), Grandmaster Leo Giron (Giron Arnis Escrima) and Grandmaster Angel Cabales (Serrada Eskrima).

### The World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation is formed



**Grandmaster Ben Largusa**



**Grandmaster Leo Giron**



**Grandmaster Angel Cabales**

In August of 1989, over 100 people from 10 different countries assembled at the Convention Hall at the Sacred Heart Center in Cebu City, Philippines, to formalize a world organization for the Filipino Martial Arts. The success of the plan to broaden international appeal of the arts was evident in the fact that three quarters of the people at the meeting were from outside of the Philippines.

Dionisio Cañete was chosen as the Chairman and Presiding officer of the newly named World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF). Articles and By laws were adopted by the Assembly, including that each member country be represented by at least one Director on the Board, and that the Officers responsible for supervising the day to day activities of the Federation would be elected from among the members of the Board.

During the elections, 35 candidates were nominated and the following Directors were elected: Dionisio Cañete, Arnulfo Cuesta, Richard Bustillo, Fred Degerberg, Bobby Breen, Arif Shaikh, Sharon Burns, Nino Pilla, Roland Krauer, Manuel Fragoso, Jorge Alcordo, Ted Javier, Andreas Becker, Anebro Paay and Greg Henderson. Cañete was subsequently elected as the Chapter President with Richard Bustillo as the Vice President, their term of office to last for two years until the 2nd World championships and Congress.

Since 1989, WEKAF has grown to represent over 24 countries where the art has gained tremendous following. There have been 8 World championship tournaments to date (1989 Manila, Philippines; 1992 Manila, Philippines; 1994 Manila, Philippines; 1996 Los Angeles, CA; 1998 Cebu, Philippines; 2000 Cebu, Philippines; 2002 London, England; 2004 Cebu, Philippines) as well as countless regional, national, and invitational competitions.

WEKAF as any Organization has had its problems, but are continually working through them and once again will grow strong.

Of course within the Philippines several Organizations have their set of rules and regulations for Sport Arnis.

It can be noted that in the Philippines the styles are numerous. Some are intricate and some simple, but no matter which styles one prefers adopting, all of them are beautiful and unique in their own special way. It is really just a matter of choice and the comfort a particular style brings to one who chooses it.

For many years practitioners of Arnis Kali and Escrima have been shrouded under the shadow of uncertainty. There are transgressions from some clubs / organizations, subterfuge to discredit other groups unfortunately happens, and the peril of a divided community is in the air. This is in-

evitable when members have a falling out, when a group begins to doubt the credibility of one's leader.

### What has been Heard, But What are the Real Facts?

Now with the Arnis bill being approved almost 2 years ago making Arnis the National Sport in the Philippines, one can't help but ruminate and wonder the amazing progress it will bring to the Filipino people if united. One of the major accomplishments of this bill is that Arnis, Kali and Escrima should finally gain recognition in the Philippines where the art is deeply rooted and throughout the world. Schools in the Philippines will be required to include it in their curriculum instead of the other international disciplines we have adopted for so long. Now, with the law being passed, it is not anymore a matter of choice or necessity for schools to implement its teachings; it is supposedly a matter of fact.

However what is perceived as a problem is that most clubs have their own set of rules and each has its own tenets that seemed resilient enough to stand on their own. There is exquisiteness in this but the predicament sets in when a National event is organized and the Filipino martial arts community starts to cogitate on which set of rules to apply.

Once the Arnis Bill was signed the Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation published an article which in it stated: It didn't take long for the Philippine Sports Commission Chairman Harry Angpin to throw his full support into



Arnis through a 5 million pesos pledge, and an office space for Arnis training at the PSC Building.

Soon afterwards some were claiming to be Executive Directors, (of what it is still a mystery) some were asking for some of the money to promote their events. Some submitted their established or suggested rules and regulations for tournaments. But no one was taking charge. Meetings were taking place with a lot of picture taking but not much else.

It seemed the biggest priority was to get rules and regulations for tournaments which would be the mandate throughout the Philippines. With a few promoting their own idea of education of Arnis for the schools and basically this was after the Mataw-Guro Association was founded and Professional Arnis came in line for support in the Philippines.

It has been rumored (cannot state as fact) that at one point an alliance was established in the Philippines directed towards the Arnis Bill, but who is a part of it is not fully known outside of the Philippines. Finally sometime in the beginning of 2011 (it is said) that Senator Zubiri finally said he would be assuming the position of being in charge of the alliance. However sine Zubiri has resigned from the Senate will he still hold the position?

A meeting shortly after Zubiri resigned there was to be a meeting of the IRR which stands for International Rules and Regulations. But it did not come about.

So if Zubiri's agenda has changed due to his situation will he continue to hold the top position in trying to bring together the Philippine martial arts community? Or will someone have to to

take the initiative to integrate the rules of each club, choosing only the best or something mundane might escalate into a bigger problem

The other dilemma which is not definitely known throughout the world in the Filipino martial arts community and also most likely throughout the Philippines is there a unified body that all groups can join and will recognize, accept, and look to in supporting and receiving support?

The community of Filipino martial arts practitioners throughout the world waits to see and hopefully follow the guidance if ever set from the country that brought the Arnis Bill about in recognition of all the practitioners throughout history that made the art of Arnis, Kali and Eskrima what it is today.



#### **A Prayer**

In unison with the many Grandmasters, Masters, Instructors, and Organizations, who constantly shared their knowledge, promulgation, promotion and continuously worked hard for the Arnis Bill to come about. It is hoped that all practitioners of Filipino martial arts will set aside their differences, petty squabbles, and will unite and come together to share this most special time when the Filipino arts will bring forth the basic education of the Filipino martial arts and then the specialties of each art from all and then in competition showing the art to its fullest tradition, skills, and beauty. Not just as a sport, but as part of the history of the Philippines which has been continuously handed down from generation to generation.







## Manuel Molina Aguillon Sr.

[1915 – 1991]

Arnis Balite

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

Born June 19, 1915 in San Antonio, Zambales on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, Manuel Aguillon commenced his training in the fighting arts as a young boy. As a teenager he also found that he had a great desire to use his hands with or without the cane, he turned to boxing. He found that boxing was demanding in using the flowing movements of the body coupled with foot and hand coordination. With

his desire of Arnis and boxing he combined the body movements. Going to Manila and various other cities throughout the Philippines his skills as a boxer grew and soon he became known as 'Kid Balite.' Winning many bouts and building his career as a boxer he became a champion in 1938.

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

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

Pundador constantly throughout his life reached out for more knowledge, either from other Arnisadors, Grandmasters, and Masters of other fighting arts and even books when available. Constantly practicing and combining his family's stick fight art any fighting art that would blend in with his philosophies. Manuel found that the graceful movements of other martial arts such Judo, Ju Jitsu, Karate, Kung Fu and coupled with the swift hand and foot fighting techniques of boxing, made a distinct and characteristic form of Arnis into a Scientific Filipino Martial Art.

As the years passed Manuel Aguillon became set and guarded in his families art. Being selective and discreet in choosing students, he would only teach those who he found had high morale standards. So

upon his passing away on January 8, 1991, only a hand full of students is known to exist that has the knowledge of Aguillon Arnis.

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

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

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

## Grandmaster Gerardo "Larry" Alcuizar

World Eskrido Federation

[1934 – 2007]

A man who never grew old, for those who were fortunate to know Grand Master Larry Alcuizar and even more fortunate to train with him, at 73 years old Grandmaster lived life and trained as if he was in his 30's. A very charismatic person, the type of person who presents could be felt in a room of many. I can recall introducing him to people that new or cared nothing about martial arts and they would ask me who he was, as if by his presence they could tell he was someone special.

At 73 years old he amazed people in demonstrations with his speed and accuracy. After a demonstration, I enjoyed sitting back and watching for the amazed look on people's faces when they discovered his actual age.

Having been raised in Cebu in the Philippines, Grandmaster as he was normally addressed by his students was raised in the Cebu during the Japanese occupation. Having had him share with me stories of what he had witnessed as a child, I would not wish those experiences on my worst enemy. It helped me to later understand why one might live, eat, and sleep martial arts for over 50 years as he did.

Martial arts; was his life, it was his work, his hobby, and teaching his knowledge to those who he wanted to know his art is what he loved. A life simply satisfied by martial arts, Grandmaster's martial knowledge and experience could fill encyclopedias. For him it was never about the money it was about his passion for martial arts, molding, and shaping his students. As

he would regularly say about many martial arts schools "they are just making money" a statement that is unfortunately true. Having lived as a non-native in Saudi Arabia for over 20 years allowed him to test and tune his martial arts in many real life experiences, experiences most people only see on TV. In martial arts Grandmaster was always thinking two steps ahead and always welcoming the challenging questions regarding a technique. Often times asking the difficult question of his own technique, "now what do you do if he is bigger than you" he would ask and then go on to answer is own question, a question others should have asked. Not so concerned about how applicable a technique was for scoring points in competition, Grandmaster always made sure his technique where applicable for true to life self defense and sparing an opponent in a self defense situation was not an option he taught. His art is a hard style that has not been desensitized, an art that has not been turned into a dance or a sport, but a true form of self defense. An art that emphasizes both weapons (stick and knife), and empty hands but always assumes ones opponent may have a weapon.

During his life he had many students from many different corners of the world, both civilian and military. He had the gifted ability not only to excel in martial artists, but also to be an excellent teacher. His teaching and materials were very organized and methodical. Every new lesson had



a

syllabus delineating out the techniques to be learned by the student and ever new lesson was linked to what was previously learned and to what was to be learned in the future.

Till the very end a few of us trained religiously with Grandmaster every Sunday at Ron Manrique house in Southern California. Having trained with Grandmaster since his early arrival to the United States, Ron was more like a son than a student to Grandmaster. Grandmaster always had Ron handle the business side and assist in the teaching of the students.

Not only did we lose a Grandmaster, a gifted martial artist, those who trained with him also lost a mentor and a friend. I am fortunate for the time I was able to spend with Grandmaster. Memories that can never be lost, he is a person that someday we will want to tell our grandchildren about. Those who trained with Grandmaster are not only very fortunate to have been able to share his art, but also fortunate to have known him and to have shared his life.



My Sunday afternoons will never be the same, Kirk Gooding friend and student. Below is the story of his fascinating life as could only be told by him.

It was in 1950 during my vacation in Sabang, Sibonga, Cebu, the birthplace of my father, that I met Maning Tenebro, who became my first instructor in Combat Judo and Arnis. He is a polite, calm, wholesome, and reserved person. He is one of the most respected men in the barrio of Sabang. His father is a faith healer. Maning himself offered to teach me and a nephew of my sister's husband combat judo and Arnis in preparation for the Sabang barrio fiesta demonstration. At the time, I was still an elementary student, so I had enough time to practice with Master Maning, especially during vacation. As I became more interested, I wanted to improve my techniques. I wanted to practice every day, since I was schooling in Cebu City. We practiced every Saturday and Sunday.

One time Maning told me that his instructor was Doring Saavedra. Nevertheless, at that time I was not interested to know who discovered the said art or the style or where it came from. I just hungered for techniques - just teach me how to fight, protect, or defend myself if my life is in danger.

After I graduated from Cebu Institute of Technology (CIT), I got a job as a security guard at CIT. That was when I met Fernando Candawan from Doce Pares. In a short time, he became

my instructor in Combat Judo and Arnis. Master Candawan was also working in the Registrar's office of CIT. We practiced at the CIT compound every night from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Actually, Master Fernando "Nanding" Candawan, aside from Combat Judo and Arnis, is also a Judo (Japanese) player. He is a former boxer and a bodybuilder. After a few months working as a security guard, I was transferred to the Registrar's office where Master Nanding Candawan also worked. A few months later, we organized a club with some enthusiasts in Combat Judo and Arnis. That was the formal birth of DUREX- Judo-Arnis-Karate Club in the headquarters inside CIT. In addition to



Eskrima/Arnis (stick defense) and Combat Judo (knife defense), we also offered Korean Martial Arts Moo Duk Kwan (Tang Soo Do). In the same year, we affiliated the DUREX Judo-Arnis-Karate Club to the Doce Pares headquarters and our Tang Soo Do to the headquarters in Bacolod City under Grandmaster Casimiro "Chingi" Grandeza. We personally talked to Grandmaster Ciriaco "Cacoy" Cañete about our affiliation to Doce Pares Club, and I went to Bacolod City to meet with

Grandmaster Grandeza to inform of our intention to affiliate to the Moo Duk Kwan (Tang Soo Do Assn).

However, in early 1966, Master Nanding Candawan left Cebu to pursue a job in the Registrar's office in the University of Mindanao. Nevertheless, I maintained our practice in CIT every Sunday morning. We had strength of more than one hundred, all CIT students, and were able to expand our club to Lapu-Lapu City Cebu, Minglanilla Cebu, Butuan City Mindanao, Cagayan de Oro City, and Tagbilaran City Bohol.

Later I went to the club of Grandmaster Felimon "Momoy" Cañete, a walking distance, and to the Doce Pares headquarters with the house of Grandmaster Ciriaco "Cacoy" Cañete. Unknown to all then, I had private lessons with Grandmaster Momoy Cañete, especially in the Espada Y Daga and double Arnis amara. Grandmaster Momoy is a secretive man; I like that. Almost every Sunday afternoon I attended practice with his senior students, such as Ben

Culanag, Ben Irog-irog, Peryong, and Banoy Borja. I really practiced with Grandmaster Momoy after all his students left the class. He refrained me from joining the advance students. However, I always followed his advice and his instructions not to tell or give to anyone what I have learned from him. As I said earlier, he is a very secretive man. That is why even in DUREX Club, nobody knew that I was practicing with Grandmaster Momoy Cañete because I was afraid he might not give me or

teach me his techniques anymore. Grandmaster Momoy has so many locks in Combat Judo and Espada Y Daga. He has a beautiful long-range style and Arnis Kata. Maybe no one knew that Grandmaster Momoy and my mother-in-law were very close friends, and that the former house of my mother-in-law was very close to the house of Momoy. Grandmaster Momoy was also a faith healer, so when my mother-in-law got sick, Grandmaster Momoy would use his Oracion to cure her. Once when I got a severe headache, Grandmaster Momoy applied his Oracion by holding the back of my head, and within 30 seconds the headache was gone. I was always curious about his ability to cure, and if it had anything to do with his expertise in Arnis or Espada Y Daga. I invited Grandmaster Momoy to dinner, and had the chance to talk to him about his extraordinary skill in curing by the use of Oracion, but was afraid to open my mouth. Before I went to Saudi Arabia, I met Grandmaster Eulogio "Yulling" Cañete. I cannot forget his advice to me: "Don't forget the techniques that you learned from your instructor;" it is the same Doce Pares style. Later he told me to always search for techniques to improve my style and abilities.

I remember during the Doce Pares annual celebration, all clubs affiliated with Doce Pares would give a demonstration including the DUREX Club. But the most awaited performers were the Grandmasters. Every time they demonstrated, I always watched their movements, footwork, and the flow of their hands in applying techniques. However, I made my own research with my own techniques, and refined them, develop-

ing my speed and power, along with my knowledge in Korean Tang Soo Do punches, elbow strikes, kicking, stance, and stamina.

When I was in Saudi Arabia, I became a member of WTSDA (World Tang Soo Do Assn.), based in Philadelphia, by Grandmaster Jae Shin, and I received the Gold lifetime membership of said association. Later, I also became a member of the WOMA (World Organizer of Martial Arts, Saudi Arabia) by Grandmaster Tianero.

I am indebted to all the Grandmasters and students throughout my martial arts career, especially to my personal instructor Grandmaster Fernando "Nanding" Candawan for his influence and role in my martial arts skills; to Grandmaster Felimon "Momoy" Cañete for his patience, wisdom, and trust in me not only as a martial artist, but also a protector of his secret techniques; to my first Korean martial arts instructor Manuel "Maning" Yu; to Grandmaster Casimiro "Chingi" Grandeza, President of the Philippine Moo Duk Kwan (Korean Tang Soo Do) of the Bacolod City; and to Maning "Undo" Tenebro.

August 1989 was an epic making year. Spearheaded by chief instructor Grandmaster Gerardo B. Alcuizar and a handful of energetic, sports-minded individuals and self-defense enthusiasts, he transformed a dream into reality by forming and founded the World Eskrido Federation (WEF) at King Khalid Air Base Sports Complex, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. WEF concentrated on Arnis/ Kali/Garote (Stick Fighting), Combat Judo (Knife Defense) including Karate influence.

Grandmaster Alcuizar devoted much of his time to the propagation and development of the art, taking a more direct and scientific approach.

WEF was organized to help develop strict discipline in sportsmanship, promote sound mind and body, and improve skill and stamina. In addition, the training received allowed members to enhance the moral and social responsibility of the youth, thus minimizing and completely eliminating delinquency. The philosophy taught within the WEF curriculum involved the following:

- 1) *Develop physical, mental, as well as social emotions of an individual.*
- 2) *Provide guidance to students in the training of self-defense, physical fitness, self-control, and mental discipline which contributes to nonviolence.*
- 3) *Develop students ability to gain the rare knowledge of knowing how to win without fighting, benefiting others as well as within.*
- 4) *Guide students by imparting in their minds what Eskrido could do as a part of physical education in the moral, physical, and spiritual development of an individual.*

Within the aspects of learning any martial art, discipline training is a must. Thru this training, students gain a moral philosophy of obedience and a sense of duty and respect. The overall philosophy of the art is to help develop each student's individual character, mental strength, and respect to others as well as the ability to do what is right, rather than what is easy or wrong. Not long after, many people from the different parts of Khamis Mushayt, Kingdom of Saudi



Arabia started to join WEF. Each member was screened to be of good moral and social standing.

To date, the majority of the members are Filipino, along with other Nationalities. At present, WEF has several branches scattered in Assir Region, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in the Philippines Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

In October of 2003, I came to join my wife as an immigrant here in the United States of America. At the same time I was also invited as a representative from Saudi Arabia and Philippines for a World Tang Soo Do tournament held in Philadelphia, PA, USA. Since being here in the states, I have conducted a 4-part seminar in Arnis, in cooperation with the Ferrer Academy of Martial Arts in Cypress, California.

Grandmaster Alcuizar resided in Bellflower, California, and was active pursuit of continuing his contributions to the promotion of Filipino martial arts. He used the term “ESKRIDO” as a combination for Eskrima, Arnis, and Combat Judo and registered the name of “World Eskrido Federation” in the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

*Grandmaster Alcuizar was laid to rest in his homeland Cebu, Philippines.*



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## Grandmaster Venancio “Anciong” Bacon

[1912-1980]

Founder Balintawak Eskrima

Venancio “Anciong” Bacon was born October 15, 1912 in Carcar, Cebu, Philippines. He lived in Labangon, Cebu City. He studied under Lorenzo “Tatay Ensong” Saavedra in the 1930’s in a style called corto linear. “Tatay” is an affectionate term for father as in the American term “pops” or “dad”. “Tatay Ensong” organized what was then known as the Labangon Fencing Club, which evolved as the Doce Pares (twelve pairs). After the death of Tatay Ensong, through club rivalry, Anciong seceded from the club. Bacon was frustrated with internal club struggles and politics. He and Teodoro “Doring” Saavedra were Tatay Ensong’s most outstanding students. Doring Saavedra died during the Second World War at the hands of the Japanese kem-petai.

Several other skilled eskrimadors such as Delfin Lopez,

Timor Maranga, Jesus Cui, Ationg Abella, Jugo Milan and Vicente Atillo later joined Anciong or studied under Anciong, as Anciong innovated and revolutionized the art. He advocated direct, efficient and effective moves. Nothing was lavish or fancy; nevertheless, it was graceful and elegant. The other stylists brought their own basic training methods and were picked up by the young masters, were tested at workouts and thus the evolution and progression of the art.

Anciong was not only innovative and original but fearless. He was the proponent of the *cuentada* method, often mouthed by many but seldom understood. Part of his training was as a wrestler and boxer. The man was small in stature, probably only 5’2” or less in height and no more than 120 pounds, soaking wet

Anciong was a propo-



nent of the single stick, using the free hand in what is known as *tapi-tapi*, checking hand or literally translated as the rebuking or reproofing (*badlong*) hand. The left hand was used to push, pull, clear, parry, punch, stab, poke, slap, distract, chop, lift, raise and swing and swing over the opponent’s stick. It was used in lieu of

the *daga* or dagger that was used in earlier training. This was at first ridiculed by his detractors since the double stick was the standard of the day.

The rumor is that Tatay Ensong took the short stick or *daga* from him when he would stab his sparring partners. Whether that is a fable or the truth is beside the point. Anciong created and mastered the single stick and stuck to its practical usage. Today it is widely imitated and copied by rival clubs who in the past advocated that two sticks were better than one. Anciong abhorred the fancy stick twirling, a signature of the “rival club”, as impractical in real fights. An apocryphal story is that he did not know how to do the *amara*. This sounds preposterous since there is no mystery in the move. Even my little boy can do it. Bacon’s moves were music in motion – direct, graceful, balanced, elegant, effective and powerful – even mysterious and baffling. He preached balance and was the master of the mind game or psychological warfare. He called this “taking the power” away from your opponent.

Bacon established a club in the very small backyard of his student Eduardo Baculi. This was at the back of Baculi’s watch shop on a side street known as Balintawak Street in downtown Cebu City, thus the name Balintawak. Balintawak is a place in Caloocan, Rizal, known as *Pugadlawin*, where the patriot Andres Bonifacio made his famous cry for an armed struggle in revolt against Spain. This was later known as *later Sigaw ng Pugadlawin* (Cry of the hawk’s nest).

Bacon had several students and he had to make the rounds before he could spend valuable time

with a student. Often, a student spent training time with his senior students or head instructor. Anciong would supervise instructions and executions were done correctly. When a student was waiting for an instructor, a student had to listen amid the din of clicking sticks, to what the Grandmaster was teaching other students. A diligent and attentive student could pick up and overhear valuable lessons. Therefore, although a student may have spent years at his club, he may not have spent that much time in personalized instructions with the Grandmaster. That is not to say his instructors were not proficient and capable. They were excellent. In later years, Bacon’s body started to deteriorate from a wasting disease. Many times, he took time outs through long lapses of conversation that would interrupt the workouts. To this day, Balintawak is still a one-on-one teaching method. That is, if you have to understand the nuances and fine shades of the art. Commercialized mass workouts just don’t work that well.

Anciong was a genius of his art, certainly a daring claim, not by Anciong but by me, his pupil. He was fabled and legendary - loved and respected by his students but hated and feared by his rivals and lifetime enemies but never disrespected. He was the single most deadly practitioner of the art with verifiable battles (*bahad* - full contact duels) to his name, including one that landed him in jail for homicide. He killed a man who waylaid him in the dark among the coconut trees in Labangon. His lawyer failed to convince the judge that what he did was done in self-defense. His lawyer apparently failed to prove

that he used necessary deadly force to defend his life. Until his death in his seventies, this little man was known to humiliate young, strong and disrespectful karatekas, martial artists and eskrimadors. Often landing them on the seat of their pants with him hovering over them in a menacing manner. His talent was esteemed, admired and even romanticized and embellished by his students and admirers. He was also shunned or avoided by his rivals. Regardless, he was a prodigy and master of his art that gained the respect and admiration of both friend and foe.

So few have deserved the title. As far as the author is concerned, there is and will always be only one Grandmaster of Balintawak, that is, “Anciong” Bacon. Many sophomoric eskrimadors have used the title “grandmaster” or “supreme grandmaster” in a trivial manner as if attaining a self-anointed black belt. This is true, not only in Balintawak but especially in other styles. It seems that those who have the temerity and audacity to make the claim just make their stake on the title. The term has been trifled and cheapened - it has become worthless. Who grants these grandiose and spurious titles of grandmaster anyway? Is it just bald-faced egotism and immodesty? Have any of these so called grandmasters developed a style, theory that is different, independent or original? Have they written a book or a treatise on the art? Have they promoted the art beyond their own clubs? ‘Just asking. None of Anciong’s students during his lifetime dared call themselves “grandmaster”. A precious few today have come close to the title.



## Guro Mariano Bermodes

[1958 – 2006]

Serrada

Mariano Baldo “Butch” Bermodes, 47 of Stockton, passed away on Thursday, October 19, 2006 in his home. Born on October 26, 1958 in Fresno, CA, he graduated from Edison High School in 1976. He was a grocery clerk for Safeway and a manager in the dairy industry for 21 years. Butch loved the outdoors, snow boarding, paint balling and camping. He was an advanced instructor of the Filipino martial art Escrima Serrada System and was a photographer for West Coast Youth Explosion Ministries. A member of the Community Church of God. Butch was a Lance Corporal in the Marines from 1977 to 1980.

I first met Mariano Bermodes in the year of 1984. I had just transferred into the retail store that he was working in. I had been training in Goju Ryu for almost 3 years at the time. I had noticed that Mariano carried himself with confidence, humbleness and kindness. He was a very nice man. I had asked him if he trained in any martial arts at all and his answer to me was an astounding “NO”. I said okay, I just thought I would ask. A week or two had passed and he came back to me and asked me why I had asked him about training. I told him the reason and he smiled at me and said that he trained under Grandmaster Angel Cabales. He had received an advanced instructors’ certificate. I asked if he had any students that he was currently training. He told me he did. I then asked if I could become a student under him.

He did not answer right

away due to the stories that were being told about myself and the violence I was involved in and the trouble that I might bring to him if he decided to hang around with me. In spite of the rumors and stories that were being told to anyone that would listen, he agreed to teach me serrada. Our first lesson was one I will never forget.

He sat me down and drilled me. He said, “When I tell you to do something, don’t ask why or the class will end for good.” Do what he asked without question and the training would go fine. If I did not want to do a drill or anything that he asked me the class would end for good. He spent about an hour telling me how the training was going to go. If I had any reservations, then just leave now and class will never start.

With everything that he told me, I was not sure if I even wanted to learn. But there was just something that Mariano possessed that had me saying to him “no problem I wanted to learn. We spent about 3 hours getting started. My first class was so much fun. He made his escrima come to life.

He truly expressed his art in a very special way. I was not a brand new student that was awestruck with his abilities. He was truly a gifted escrimador and teacher. His other students were also very good at the level they were at, during their training. This definitely showed me he knew what he was doing. He had introduced me to many Serradians during our training days. The days I trained with Guro Bermodes were



some of the best and funniest days of all my training for the last 22 years.

He was the man who introduced me to Grandmaster Angel Cabales. Mariano had told me that our training had to end because he could not teach me anymore, that I needed to go to the Grandmaster to finish my training. Angel did take me as a student, which in time I received my advanced Instructors degree and afterwards my Masters degree under Grandmaster Cabales.

My first instructor and great friend was there when Grandmaster Cabales presented me with my master’s degree. He was as happy for me, maybe more than anybody there for the accomplishment.

Mariano went on to train many people since taking me on. He has students stretching from Sacramento to Tracy; CA. Mariano is an instructor who preferred to be under the radar. He loved seeing his students advance and become very competent instructors in their own rights.

He was satisfied to see the art taught, the way it was taught to



him. His style was quite unique and very effective. I am honored to say that Guro Mariano Bermodes was my first escrima instructor.

Guro Bermodes is appreciated by everybody that has spent time with him. Not only is my friend a great man, a great husband, and a great father, a great escrimador. He is a great human being that I have had the honor and privilege to call my friend and brother now for over 22 years.

My friend and instructor Mariano has a beautiful wife Febe and 4 wonderful children. When the

time is right I will finish their training as their father has asked me to do.

Those of you that are out there that knew Mariano Bermodes; please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. There are good Escrimadors, even very good Escrimadors; Mariano is one of the great ones.

*He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Febe Bermodes of Stockton. Loving father of Mariano Bermodes, Jr., Douglas Bermodes, Brittany Bermodes and Cortney Bermodes, all of Stockton. Also survived by numerous brothers and sisters. “Proud Godfather of Elai John Asio and Khryzel A. Boron.”*



## Guro Grande George Brewster

[1924 – 2006]

Brewster Arnis

*Quote from Guro George Brewster - The training must go on!*

*Quote from Guro Peter Freedman - And so it will!*



Guro Grande George Brewster grew up on Hammond Street in Boston Massachusetts where he attended and graduated Sherwin Elementary School and English High School.

He served in the United States Army in 1943 (World War Two) he participated in four major campaigns, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe. He also was part of the unit that helped to blow up the gas tanks at the Battle of the Bulge so the German panzer tanks could not refuel. He helped to shut down

the German concentration camps. He helped to build bridges to help Patton's tanks cross over.

Guro George Brewster started Martial arts in early 1950. He was a practitioner of Judo and Karate. He started out with Okinawan Goju Ryu Karate with Geo Gonis and then Goju Kai Karate where he achieved the rank of Master. Guro George Brewster was introduced Arnis in 1975 by Amante P. Marinas who taught him Arnis Lanada. He also studied Arnis Lanada from Porferio S. Lanada founder of Arnis Demano Federation. Guro George Brewster founded the Boston Arnis Club.

Guro Brewster also started training with Guro Rey Galang of Bakbakan International from Lodi New Jersey. It was here that he added to his knowledge the art of Kali Ilustrisimo. Guro Brewster also knew the great late Angel Cabales Serrada Escrima Master,

who he spoke to over the phone.

Guro Brewster had J.C. Cabiero travel from California to teach Angel Cabales

Serrada System, to his students. He also had Guro Felix Valencia visit to teach the Lameco Escrima system to his students. He has Peter Freedman Sensei / Guro his senior student who also teaches Ketsugo Jujutsu for close quarters empty hand as well.

Guro Grande George Brewster was laid to rest on March 30, 2006, with family and many friends in attendance.

If any body wants to train with the Boston Arnis Club, they can contact Guro Peter Freedman who will be carrying on Guro

Grande George Brewster's Legacy of Arnis, which will now be called - Brewster Arnis. Every thing will be taught as Guro George Brewster had taught and passed his art to others.



## Grandmaster Angel Cabales

[1917 - 1991]

Serrada Eskrima



Grandmaster Angel Cabales was born in Barrio Iganía, Sibalom, Antique, Philippines, in the early 20's. His mother died when Angel was only two weeks old. His father entrusted the care of young Cabales to his maternal Uncle in Barrio Guintas, San Jose, Antique. Cabales' uncle took care of him until young Cabales reached the age of 16. It was in this Barrio setting that young Cabales became interested in the Filipino art of stick fighting which he later referred to as Escrima. His introduction into the Filipino art was through an Escrimador by the name of Felicísimo Dizon. Dizon was known as the "Wizard" because of his skill in combat. In fact he was the undisputed death match champion of the Philippines; never having been defeated in reality death matches. In 1932 at the tender age of 15,

Angel Cabales began his rigorous and intensive training under the watchful eyes of Felicísimo Dizon. Cabales absorbed the knowledge of Escrima quickly. It was common occurrences for other schools to challenge their competitors; this was no exception when word circulated that Cabales was Dizon's top student. In his first challenge Cabales defeated his opponent in short order. As other challenges came to Dizon, Cabales would be his right hand man. Together the two were a formidable team in the stick/knife art. Most matches last less than a few seconds, as Dizon and Cabales were precise in their Escrima art. Dizon and Cabales were an undefeated duo.

Time finally came when the two had to take different paths in life. Without any technical job skills, Cabales had to take any type of job that he could get to survive economically. He landed odd jobs on the docks of the Philippines, working as dock worker, laborer, cement mixer and longshoreman. Recognized as an accomplished Escrimador he was hired by wealthy Filipino Matrons as a bodyguard. He also worked as a special policeman at Muella Industria, Intramuros, in Manila.

In 1939 Angel Cabales departed the Philippines and joined the crew of the SS Don Jose, a freighter carrier under the flagship of the Madrigal Shipping Lines. The vessel was plying route from Manila to several ports of the world, which included the ports in the United States.

Seeing great opportunities in the United States, Angel Cabales abandoned his job as a sailor and decided to reside in Stockton, California, where he opened his first Escrima Academy in 1966. His reputation spread and soon he attracted some of the legendary martial artists of the time as students. Such names as Max Sarmiento, Mike Inay, Dentoy Revillar, Al Concepcion, Jimmy Tacosa, Leo T. Fong, Dan Inosanto, Fred Bandalan, Richard Bustillo, Ted Lucylucay, Anthony Davis, Leo Giron, and many others were privileged to learn Cabales Serrada Escrima System. Cabales died in 1992 and leaves a rich legacy of his art through his students. Serrada Escrima is now being taught around the world.





## 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 Punong Guro 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.

## Founder Filemon De La Cuesta Canete

[1904 - 1995]

San Miguel Eskrima

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

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



Momoy towards a traditional mid-to long-range style of eskrima, in contrast to the shorter-range styles that were becoming more popular. His eskrima was sometimes referred to as the “Batangueno” style.

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

Momoy concentrated on espada y daga in his own training because he considered it the most difficult style to master. He developed extensive footwork skills to allow him to evade an attack and move back in quickly with a

powerful counter-strike or thrust, and created a more aggressive role for the dagger, which could now be used both to monitor and control an opponent’s weapons as well as to attack the opponent with thrusts. Momoy also introduced practice with the spear, an ancient weapon that had fallen into disregard during the Spanish occupation. He linked the movements of the spear to those of the stick and dagger, and added the ananangkil, chain, bullwhip, and throwing knife to his arsenal of weapons. These were all used as weapons in their own right, but also to develop attributes that Momoy considered essential to his method of eskrima.

During World War II, Momoy ferried supplies from the Americans to the Filipino resistance army in the mountains and forests. He also served as a healer for many Filipino soldiers. The Japanese killed many eskrimadors during the war. Those who survived either hid with the guerrillas or fled. Teodoro “Doring” Saavedra was executed by the Kempetai, and Lorenzo “Tatay Ensong” Saavedra died of old age in Mambaling.

After the war, Momoy became well known in the San Nicolas barrio of Cebu City as a healer. Often during Eskrima



practice he would pause to treat patients from the neighborhood with spiritual healing and hilot in his courtyard. As he massaged an injury, aligned bones, or healed illness, he recited spiritual words and prayers. Momoy attributed his skill to God and claimed that concentrated prayer developed his ability to heal. (It is interesting to note that Momoy may have based the name “San Miguel Eskrima” on a statue of Saint Michael in Cebu City that depicts him slaying a dragon in a crossed-legged stance; “San Miguel Stepping” employs a similar stance as the transition between forward and backward footwork movements. According to Grandmaster Casio, Momoy may also have developed his ideas from the concept of “Sinugdanan ug Kataposan,” which means that no one can conquer or defeat an angel of God.)

Momoy also learned to play the guitar, and composed several popular songs. He was considered a talented musician and songwriter. His ability to come up with new movements and forms was attributed by his students to his talent for musical composi-

tion. Tom Bisio states that during breaks in Eskrima practice he could often be seen staring off into space, clapping his hands together to mark time as he created new forms.

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

Following the death of Filemon Canete in 1997, Tom

Bisio formed the “San Miguel Eskrima Association” in the United States. The goal of this group is to preserve, promote and develop Master Canete’s eskrima method. The name is a product of discussions with Master Canete in 1987. It is also an attempt to define his method as a traditional style of eskrima that emphasizes the use of the blade, and to differentiate his method from the modern tournament styles of Doce Pares.

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



Her decision was supported by her brothers, but this made Gorio very mad, so he decided to burn their house down, then he fled there from Dalaguete with his son young Vicente ‘Inting’ Carin on his shoulders.

Gorio was later targeted by his in-laws, and they chased him with hand made guns, and blow darts, so when they caught up with him eventually, he was imprisoned for burning down the house, and for trying to kidnap his son Vicente.

Later on his family did decide to transfer to Cebu City, because there was more opportunity for work there.

In his early teens Vicente Carin witnessed his elder brother Cipriano get fatally shot and murdered, then his body was thrown in the mud and was covered up just like a pig, this act was carried out by a very nasty and cruel Police Officer from Dalaguete.

Even at a young age, Vicente Carin vowed revenge for his brother’s death, and he knew that eventually he would kill the man who murdered his brother.

As young man, Vicente Carin became an amateur boxer, and he earned himself quite a repu-

## Grandmaster Vicente “Inting” Carin

[1920 – 2004]

Doce Pares

Vicente Carin was born in Dalaguete, which is in Cebu, and it’s approximately 40 miles away from Cebu City.

At the time of his birth there was a mix up with dates and times of the birth, so throughout his life he always had to celebrate two birthdays, one for the date told to him by his mother, and the other was the date that was eventually put on the birth certificate documents, but no-one knew which date was the correct one.

When Vicente Carin was very young, his father Gorio persuaded his wife Merta to leave their dwellings and to go live in Cebu City where he had found a new job.

But Merta did not like the idea because she was happy with the resources that they had, and to her it was sufficient enough for their family to live with.

tation as a very tough opponent, especially after having some very hard fights.

He also worked as a counter salesman in a Japanese owned store before the war.

As a child he studied to a good level of education, actually this was almost an equivalent level to the school teachers there in the Philippines, because he was very bright and articulate, and especially with the English language.

When World War 2 broke out, the young man Vicente Carin signed up as a soldier, and he was then inducted as regular member of the Philippine Guerilla Platoon.

He was very active as a Geurilla fighter in the mountains around Cebu, and he fought against the Japanese.

After the war he was honorably discharged as a soldier, so he sought refuge back in Dalaguete where he was born, but when he arrived there he got a real surprise when he found out that most of his the senior family relatives had commenced the practice of Eskrima, and they trained with great pride and honor.

He learned his Eskrima skills from the leader of the group, this was his Uncle Ponsing

Ybanez, and everyone knew that Ponsing Ybanez was a great stick fighter, and he became Vicente Carin’s teacher, hero and idol.

There was a time when a family feud erupted into full blown mayhem between his Eskrimador relatives and a group of stone throwing distant relatives.

Even Vicente Carin’s old father Gorio got involved in that battle and he protected any of his fallen relatives by screaming at the oncoming distant relatives who were coming to kill the fallen family member.

Gorio Carin chased people away with his knife, and at times he would even pick up a stone and throw it back at the angry group of distant relatives. (The old man saved the fallen ones from a certain death!)

Old man Gorio was not fully convince that Eskrima was effective enough in a dangerous fight, so he preferred to use a bladed weapon instead.

When Vicente Carin had learned enough of the Filipino Stickfighting from his Uncle Ponsing Ybanez, he had to fight a ‘Juego Todo’ stick fight with his teacher just to see if he was worthy enough to be a real stick fighter.

It was here that Vicente Carin earned his reputation as a champion stick fighter, because he was too tough for his Uncle Ponsing Ybanez, because he fought him so hard that eventually Ponsing Ybanez surrendered.

At the height of Vicente Carins popularity as a 'Juego Todo' stick fighter, he sought the whereabouts of his brother's killer, because he wanted to avenge his brother's death.

That brutal Policeman heard that Vicente Carin was looking for him so as to avenge his brother's murder, so the Policeman got so scared that together with his family they all left to go live in Mindanao.

The Policeman had been told about Vicente Carin's 'Juego Todo' stick fights, and his acts of bravery during the war, so the Policeman became so afraid of Vicente Carin's day of vengeance, so he just fled.

After the war Vicente Carin polished and upgraded his Eskrima skills to a very effective and combative level, and he taught his family members his own style of Eskrima.

Vicente Carin later joined the very famous Doce Pares Eskrima Organization, so he became the student of Grand Master Momoy Canete, and he was taught the Espada y Daga techniques from this great teacher.

Vicente Carin was later ranked as a 'Grand Master' in the Doce Pares Eskrima system, and he would do a lot of sparring with the club's 'Juego Todo' champion, the very famous Cacoy Canete!

Eventually Grandmaster Vicente Carin branched out and created his own style of 'Dalaguete Doce Pares Eskrima', and

now his sons teach the style of their father, and they continue his legacy.

**Note:** *'Espada y Daga' means- Sword and Dagger Techniques 'Juego Todo' means- Stick fight without any rules, and no protective equipment.*

There are many styles in Cebu that once belonged to the original Doce Pares Eskrima Organization which was founded in 1932, but a lot of these styles have branched off to create their own style of Eskrima, yet it is so very obvious to see the essence of the original Doce Pares Eskrima techniques still in their systems, even at this time now.

The Doce Pares Eskrima Organization is respected as the leader and front runner of Eskrima in Cebu City of the Philippines, ever since it was formulated in 1932.

Doce Pares Eskrima Stick fighters are known as real stick-fighting warriors in the Philippines.

Vicente Carin was given money from his father and he was asked to process his documents so that he could get residency for all of the Carin family in the USA, this was because Vicente Carin was a member of the USAFFE during World War 2.

Unfortunately Vicente Carin lost the money because he had stopped by at a local gambling den along the way, and he had lost all the money with his gambling, so he decided to dispose of all the USA residency application forms, and he hoped that his father would just think that the family's application did not get accepted.

Vicente Carin was very afraid of the wrath that he would



receive from his father if he ever found out the real truth of what had really happened to that money and the documents for the USA residency application.

This is something he regretted all his life, because if he had done the right thing, all of his family and himself could have been American citizens, and then they would all be eligible to receive some form of pension as well.

After this he became an amateur boxer, and he was known for his tremendous knockout punch, but after having a few bouts, he decided to quit boxing because of his height disadvantage against much taller opponents.

There was a time when Vicente Carin's distant uncle taught him how to use special amulet powers, this was also while he was still back in the army brigade near his hometown, and his uncle showed him how he would inflict a stab or slash against some of his disciples onto their arms and body, but it wouldn't pierce the skin of the person.

His uncle told Vicente Carin that these powers protected people against blades and bullets.

Vicente Carin was given the daily Mantra prayer, and the

ritual was all done in Latin words for personal protection, power and anticipation, which could be used to calm an otherwise volatile individual or animal, and these powers, could also be used to calm an aggressive spirit or demon. Vicente Carin taught his older son Alfredo how to use these powers as well, and he practiced this ancient belief and Mantra for many years, actually Vicente Carin continued this ritual and Mantra rite up to his death in 2004.

When Vicente Carin joined the Doce Pares organization he already had well polished Eskrima skills that he had learned from the great Grandmaster Momoy Canete, this also included the basics of Espada y daga, and he was taught the old techniques from the original Labangdon Fencing Club.

Vicente Carin liked to practice using a sharp single blade pinute, or the long bladed Kampilan sword, and he also liked to demonstrate his skills with these weapons whenever he did an exhibition for the public.

Some original members of the Doce Pares Club consisted of

Delfin Lopez, Grandmaster Anciong Bacon, Coling Javelosa, the Saavedra Brothers, and the Canete Brothers.

This was a time when Vicente Carin developed his own version of the espada y daga techniques, and he also developed the new series of techniques for the long range and close range knife fighting.

Vicente Carin came from the school of hard knocks, so he earned his living by being a minder for business men, and at times he was employed to put the hard word on staff members who were cheating their bosses by being dishonest in their behavior at their work place.

In early 1950s the Cebu City Mayor named Inting Del Rosario was always harassed by a Doce Pares member, his name was Delfin Lopez, he was a killer and a hulk of a man, because he was a wrestler, boxer and an expert Eskrimador, so Delfin Lopez was feared all over Cebu, and nobody dared to challenge this fierce man!

Whatever Bodyguard had been chosen to look after the Lord

Mayor of Cebu, this person always received a stern warning from Delfin Lopez, and they would also get a beating just to show who was in charge, and this is why nobody ever stood up to Delfin Lopez. (He'd always challenge any of the Bodyguards to a fight!)

Nobody at that time had the guts to become the Lord Mayors Bodyguard because they were all scared of that fierce man named Delfin Lopez, and what he would do to them.

The only person who accepted the task of being a Bodyguard for the Lord Mayor was Vicente Carin, because he was not scared of Delfin Lopez, and this was due to the fact that Vicente Carin knew everything about the fierce Delfin Lopez, so this also meant that he knew his strengths and weaknesses as a man, and as a fighter as well.

Therefore Vicente Carin was hired and appointed as the Senior Bodyguard for the Lord Mayor of Cebu!





## Gregorio Ceniza

1925 - 2007

Baraw Sugbo



Indeed very few practitioners of the Art of Eskrima nowadays specialize only in one facet of a complex fighting system ranging from solo baston, double baston, espada y daga, pangamot-the entire gamut of the Filipino Martial Arts. One such rare master is Gregorio “Goyong” Ceniza of Mandaue City, Cebu. Grandmaster Goyong specializes only in the deadly business of knife fighting, period. Baraw Sugbu formerly known as Arnis Diablo traces its lineage to the patriarch of Cebuano Doce Pares the Great Grandmaster Lorenzo Saavedra. Saavedra taught a distinct brand of knife fighting that he shared to only a few chosen disciples. One of Saavedra’s protégés a certain Simo later passed on the methodology to Lucesio Okit Albano who became later Goyong Ceniza’s mentor in Baraw Sugbu.

The system was so secret that Grandmaster Ceniza says they used to practice under a cloak of blanket to screen the deadly drills.

One of Grandmaster Ceniza’s top students was the late Aproniano “Rene” Capangpangan who also later became the mentor of Dr. Ned Nepangue.

### The Passing of an Eskrima Patriarch Sun Star Cebu

By Karlon N. Rama

The community of Eskrimadores in Cebu, mourn the passing of a teacher - Gregorio Ceniza, 82.

Goyong to friends and fellow practitioners, he was a proponent of Baraw Sugbo, a dagger-oriented system that traces its roots to Lorenzo Saavedra - one of the patriarchs of Eskrima in Cebu and teacher to both Venancio “Anciong” Bacon (1912-1981) of Balintawak and Filemon “Momyoy” Cañete (1904-1995) of Doce Pares.

Baraw Sugbo, however, is one of the least known styles of Eskrima. This is understandably so because when people think “Eskrima” they only see two people with sticks fighting in their heads. And Goyong never went main stream by teaching on a commercial scale. Thus, word of his art didn’t spread outside his own close-knit community of practitioners.

Training is done in twos and proceeds as an interactive drill. Trainings begin standing up, just like corto mano practice in Eskrima, or on the ground. Like in Eskrima, the concept of the live or checking hand opposite the weapon hand is very evident. And instead of being taught a series of disarming techniques, Baraw Sugbo teaches a flowing maneuver of attacks, counters and counter-to-counter moves like the palakaw of Eskrima. The students exchange roles so they can both practice the attacking and defending components of the art.

Lineage: Ceniza, accord-

ing to the book Cebuano Eskrima: Beyond the Myth of Dr. Ned Nepangue and Celestino Macachor, learned the dagger art from his uncle, the late Lucesio Albaño who learned it from a certain Simo, Saavedra’s only student in knife fighting.

Ceniza taught the art to two men, Cronnie Cabatingan and Rene Capangpangan (1953-2000), as well as to his son, Eduardo “Boy” Ceniza.

It was Capangpangan who baptized the technique as Baraw Sugbo with Ceniza’s approval. Baraw is the Cebuano word for dagger. Cabatingan and the younger Ceniza continue to teach it today. Most of their students are friends and the friends of friends who are interested.

Minus the 181 “vigilante-style” murders that media has reported heavily on since 2004, the knife rules Cebu City’s mean streets. More people are brought to government hospitals for stab wound rather than gunshot wound treatment, attests Dr. Tyrone Mercader. And the wounds, he said, range from the ordinary-looking puncture marks to those long hid-



eous slashes that take dozens of stitches to close.

Thus a martial art that allows a man to defend himself from a knife attack is definitely significant, especially now that a gun ban - which does nothing but encourage street crime by prohibiting law-abiding citizens from fighting back – has limited our manner of protecting ourselves.

### Roland Tangco Pintoy Dantes

[1944 – 2009]

A very sad day for the Filipino martial arts community throughout the world, Roland Dantes was rushed to the Philippine Heart Center, East Ave., Quezon Coty, Philippines and expired at 1:52 am on March 16, 2009.

Just the afternoon and evening before he had joined in a gathering of Filipino martial arts practitioners at Peachie Baron-Saguin home, enjoying the camaraderie and brotherhood of fellow martial artists.

Untiring in his quest in the promulgation and promotion of the Filipino martial arts, Roland Dantes was a man that had touched every one’s life that had met him, a true crusader and ambassador of the Filipino martial arts and the Philippine culture.

Roland Dantes was viewed by family, friends and fellow martial artists at Marian Memorial Chapel located on Marcos Highway, Antipolo City, Rizal, Philippines; he was dressed in his Arnisador uniform with two bastons at his side.

Roland Dantes was laid to rest on March 22, 2009 at Heaven’s Gate Memorial Park, Antipolo, Philippines.

Looking back to when the Spanish dominated the Philippines, Guro Dantes Spanish grandfather Loreto arrived from Spain, only to see that the Filipino people were being unjustly ruled and treated. Seeing this, his response was to join the resistance against the Spanish, he eventually came to the attention of the Spanish

rulers and culminated in a move to capture and arrest him. This made it to where he was constantly on the move to elude them, moving from one place to another.

Realizing his life was in danger should he stay in Manila, his grandfather fled Manila on a ship whose Captains name was Pintoy. Adopting the name Pintoy to assist



him in eluding the Spanish authorities, he was constantly on the move from one island to another to evade capture and he found himself in the southern regions of Leyte and Mindanao.

**Note:** There is an island off the coast of Leyte, which is named Pintuyon Island; this being named after his grandfather for this was is main refuge from the Spanish.





Being Spanish, he was already familiar with the Spanish methods of fencing, however due to his involvement with the resistance, he was exposed to the various approaches his Filipino resistance fighters he led and the Filipinos he came into contact with.

On a very sad day, while again moving to elude the Spanish, on a boat off the island of Mindanao, Roland's grandfather, grandmother and several of his men of the resistant were transiting in a boat. Pirates attacked the boat, and a fierce battle took place. Only the one of the men of Roland's grandfather is noted to be a survivor, and in accounting the events of the attack elaborated on what happened. He tells a story that Loreto, the grandfather of Master Dantes, was fighting fiercely against the pirates upon hearing his wife yelling from the rear; he turned to assist her only to be cut down from behind.

Two American missionaries took in Roland's father Climaco Pintoy now an orphan. Later, he entered the Philippine Military Academy and graduated as an officer of the Philippine Military. His father's career saw him assigned as Military Provincial Commanders of the provinces of Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, Dipolog and Zamboanga. After being promoted, Brigadier General Climaco Pintoy became the Military Zone Commander of the 4th military area, which comprised all the main southern islands including Mindanao, Jolo, Sulu, Palawan, etc. As Roland grew up in the different areas, he learned boxing from his father and was shown a little of arnis de mano before his father passed away. In teaching his son, Brigadier General Pintoy told Roland

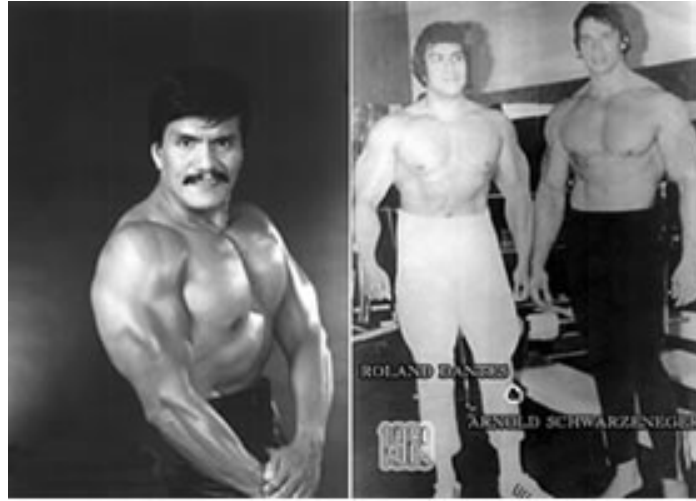
that what he was teaching him were techniques for survival and that the Filipinos had their own effective combat methods. After his father's death, Roland interest in martial arts stayed with him and he eventually earned black belts in Shotokan and Moo Duk Kwan.

While in college and majoring in PE (physical education), he met Professor Remy Presas. It was Professor Presas's program that was one of the first of its kind to be accepted by the Department of Physical Education to be used as a physical education subject. With his interest in arnis instantly re-ignited, Roland started training directly under Professor Remy Presas and went onto become one of his top students and close friends.

Roland assisted Professor Remy in traveling to the Japan and the US to introduce Modern Arnis in the 1970s. When Professor Remy left the Philippines to teach in the US in the late 1970s, Master Dantes still having a strong desire to learn the art and by this time since he was a well-known body builder and actor, he was fortunate to be able to study with several of the grandmasters and masters of different Filipino martial arts.

Always acknowledging these teachers of their skills and knowledge, Master Dantes believes in giving due credit. From his college days until today, Master Dantes passion for furthering his understanding of the Filipino martial arts still burns strongly.

Always one to contribute and assist in the preservation and promotion of the Filipino martial arts, Master Roland Dantes holds the position as Chairman of International Affairs of Arnis Philippines, and the International Arnis Federation, Arnis Philippines for



those who do not know, are the official governing body recognized by the Philippine government are in fact the 33rd Member of the Philippine Olympic Committee. As the Chairman of International Affairs he works not just with organizations within the Philippines, but also with different countries to promote and bring unity to the Filipino martial arts.

With the next Southeast Asian Games being held in the Philippines in 2005, a historic event will take place for Arnis/Kali/Eskrima will be an official event and not simply a demonstration sport. So this in its self will be a monumental moment and will be noted in history. This came about not only through the efforts of Arnis Philippines and its President, Mr. Raymond S. Velayo and all officers and staff. But the many organizations, grandmasters and masters who have constantly shared their knowledge and have promoted and worked hard for this

to come about. It is hoped that all practitioners of Filipino martial arts will come to share this most special time when the Filipino arts will compete showing the art to its fullest tradition, skills, and beauty. Not just as a sport, but as part of the history of the Philippines which has been continuously handed down from generation to generation. This has been through such men as Professor Remy A. Presas, Grandmaster Ben Luna Lema, Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo, Grandmaster Angel Cabales, Grandmaster Filemon Canete, Grandmaster Filemon Caburany, Grandmaster Leo Giron, Mangisursuro Mike Inay, Grandmaster Timoteo Maranga, Punong Guro Edgar Sulite, to mention just a few, for the list goes on and on. It is because due to the efforts of these great martial artists and the organizations that have promoted the Filipino martial arts so future generations can benefit.

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An Arnis Master in his own right, Guro Roland Dantes has studied under and exchanged ideas with a vast who's who in the world of Filipino martial arts, and has promoted the art of Arnis

continuously throughout the world. Additionally, he has promoted the art of Arnis continuously throughout the world since the 1970s. Awarded a 7th degree Black Belt in Arnis de Mano in 1977 by the late Grandmaster Remy Presas of Modern Arnis, he was later promoted to the rank of 8th degree black belt prior to Professor Remy passing away. Guro Dantes has also studied with some of the most recognized Filipino martial artists such as: Grandmaster Ben Lima - Lightning Scientific Arnis, Grandmaster Johnny F. Chiuten, Grandmaster Filemon Caburnay - Lapunti Arnis de Abaniko, Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo - Ilustrisimo system/ Kali Ilustrisimo, Grandmaster Jose Mena - Mena Style/Doblette Rapon, Grandmaster Dr. Guillermo Lengson (Kafephil / Arfephil/ Sagasa), Grandmaster Ciriaco "Cucoy" Canete - Doce Pares, Grandmaster Porfirio Lanada - Lanada Arnis, Grandmaster Edgar Sulite - De Campo, Caballero style / Lameco, Grandmaster Jose Vilasin - Balintawak, Grandmaster Johnny Chiuten - Combined Open style, Grandmaster Chris Ricketts - Bakbakan, Grandmaster Leo Gaje - Pekiti Tirsia, to name just a few.



## Master Robert M. Du

[? – 2007]  
PAKAMUT

On December 15, 2007 PAKAMUT representative in the Philippines Master Robert M. Du and one of the most senior student of Grandmaster Felix Roiles died passed away.

According to Mike one of the students, that Robert has been ill since August due to some internal bleeding.

Master Du was doing a lot of seminars and private instruction in law enforcement under the guidance of Grandmaster Felix Roiles. Master Du's contribution to the development of PAKAMUT was very instrumental which made him travel to different countries for the sole purpose of promoting the system which he believed to be the origin of the fighting art in the Philippine Archipelago.

Our deepest condolence goes out from the Headquarters of PAKAMUT International Association and Council of Masters in the United States to his family and students



Master Robert M. Du on the left in red.



## 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 Emeritus Leovigildo (Leo) Miguel Giron

[1911 - 2002]

Giron System of Arnis Escrima  
BAHALA NA

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

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

Giron landed in San Francisco in November 1926 and was picked up by his cousin and brought to Stockton, California. During this time Stockton, California had the largest population of Filipinos in America that it would earn the nickname “Little Manila”. Young Giron would work in various areas in Stockton until in 1929 when he would move to Meridian, California to pick prunes. During this time he would meet a man by the name of Flaviano Vergara. Vergara was from the town of Santa Cruz in Ilocos Sur Luzon, Philippines. Vergara was the top student of Dalmacio Bergoina who defeated the great champion Santiago Toledo. Giron and Vergara

would “play” deep in the orchards so no one would be able to watch the secret training of the deadly art of Arnis / Escrima. There training would last from 1929 until 1932. Vergara and Giron would meet again directly after the outbreak of World War II. They would train again for the last time from October 1942 until January 1943.

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

On September 24, 1942 he was inducted into the United States Army and would be attached to the 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment and would later be assigned to the famous 978th Signal Group and The Allied Intelligence Bureau. This was a select group of men that served as secret opera-



tives for General Douglas MacArthur. Then Sergeant Leo Giron would be dropped behind enemy lines by submarine nearly one full year before any America Soldier would set foot on Philippine soil. It was there assignment to search out the enemy, extending lines of communication, securing vital weather data and obtaining military information and not to be detected by the enemy. Sergeant Giron lead a group of American and Philippine soldier’s through the most hazardous conditions of World War II deep in the jungles of the Philippines. Many encounters are documented in the United States Library of Congress in Washington DC. Because of his contributions during World War II Sergeant Giron would receive, The Bronze Star Medal, The Philippine Liberation Ribbon, The Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, The American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and a letter of commendation ordered by the President of the United States of America.

Giron would return to civilian life as World War II hero and a part of America’s Greatest Generation. But, without anyone knowing

he would return too live a new and normal life in America as a Filipino American, not pondering on his heroics during the War. After the war Giron would return to Stockton, California to raise a family.

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

In 1970 Grandmaster Leo M. Giron and wife Alberta would

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

Grandmaster Giron’s contributions to the Filipino Martial Arts in general were enormous. He was known as the Father of Larga Mano in America. A World War II veteran that knew how to use his

weapon and will be always remembered as a great man, a humble man, with dignity, love in his heart, a living legend and martial art Icon. He was a super star, he was our star and he was our shining light of life. He gave us all the liberty of freedom to learn of life and the arts, Equality in having the necessary ability and strength, Fraternity in which the same beliefs in work along with fellowship and family.

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

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### “BAHALA NA”

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





## Julian Goc-ong

[1925 – 2003]

Abanico De Vertical

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 his 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 (corncobs) 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 hot-headed 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 Tumalak. Judge Tumalak 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 Balam-ban 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 eskrimadors 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.

Francing 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 locked 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 guod (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.



Mangisursuro Michael G. Inay  
[1944 – 2000]  
Inayan Eskrima

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

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

Working in the asparagus fields of Stockton and living in the temporary camps was not where Mateo wanted for his son while going to High School so he arranged for Suro to live with one of Suro's friends, Benny. Mateo paid Benny's mother Mrs. Amigable to take care of him.

While living with this family Suro was introduced to Max Sarmiento. Max was married to Benny's sister so he was around the house often. When Suro was dating his first wife Mary she had a relative in San Jose that got Suro a job so Suro and Mary moved to San Jose. It was while Suro was in San Jose practicing Gung Fu that he found out about Max being an Eskrimador through Mary's sister. She said she had read an article in the newspaper about Angel Cabales and Max Sarmiento.

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

with both Angel Cabales and Max Sarmiento.

Suro Inay co-founded the West Coast Eskrima Society with its first chairman, Max Sarmiento in 1979. The West Coast Eskrima Society was formally inaugurated in Los Gatos, California in Suro Inay's home. The West Coast Eskrima Society was founded in the hopes of preserving, propagating and promoting the Filipino Martial Arts.

The "West Coast Eskrima Society" was, for the first time in the Filipino Martial Arts community, able to unite several Filipino Masters under one organization. The Society's Charter was signed in Suro Inay's house in Los Gatos, California on January 13, 1979. Many notable Eskrima Masters joined the West Coast Eskrima Society and were present during the Charter signing. Some of the original members were: Max Sarmiento, Mike Inay, Jimmy Tacosa, Jeffrey Elliott, San Tendencia, Dentoy Revillar, Gilbert Tenio, Leo Giron, Narrie Babao, Dan Inosanto and Richard Bustil-

lo. Suro Inay was instrumental in bringing both The "West Coast Eskrima Society" and the "Cabales-Serrada Eskrima Association" to light. They were the forerunners of the present day Filipino Martial Arts organizations that have emerged in the last 20 years. Suro Inay also played an integral role in the events over the past several years that lead to the growing acceptance of the Filipino Martial Arts in the U.S.

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

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

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## 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.





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

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

Suro Inay developed several courses dealing with pressure sensitive nerve areas, riot baton and advanced knife training. He also developed the use of the knife as an alternative weapon for executive protection in instances where a firearm is not warranted or safe to use.

Mangisursuro Michael G. Inay passed away while doing what he loved the most - teaching Inayan Eskrima. Though he was

taken from us long before his time, he made a profound impact in the Martial Arts world and improved the lives of many. Those that he touched most have vowed to keep his dream alive by spreading the word of Inayan Eskrima.

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

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

puts them together as it fits their particular way of fighting.

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

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

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

This style is credited as being the first complete formal style to teach the use of the Kampilan.

**Supplemental styles include:**

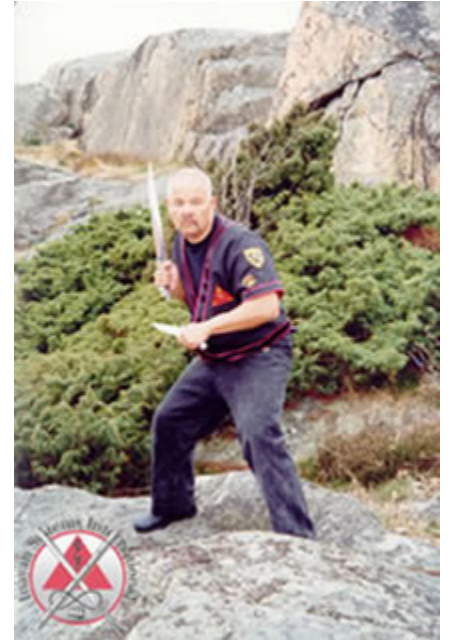
- Inayan Dequerdas
- Inayan Sinawali
- Inayan Espada y Daga
- Inayan Sibat/Bankow

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

**Inayan Brotherhood of Eskrima (IBE):** The IBE is the active founding Guro council that sets the policy and direction for the underlying organizations.

**Inayan Systems International (ISI):** The ISI is made up of the core schools and students. These schools are headed by Inayan Guros and have Inayan Eskrima as their core curriculum.

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



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

**• Inayan Kadena de Mano**

Kadena De Mano translates to “chain of hand” and is a combination of empty-hand and knife/dagger techniques. It covers basic and advanced hand and knife drills as well as permuted locks from the basic/advanced drills. Lock/flow/trap practice drills are stressed as well as subject control through the use of Vital Points (Pressure Sensitive Nerves).

**• Inayan Serrada**

Serrada translates to either “to close” or “close quarters”. The style is noted for using a shorter cane, male triangle footwork, and quick, linear, in-close fighting. This blade and stick style translates well into empty-hand applications.

**• Inayan Largo Mano**

Largo Mano translates to “long hand” and is a long-range system of Eskrima. Evolved to use a longer/heavier cane (~40”) and to use the cane as if it were a Kampilan, the longest sword found in the Philippines.

## Maestro de Maestro Sozimo 'Sosing' Labor

[1924 – 2008]

Siete Pares Escrima



favorite weapon was the bamboo lance or bankao. Sosing was taken to Iloilo under his wing for tournament

the town fiesta was held every day and the American soldiers and guerillas were fighting with the Japanese in the surrounding islands, Sosing honing his skill on the tournament. The big tournament was Sosing Labor fought

and defeated the seven brothers, thus becoming the youngest tournament of death champion in their town.

The war was over, the oldest of the seven brothers died and Sosing Labor was asked to take the leadership of the 7 Pares Escrima System. Sosing Labor then incorporated his style of fighting, the De Campo, Disalon and Orabis system. Sosing Left his province of Iloilo to seek the greener pastures of the city of Manila. Working as a handy man for the Magsaysay family, in which one became president of the Republic, Ramon Magsaysay. Sosing then settled in the town of Subic or Subic City as known to U.S. servicemen. It's about 65 miles north from the city of Manila and 8 miles north of the U.S. naval base in Subic Bay. Here he settled into a quiet life, blessed with a wife and 2 sons.

Tired of the hustle and bustle of the big city, he came home to Subic and became a driver of the community transportation, the tricycle, a Filipino innovation

made of motorcycle with sidecar that can carry up to 7 passengers. Nobody knows that we have a champion among our midst.

Bert Labitan, born in the Visayas, the province of Cebu, grew up in Subic City, his father's hometown. As a son of a poor family, Bert learned hardship in early life. Their livelihood was fishing on the Bay of Subic. That barely supports a family of 5, so Bert the eldest of the children learned illegal ways of fishing, like dynamite and the use of poison to bring home more fish. Like his forefathers before him, he also sought greener pastures and was blessed that he was recruited by the U.S. Navy.

In the early part of 1976, Bert stationed on board the U.S.S. Dixie and was in Subic Bay for R and R. As a new Black Belt of Arnis Batangas, as taught by Master Babao, presented an exhibition of the art during the town's celebration for the farmers. Assisted by his compadre, Reggie Probst, a brown belt of the art, he brought the people into wild applause. When the celebration was over, Bert and Reggie, like triumphant gladiators walked in the town street with heads up and chest out. Sosing Labor was in the audience and walked with them toward Bert's house a few hundred yards from the celebration. Sosing then said to Bert that it was a good show, but can be made better. He then told Bert, who regards him as a distant relative, that he'll see him that night. Bert's house also served as a small gym in the first

floor. At 7:00 that evening, Sosing arrived at Bert's house with a coconut leaf center rib shaped like a sword. He then instructed Bert to strike. Bert only remembered his one and only strike, the rest he was not able to remember. He gained consciousness while his mom was applying medicinal coconut oil to his bruises, thus started Bert's lesson in 7 Pares Escrima. After a couple months in Subic Bay, the U.S.S. Dixie went back to the United States in San Diego, California. Two months later, Bert was

on his way back to Subic Bay and reported to his duty station at Naval Supply Depot, oil farm as a new maintenance chief. For 3 years, while stationed in Subic, Bert trained daily with Maestro de Maestro Sozimo Labor in the fighting art of 7 Pares Escrima. On the 3rd year of their training, Bert was able to differentiate and isolate each style of the Siete Pares system. Bert was wondering throughout those years of training why he can't figure out where was the number one strike of 7 Pares

Escrima coming from. Each day starts from a different angle. On November 30, 1994, Maestro de Maestros or Grandmaster Sosing Labor passed the stewardship of Siete Pares Escrima to Bert Labitan, Maestros or Grandmaster of the system.

7 Pares Escrima is composed of the following styles: Sinawali, Di Campo, Tinulisan, Figura 8, Orabis, Disalon, Binukidnon, Kapakapa or Pupog, Pabilog, Combate Heneral, Cruzada, At Iba Pa.

On June 29th, 2008, the Founder of the Siete Pares Escrima System, Sozimo Labor passed away in the Philippines. He was in his 90's.

We honor his memory and are proud to be part of his legacy to this day.

The fighting arts of Siete Pares Escrima can be traced to a certain town in Iloilo Philippines, as practiced by seven brothers, each one fights with a different style or way from each other. They were the defending champion in their town for so many years, unbeatable and undefeated, until one day a young man named Sozimo Labor or Sosing as known by his town mate of Janiway came into the picture. A prodigy of Carlos Jaranella, an adventurer and fighter who earned his skills from Cebu who travelled back to Iloilo as guerilla, a soldier of World War II and also a tournament of death fighter. Sosing Labor learned his Arnis/Escrima basics from his father, Zacarias Labor, a De Campo and Disalon fighter whose

## 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.

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### Grandmaster Ben Largusa

(1926 - 2010)

Villabrille-Largusa Kali System

*“To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.”* - Thomas Campbell

*“Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, Love leaves a memory no one can steal.”* - Author Unknown



Kali Grandmaster Ben T. Largusa - a Filipino martial arts legend and one of the greatest martial artists in the world – has left the narrow bonds of earth to touch the face of God!

Grandmaster Largusa passed away at age 84 early Sunday morning, October 3, 2010, in his home in Kauai, Hawaii. A high-ranking yet truly humble martial artist, a husband, father and grandfather, he was preceded in death by his sons Lance and Layne,

and is survived by his wife Philomena, daughter Lois, and sons Jerry and Lindsey.

His passing is a great loss to the Filipino martial arts world! Grandmaster Largusa was the head of Kali - an ancient but existing martial arts system. It is so effective in combat that during Spain's conquest of the Philippines some Southern Philippine tribes had successfully resisted the armored might of the Spaniards for nearly four centuries.

Grandmaster Largusa is widely regarded as the final word on this devastating and deadly method of combat. Kali is a system so unique that it is said to be the source of all Eskrima styles. It could also be the only martial arts system in the Philippines and the United States where there is one Grandmaster and one Master at any given time. In other systems it is a common practice that there are several Masters, Grandmasters and even Great Grandmasters at the same time.

The very first Grandmaster in Kali was no other than Grandmaster Floro Villabrille, the Philippines' most revered fighter and champion of numerous stick-fighting death matches. It is from the Patriarch of Kali himself that Grandmaster Largusa learned a unique blend of deadly and devastating methods, strategies and techniques in martial arts.

Grandmaster Largusa was born in Kauai in 1926 where his parents immigrated to from Carcar, Cebu, Philippines. Although he started his Filipino martial arts training from his father, his first Eskrima instructor was a Master Agustin. His training with Agustin ended when he joined the U.S. Army in 1945 during World War II.

While in the Army, Largusa trained in several fighting systems that also included Judo and boxing. Upon his discharge from the Army in 1951, he returned to Kauai, and with the blessings of his instructor

Master Agustin, he was accepted as a student of Grandmaster Villabrille.

At the age of 25, Largusa trained one-on-one for seven consecutive years with Villabrille, who was still in his prime then at 39 years old. At the onset of his training, Grandmaster Villabrille had him promise to never teach anyone else the art of Kali. At the time, few people had ever heard of this deadly art because it was a closely-guarded secret that was passed only from teacher to student and from father to son.

As his years of training with Villabrille progressed, Largusa realized that what he was learning was primarily comprised of fighting techniques and theory, and that he could not teach the system the way it was taught to him. So he broke down step-by-step and move-by-move – Grandmaster Villabrille's complete system.

In recognition, the Kali Patriarch gave Ben T. Largusa a signed legal document designating him the sole heir to the Villabrille method and the title of Tuhan (Master). Largusa was also authorized to add his name to Villabrille's system of martial arts, hence it is widely known today as: Villabrille-Largusa Kali System.

When Grandmaster Villabrille passed away in March 8, 1992, Tuhan Largusa automatically became the second grandmaster of the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System. Upon assuming the mantle of leadership, Grandmaster Largusa was duty-bound to also select who among the officially designated Kali guros (instructors) will be the next in line.

Guro/Professor Mel Lopez of San Francisco was Grandmaster

Largusa's choice! With Largusa's demise, Grandmaster Mel Lopez is the third grandmaster of the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System.

Largusa moved to San Francisco from Kauai when he was around 32 or 35 because Grandmaster Villabrille told him to train and spar with opponents of different styles. Once in the Bay Area, he met people from different Karate and Kung-Fu styles. He was invited to spar with practitioners of Choy Li Fut, Wing Chun, and Praying Mantis. Because he could easily handle the fighters, everyone thought that he trained in kung-fu, although he didn't. Villabrille's system gave him the facility to effectively deal with other martial arts styles.

I have heard that one of Largusa's constant sparring partners was a Kung Fu Sifu who claimed to be a practitioner of the "Hundred Elephant" style. Said Sifu tried numerous times to penetrate Largusa's defenses but failed. Like a master chess player, Largusa was always many moves ahead of the sifu's planned attacks.

Grandmaster Ben Largusa was the first man to bring and introduce Kali into the United States public arena. He gave America its first demonstration of Kali in 1964 at the Ed Parker International Karate Championships in Long Beach, California. Also in attendance were numerous martial artists from around the world, including the legendary Bruce Lee, Dan Inosanto and Jhoon Rhee.

On the eve of this event, Parker gathered the top instructors of the various martial arts inside a hotel ballroom. Every instructor was given a chance to present the principles and theories of their

particular system. Ben Largusa was among those presenters.

Parker decided that Bruce Lee would be the last to present. While giving the values of his Gung-fu system, Bruce Lee felt he was talking above the heads of the people present. Most of the other martial arts instructors were even baffled of what Lee was talking about.

When Lee saw what was happening, he made eye contact with most of the instructors present and pointedly commented, "It seems that most of you have no idea of what I'm talking about. It looks like Ben Largusa is the only one who understands."

On the day of the Internationals, both Bruce Lee and Ben Largusa were introduced to the American public for the very first time!

On stage, Bruce Lee demonstrated his modified form of Wing Chun Gung Fu, the precursor to Jeet Kune Do, as well as Lee's very well publicized, powerful two-inch punch. Largusa, on the other hand, demonstrated sparring using Eskrima sticks with his brother, Dominador Largusa, as his partner.

Prior to their performance, Largusa asked the audience to refrain from taking any still photos or home-movie pictures. At that time there were no video cameras or cell phones yet. His plea fell on deaf ears because he noticed the flashing lights of several cameras, so he had to cut short his presentation.

The great Ed Parker was a martial artist with an open mind. Even way before the 1964 Karate Championships, Parker wanted to know more about the art of Kali. Largusa explained to him that Kali



is not just about stick-fighting, and he proceeded to show Parker empty-hand movements and techniques. Parker was very impressed and decided that he and Largusa get together more often. Parker loved the Kali movements and footwork. They had another friend, a Choy Li Fut practitioner, on these get-togethers. When Parker decided to put on his famous Karate Internationals, he asked Largusa to demonstrate.

A few weeks after the Karate Internationals, Parker received a phone call from William Dozier, the producer of the "Batman" TV series. Ed Parker had a lot of friends in Hollywood and was teaching martial arts to some of the top people in the industry. Dozier was then planning to produce a new action TV series called "The Green Hornet." He asked Parker's assistance to help him search for a real martial artist to play the role of Kato, the Green Hornet's sidekick.

Parker called up Largusa and told him that Hollywood needed a person for that role, and he thought of two people - Ben Largusa and Bruce Lee. But he

decided to offer the part to Largusa first and Bruce second. Largusa told him that he truly appreciated the offer but that he couldn't answer right then; he needed time to think. A few days later, he called Parker back and declined the offer. Parker was disappointed that he didn't accept, but he understood. So Parker said, "I'll have to call Bruce Lee." And the rest is history.

Everyone who knew Grandmaster Ben Largusa knows that he is a very humble man. He never dreamed of using his martial arts knowledge as a way to gain

fame, fortune and glory.

I and my husband first met this great yet humble man, who describes himself as "just a man of Kali" back in 1976 in one of the Filipino martial arts events in Los Angeles. We were introduced to him by our very good friend and kumpadre Dan Inosanto, another martial arts legend, who is the godfather of our youngest son, Kris.

And then in 1978, Largusa made my husband a Kali Guro when his U.S. navy ship made a port visit to San Francisco. Before we changed our martial arts school



**Kali heirarchy, seated L to R:** Grandmaster Floro Villabrille, Kali Patriarch; Grandmaster Ben Largusa, Villabrille's successor; and Grandmaster Mel Lopez, Largusa's successor.

to "Babao Arnis" we called it "Kali Academy of San Diego."

In 1981, at a very special ceremony in Kauai which we attended, Grandmaster Villabrille presented then Tuhan Largusa the "Conveyance of Life Interest", which gave Largusa the exclusive right, license and authority to use the name of Floro Villabrille School of Kali in perpetuating and promoting the Kali system. Although there were others who trained under Villabrille, it was Largusa who was chosen by Villabrille to be his successor. It was such an honor and a privilege for me to meet Grandmaster Villabrille in person! I wrote about him, and other Filipino martial artists, in some newspapers and magazines I write for through the years. One of

these papers was the San Diego Taliba (News) which I edited.

The last time we saw Grandmaster Largusa was in Los Angeles in June 18, 1993 at the very memorable event called "The City of Los Angeles Honors the Living Treasures of the Filipino Martial Arts." I remember that among the Filipino martial arts legends present, aside from Grandmaster Largusa, were the late Grandmaster Leo Giron, the late Grandmaster Sam Tendencia, the late Senior Guro Lucky Lucaylucay, Grandmaster Richard Bustillo, Guro Dan Inosanto, and Professor Greg Lontayao.

When not practicing martial arts, Grandmaster Ben Largusa's main hobby was playing his guitar. He was always on the

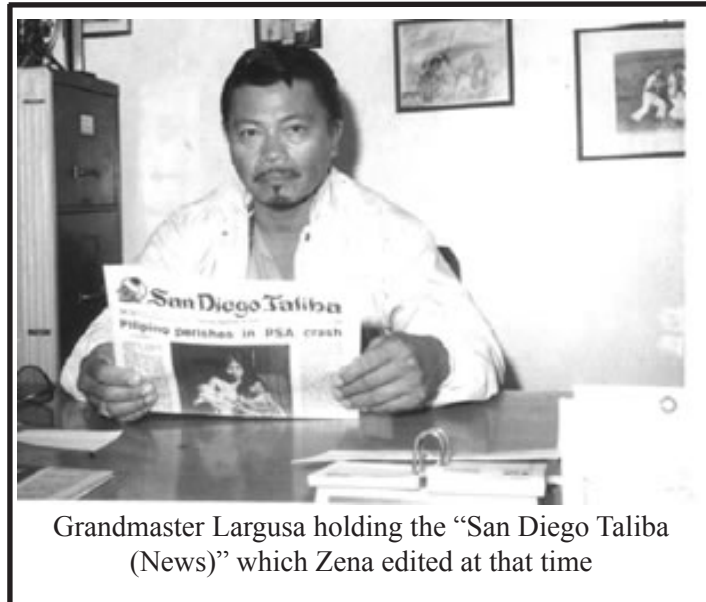
look-out for a good guitar player or instructor from whom he could learn more. His refined ear for music was probably inspired by Grandmaster Villabrille who taught him the musical rhythm of Kali. The various beats and tempo of the drums, the gong and the kulintang (Philippine musical instruments) can only be appreciated by a knowledgeable Kali practitioner who could use these musical beat and tempo as tools in sophisticated fighting moves.

Until now there are folk dances in the Southern part of the Philippines where the dancers' fluid movements are actually camouflaged fighting moves. It's up to the audiences' depth of knowledge of Philippine martial arts or Philippine history to actually perceive these moves.

Grandmaster Ben T. Largusa - you are gone but not forgotten. You have left a lasting legacy to us all in the Martial Arts world! You will forever be loved and revered! Rest in peace with the Lord!!



At the "Living Treasures of the Filipino Martial Arts" grand event in Los Angeles, California in 1993 attended by Filipino martial artists from all over the United States.



Grandmaster Largusa holding the "San Diego Taliba (News)" which Zena edited at that time



Grandmaster Largusa with the Award of Recognition as an FMA Living Treasure





## Grandmaster Federico T. Lazo

[1938 – 2010]

Luzviminda Arnis Kali Brotherhood

A common theme among true masters of the martial arts is a growing desire to see their arts preserved for future generations. Grandmaster Lazo is no exception. After having distilled his art of Luzviminda Arnis Kali for over fifty-five years the Grandmaster now feels that the time has come to offer this uniquely refined art to the public. The year 2007 marks the historic year of the debut of the Luzviminda Arnis Kali Brotherhood in accord with Grandmaster Lazo's desire to share his legacy with the world.

Luzviminda Arnis Kali Brotherhood (L.A.K.B.) is a Filipino martial arts organization that aims to propagate the Filipino martial culture both in its classical form as well as its modern interpretation. The aim is to teach an all-around

knowledge of all the Filipino weapons as well as proficiency with empty hands. Luzviminda Arnis is not a sport but purely combat oriented fighting art.

The goal is to train highly skilled fighters and who will later go on to become highly skilled teachers, preserving the art for generations to come. Over 55 years of study in the Filipino martial arts has resulted in the formulation of the Luzviminda Arnis style.

Grandmaster Federico T. Lazo is a living treasure, and a peerless expert in the highly esteemed martial arts of the Philippine archipelago. Rarely does an individual progress to the levels of martial arts mastery that Grandmaster Lazo has ascended to. Even more rarely do they openly share what they have learned with others. A quiet and humble man by nature, Grandmaster Lazo has always been one to avoid public attention during his 55-year plus span of intense study, practice and application of these bona-fide warrior arts.

Although Grandmaster Lazo was actively involved with the creation and promotion of what is today known as Modern Arnis, for decades he has chosen to live in seclusion, preferring to teach just a handful of students. When Grandmaster Lazo is not engaged in the further refinement of his own signature art or training his core disciples, he passes his time by making authentic battle-ready weapons and refurbishing antique Filipino blades.

Grandmaster Lazo is and always was a man with a deep passion for every aspect of his art, from little known historical details to subtle differences in the application of techniques and everything in between. It is that enduring passion for the arts that he loves so dearly that has led this grandmaster to break out of seclusion and share his unique personal art, this crowning jewel, with the new generation of practitioners. This is his way of displaying his gratitude to all of the enthusiastic lovers of these arts and the passion and dedication that they have invested into their practice of the combat legacy of his homeland.



## Dr. Guillermo B. Lengson

[1929 - 2000]

KAFEPHIL

Dr. Lengson migrated to the USA during the mid 1980's and resided in Los Angeles, California. Jeff Suministrado met Dr. Lengson at a local martial arts club which was owned by one of Dr. Lengson's former students. Jeff began his martial arts training with Dr. Lengson (known as "Doc" by his students) at Doc's apartment in the garage and in his dental lab at the backyard, practicing what is today known as Sagasa Karate Kickboxing, and Doc's own arnis system. The relationship between Doc and Jeff grew closer and can be best described as father and son. Jeff even took on Doc's name, and was sometimes known to all as Jeff Lengson. With Doc's approval, Jeff renamed Doc's Martial Arts System as Lengson Martial Arts. Under this name, Jeff operated his first official martial arts school in Northridge, California while Doc had his club in L.A. Together, Doc and Jeff, along with instructors and members, Salvador "Badong" Alinas, Vic Alzate, Che Navidad, Jenny Oh, Debbie Oh, Mel Bautista, Bob Suministrado, gave demonstrations and seminars to those interested in martial arts.

During the late 1990's, Doc's health began to decline. His teaching became more detailed oriented and very instructional. Doc began to train Jeff separate from the other students, exposing him to different types of empty-hand and arnis drills. Doc also began to teach Jeff on how to modify and simplify training materials. One of Doc's main instructions to Jeff before he passed away was to have Jeff establish a

new martial arts system based on Doc's teachings and Jeff's acquired knowledge and experience in both competition and actual fights, as well as the training received from other previous instructors, two of whom were Ben and Bobet Torres, Founders of the Kuroi (black) Samurai Karate Club and members of the KAFEPHIL (Karate Arnis Federation of the Philippines), both were top fighters of their club. He also instructed Jeff to rename his club under his own name. On July 18, 2000, Guillermo "Doc" Lengson passed away in his L.A. apartment. His club in L.A. was closed and Jedokan martial arts under the ownership and instruction of Jeff Suministrado, was born on July 27, 2000.

Dr. Lengson's training methods focused on mind and body coordination, specializing in developing powerful hips and amazing footwork. It was very important to Doc that students learn very strong stances, powerful execution of attack the ability to dodge or evade an oncoming force or attack, and the effective manipulation of the opponent in a fight. Dr. Lengson's martial art system includes basic stances, basic blocks and basic strikes, borrowed from karate; lower body dexterity and kickboxing, strength, upper body speed and power-punching borrowed from boxing; agility, fluidity and flexibility borrowed from Kung fu; and weapons mastery from Filipino Arnis. However, what made Doc's system so unique are the dodging drills and other training methods which he himself developed. No martial arts system in the world

Doctor Guillermo Lengson was born on March 12, 1929, in Pangasinan City in the Philippines. Because he had a bad condition of asthma, he started training arnis at an early age to improve his health. Over time, he became proficient in boxing, kickboxing, some form of combat Judo, Kung Fu, and Shotokan. He eventually developed his own training methods based on his martial arts background, as well as his sparring and training experiences with close friends Remy Presas and Johnny Chuten. Dr. Lengson had his own martial arts club, and his team, the Black Banders, was the longtime reigning champion in karate and arnis. Dr. Lengson along with Remy Presas was invited to demonstrate and teach arnis, or kali, to the Tokoyo Police Department. He also trained the Philippine Air Force Anti Riot Squad in his martial arts system.

Dr. Lengson was re-known for inventing dodging drills, Sagasa drills and drills which emphasize the strengthening of the hips. Adding to his fame, he was the first Filipino martial arts instructor to have a television program in the Philippines (Karate Arnis Pilipino) which featured Karate and Arnis ring tournaments.



has the dodging drills that Doc's system has. This is the one of the main secrets of Doc's martial arts system.

Even during his older age, Doc was still sparring with Jeff and joining his other students in physical conditioning drills. Doc was an honest instructor who did his best to teach all he could to his chosen students, especially those training to become instructors. Doc always talked about his best friends Remy Presas and Johnny Chuten. He would refer to the fun times they had and how they went about developing moves and drills. Doc also spoke a lot about his team the Black Banders. He always mentioned how great his former students were. More importantly, Doc never failed to give lessons about life and marital arts as a way of life. He spoke highly about Ben and Bobet Torres as top fighters in their club, Salvador "Badong" Alinas whom he first used to test and was proven that his system was indeed effective and Vic Alzate who was known for having powerful execution of techniques. He also talked about Topher Ricketts sincere dedication to martial arts, and Topher's brother Ronnie Ricketts, who Doc often said was very good in sparring. Doc also often described Jeff Suministrado as having a gift or inborn skills in the martial arts and used to refer to him as being versatile. To his students, Doc was more than an instructor - he was a father, a mentor, and a best friend. Doc was not much talked about in the world of glamorized martial arts because of his humble nature and non-commercialized system.

He disapproved of commercializing martial arts, and never did. He believed that the

martial arts, is a way of life, the knowledge of which should be passed down to new generations of people dedicated to making martial arts an integral part of their lives.

Doc is one of the most unique martial artists in the world, having developed a training method that simply does not compare to any other. Even though Doc is gone, his work continues on through Jeff Suministrado (aka Jeff Lengson) and Jedokan Martial Arts.

### **A look into Grandmaster/Dr. Guillermo Lengson Arnis system**

Grandmaster/Dr. Guillermo Lengson arnis system had six basic strikes. The 2 upper strikes were focused on the upper left and right sides of the body, 2 were focused on the lower left and right sides of the body and 1 thrust to the center of the body sometimes to the stomach region and sometimes to the face or throat, then the last 1 is an overhead strike which sometimes applied on the sides of the neck although in training it is used to strike the top of the head.

The striking drills which are part of the system are mostly designed for the purpose of attacking the students and not so much on the offense. It was taught not to worry so much about matching an attack with specific blocks but instead, to dodge, parry, or side step depending on where the attack is coming from.

Students focused a lot on attacker and receiver drills and when the students are able to move freely and comfortably with the basic six strikes, then they would attack in a freestyle mode.

Even though the style used six basic strikes for long,

medium and short ranges, during freestyle attack, things change and other types of strikes are also used. Grandmaster Lengson was very technical and freestyle-like rather than in formation. Students were taught to react or respond freely rather than make assumptions. Almost like not thinking just react. That's why basic training was very important and we focused so much on it. The student depended on basic blocks and dodging with proper footwork which everything came from the styles empty hand system.

Also, before the student did arnis, training often was in empty hand first. There was also disarming. There were six basic disarming and the rest was taught and learned during what was called semi-prearrange. This is the stage where the student is attacked by the teacher in a freestyle mode but with control. The student is to respond from all ranges, long, medium, short, to disarming, tripping, takedowns, and locks or grappling.

### **Some of our basic drills were:**

- *Dodging arnis drills (combined dodging, blocking, parrying, attacking in short forms and later the forms are attack which becomes receiver drills)*
- *Tapikan freestyle*
- *Salagan or disarming drills*
- *Ispada at daga*
- *Sunggab kalas*
- *Dodge-hand check*
- *Semi prearrange (attacking the student in freestyle mode)*
- *Receiver drills (kind a like a kata but not exactly, short forms that we attack in formation that later move to freestyle)*
- *Locks and release drills*
- *Grappling drills and takedowns*
- *There was some twirling with dolete drills, pilantik or witik*

*drills.*

- Double stick drills such as basic sinawali, sinawali-salisi, sinawali-pinagsabay, one of our drills is the two sticks for the teacher and single stick for the student, and the student gets attacked and must react freely or in freestyle mode.
- The arnis system is both designed for stick and blade fighting

There was also knife fighting drills which follows the same patterns as the arnis, but a bit of adjustments were made in distancing and some of the dodging and deflecting. Focus was more on deflecting in the empty hand and weapons training. The empty hand and weapons training has the same pattern of movements, this was why the students fight very much alike with weapons and without

In my own version which is the JEDOKAN Arnis, I follow the same similar patterns but I use ten basic strikes to defend against and I have simplified some of the dodging, disarming, locking, and I do more attack and receive drills in freestyle. I also allow the students to spar at an early stage so they can get the idea of the application. I believe that there are three basic paths in learning.

1. Imitation of movements or drills,

2. Understanding the principles or knowing why to move in such a way, and
3. Application which is the freestyle mode of attack and receiver and sparring as well.

I also added more advanced and faster deflection drills. All or most of my disarming drills are reality based and had been used effectively in sparring matches including competition. I do not teach things just because so and so taught it. I teach things because they work. I like to stay basic based on what I learned from Grandmaster Lengson but at the same time, which is why I still fight is to continue to update and improve my Arnis system. The drills I have written above I still practice but with more attacks and more angles.

Fighters back then fight differently than today that is why I believe in fighting and practicing old system and the new system. In Jedokan, je-jeff, do-method, k-karate (any types of empty-hand, kickboxing, boxing, or grappling, a-arnis or kali, n-new system - which is like the old testament of the bible and the new testament. Grandmaster Lengson system is more like the old-testament and mine is more like the new-testa-

ment, united but with additional knowledge.

We did not use many tag-along terms. Also, the training is not so traditional but more scientific. However, we were always reminded of traditional discipline. The reason why Grandmaster Lengson and I used mostly the English language is to simplify the training methods being that the best way to teach and to learn is through simplicity and most students spoke and understood English.

In Jedokan, I have the ten basic strikes which are designed more as a tool to defend against. I also formed 8 sets of basic offensive strikes, and 8 sets of basic disarming.

Then I have ten basic receivers or short forms which includes the Pasuntok drills and disarming. The Pasuntok is what many call today as punyo or the usage of the fist or the butt of the stick. We also use the same sinawali drills as Grandmaster Lengson system. I also believe in half blade mode and half stick mode system. However, we tend to practice more stick drills than swords because there are obviously more things to do with arnis than the bolo in terms of real combat.



## Punong Guro Mark Lledo

[1974 – 2008]

Amara Arkanis

“The man who would have been FMA Master”

As a youngster he watched his father teach martial arts. He imitated the movements that he saw and started training on his own. A natural-born athlete, Mark excelled in unarmed and armed fighting. Like his father (Punong Mataw-Guro Lowelle Lledo), he made black belt when he turned 18 years old.

Carrying martial arts weapon, such as a stick, is prohibited by law so Louelle made Mark train hard in unarmed combat. Louelle made speed, power and accuracy Mark's hallmark of training. Mark excelled in Karate like his father. He won his share of medals and trophies in tournaments. But his concentration in training was in free-style sparring. Mark's style of fighting was considered rough and aggressive in the tournament circuit. Oftentimes he was warned by referees to have more control, to the point of being threatened with disqualification. He started to shy and eventually stay away from tournaments considering it too

restrictive. He preferred the all-out sabakan or free style sparring. Mark sparred with Louelle's mentors, senior students and training partners. He trained hard getting ready to live up to his father's aspirations and expectations.

Mark was a very formidable fighter whether in armed or unarmed combat. He had his share of medals and trophies in tournaments, but in the end he lost interest in rules-restrictive competitions.

He engaged in free-style sparring in the gym where there were no rules. In sabakan he concentrated on power hitting. He outfought all his training partners. But there was one very big drawback in his training. He had been fighting only one opponent at a time. With a single opponent, he was fighting like a horse with blinders concentrating only with the attack coming from the front. He did not need peripheral vision because he can see the opponent at all times.

Mark saw the weakness in this type of training. He developed his own type of sabakan. This training program was kept a secret that only he, his father Louelle, and closest martial arts friends were allowed to join and witness. He sparred with his three closest training partners, only this time all at the same time. He



trained in “real world” scenario, combining armed and unarmed tactics.

At first his training partners were a little apprehensive for fear that Mark or that they will get hurt in the uncontrolled manner of engagement. Mark insisted that it will be better to get hurt and bruised in training than to get hurt and die in the streets.

Realizing the benefits of the training, his partners thereafter all seriously participated. It became a round-robin type of sparring. To give their training “street realism”, Mark refused to use protective gear. He insisted that protective gear gives the trainees a false sense of security because they cannot feel the blow and they disregard defensive tactics. Eye gouging, kicks to the groin and strikes to the neck were “controlled”. Louelle also demanded they use padded sticks, rubber knives, head gear, and groin protector.

It was an unorthodox type of training that eventually became part of the teaching curriculum of Amara Arkanis in the Classification of Honor (Uri ng Karangalan) stage. Louelle Lledo gave it the term “Salida” (rushing downhill or exiting using momentum and

force).

Besides his father, Mark sought instructions from the best teachers, such as Rodel Dagooc of International Modern Arnis of the Philippines, Ciok Glaraga of Kalaki, Yaming and Arnis, Yuli Romo of the Philippine Panantukan Pendakali Stick Boxing Society and Mark Santos of ARMAS. He also trained with Ed Cayetano and George Artencio (his father's Tai Chi Chuan teachers) and Emmanuel Querubin and Rodrigo Espiritu of Sikaran Pilipinas. His grandfather's (Delfin Bernarte) motto “strike fast, strike hard and strike deep” became Mark's battle cry.

Mark developed his own version of “awareness training.” Using only his imagination, he performed his strategies and tactics while blindfolded, combining maneuvers from both armed and unarmed techniques.

Training with multiple opponents became Mark's routine. He still engaged on a one-on-one sparring but the emphasis of his training was “defense against the opponents that he cannot see”. Mark really developed into an all around fighter. His personal training method was described by his father as exhaustive and extreme.

For the first time Mark understood the principle of one-strike-one-kill that his father insisted should be the driving force in his training. To achieve this ability, Mark concentrated in “intuitive power strikes” to end the fight in one, preferably the first strike, before the opponent can attack.

Of equal importance, Mark developed to be a good teacher. Aware that teaching is also learning, after each training session

he lets his students attack him at random, sometimes all at the same time. To the students this was fun time, to Mark it was preparation in evasion and prevention from being hit in street fighting against multiple attackers. Because the attacks are unstructured, Mark learned how to react to different situations.

In 2000, Mark was promoted from Pansamantalang Guro (Provisionary Teacher) to Guro (Teacher), Uri ng Kagitingan (Classification of Steadfastness) Ika-4 na Antas, Sagisag na Itim may bandang kulay puti, ginto, at langit (4th Degree Black, white gold, and blue braided Sash) in Amara Arkanis.

In 2005 and 2008, Mark visited his father's Amara Arkanis School in New Jersey. Louelle's students were fascinated with Mark, whose expertise in the martial arts was a spitting image of Louelle. Mark's teaching and playing style was an exact copy of his father. He assisted his father in giving clinics and seminars. When Louelle was not available to teach, Mark takes over, without “skip-



left for the Philippines, Louelle promoted him to Punong-guro (Head Teacher) with the rank of Ika-5 Antas, Sagisag na Itim may bandang kulay puti, ginto, langit at dugo (5th Degree Black, white, gold, blue and red braided Sash). Together they worked on this Amara Arkanis Training Manual. While in the United States, Louelle continued Mark's preparation to one day be the successor to the Amara Arkanis (Sistemang Praksiyon) hierarchy.

Unfortunately the dream

never saw fulfillment. Mark Lledo went to bed and passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Mark's untimely passing away is a big lost to Amara Arkanis, his family and friends in particular, and the Filipino Martial Arts in general.



While in New Jersey, Punong Guro Mark Lledo assisted his father Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo (back turned to camera) in seminars and workshop.

ping a beat”.

In April 2008, before Mark



Guro Mark Lledo, training with his father Punong Mataw-Guro Louelle Lledo.



## Grandmaster Benjamin Luna-Lema

[1919 - 2003]

Lightning Scientific Arnis



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

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

great man and a good teacher, and the Lightning system has been both his legacy and his gift to his many students.

## Founder Reynaldo Ayo Magdaraog

[1945 - 1998]

Magdaraog Philippine Zen Aikido Jutsu Ryu

A man named Reynaldo "Rey" A. Magdaraog was born in Legazpi City, Albay Province on February 6, 1945. From the time he has entered school at the age of six, he has shown keen interest in the Eastern Arts of fighting. At that time Karate was beginning to take hold in the imagination of young men.

Rey A. Magdaraog started training in the discipline of Martial Arts in the year 1954 or at the age of 9 years. In his youth he studied many different kinds of Martial Arts like Chinese Karate (Kenpo), Judo, Boxing, Jujitsu and Kung-Fu, but the one that has fascinated him most was the Arts of Aikido.

He learned the Arts of Aikido through the guidance of the book Zen Combat. As no other person could possibly teach him, (at that time there was no known Aikido dojo in the Philippines) the Master relied mostly in books,

which he practiced to perfection. After years of hard training he was able to harness the power called Ki.

From this discovery he gathered some friends and started to share his knowledge of the power of Aikido. By this time he was not economically blessed to meet the demands of lesser-known Martial Arts. Following nature's way he continued to defy the trials and tribulations confronting each moment.

Destiny has its own way of getting things realized when the Master was able to land a teaching job at the Divine Word College of Legazpi City handling Practical Arts subjects. Even in his professional life, the master has to combine and introduce his knowledge in the Arts of Aikido to his students.

In the late 1960's other Instructor's develop their own



schools and the popularity of Karate spread to the West and Judo in the other hand was a national sport here in the Philippines.

In 1964 the Way Aikido Club was established by the Founder comprising of selected students. From the year the Way Aikido Club was established, there were various changes in the name of the organization. Among them is the Bicol Aikido Club, then the Seika-no-itten Aikido Study Center and the Divine Word College Aikido. But the teaching remains the same with the sole objective of making Aikido and effective tool

in self-defense.

The first public demonstration was conducted in 1965 during the Foundation Day anniversary of the Divine Word College in Legazpi City. Here the Art was presented in its simplicity, as survival techniques where the attacker is never aware of the applied techniques in its formless form.

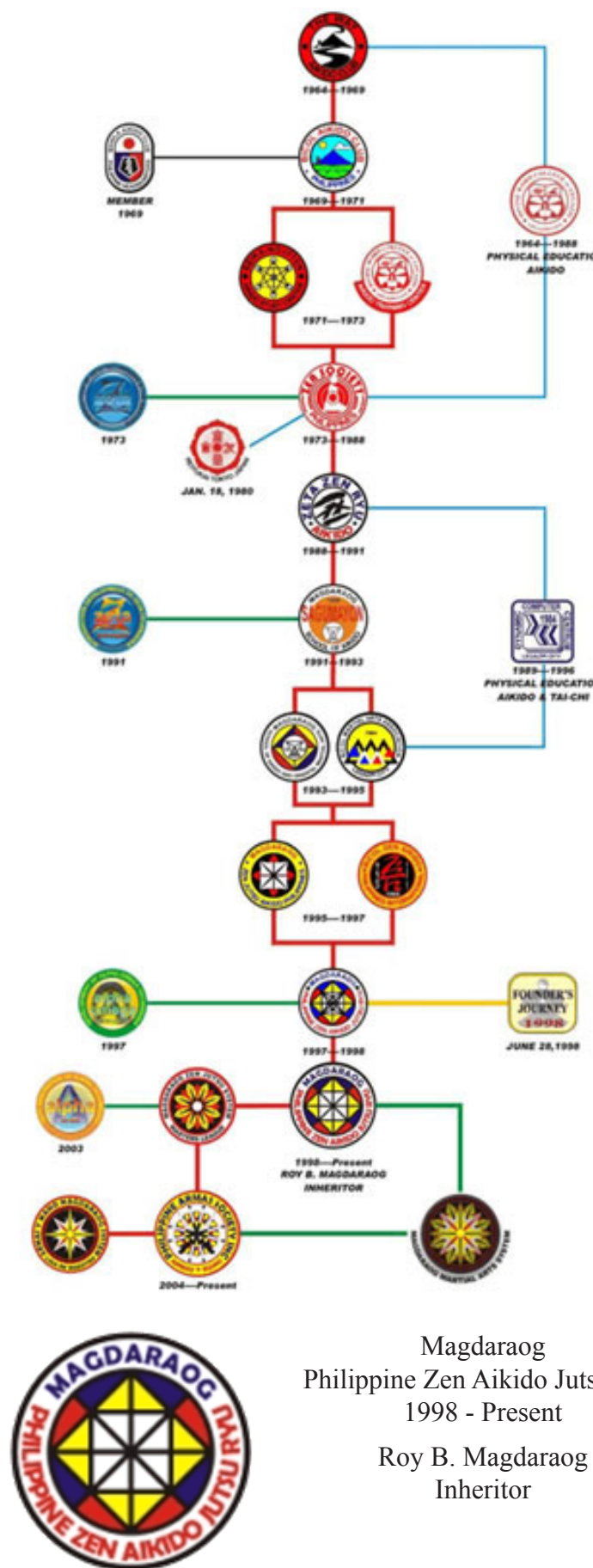
Rey A. Magdaraog was a man of honor, a brilliant martial arts master and talented teacher who acquired his skills through devotion and sacrifice at a very tender age. He was meticulous in his teachings, precise in his movement and generous of heart that his loss was truly felt to those who have been his students.

To him we dedicate the undertakings of the Magdaraog Philippine Zen Aikido Jutsu Ryu.



Divine Word College of Legazpi. Foundation Day 1st Aikido Demonstration.

Flow of Aikido Development in Legaspi City (Bicol)



Magdaraog  
Philippine Zen Aikido Jutsu Ryu  
1998 - Present

Roy B. Magdaraog  
Inheritor





## Grandmaster Romeo Mamar, Sr.

[1938 – 2005]

Tapado

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

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



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## Grandmaster Timoteo Timor Maranga

[? – 1988]

Combat Eskrima Maranga



Grandmaster Timoteo Timor Maranga was one of the most battle tested Eskrimador of World War II. His hand-to-hand fracas with Japanese soldiers placed him in the league of other decorated World War II veterans like Grandmaster Leo Giron and Grandmaster Antonio Illustrisimo and was member of the legendary Bolo Battalion.

Grandmaster Maranga started practicing Eskrima at the age of seven. One of his first instructors was father Gregorio Godoy Maranga a practitioner of the Demarina one of the obscure Eskrima systems of the pre-war period. His other instructors were Emilio Tadio, Faustino Tanio, Rogelio Ortiz, Emo Sagarino and Dalmacio Salinguhay. These lessons were a mix nuts of styles such as Florete, Sumbra (shadow), Batanguena Serrada and Batanguena Abierta.

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

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## Grandmaster Jose G. Mena

[1917 - 2005]

Doblete Rapilon



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 Rapilon 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 qui 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 hold 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 prefect 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 Masters, 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.

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



Grandmaster José Mena demonstrating with Master Dani Faynot

Martial Culture" by Mark Wiley and "Masters of Kali Arnis Eskrima" by Punong Guro E. Sulite.

Aside from being an exceptional expert and skillful fighter, Grandmaster Mena also posses, 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 Arnulfo L. Mongcal

[1924 - 2005]

New Concept of Philippine Arnis

Grandmaster Arnulfo L. Mongcal is the Great Grandmaster of the New Concept of Philippine Arnis. He learned the Balintawak style from its genuine founder, Venancio Bacon and was one of his top-students. Grandmaster Mongcal also learned from and trained with the other top-students of Venancio Bacon.

Grandmaster Mongcal refined further what he had learned in the past and continuously developed his personal way of the art of Arnis, which he later called the New Concept of Philippine Arnis. This style can therefore be regarded Grandmaster Mongcal's development of the Balintawak style.

Among Grandmaster Mongcal's students are a variety of well-known people in the Balintawak style, as well as many others. The German Uwe Schwarz trained a few weeks with Grandmaster Mongcal. Remy Presas, the founder of Modern Arnis, belongs to Grandmaster Mongcal's students. During the last decades of Grandmaster Mongcal's time as an active teacher, he passed on all his knowledge to the German Toni

Veeck. After Grandmaster Mongcal had taught Toni Veeck everything about his style, he conferred Toni Veeck the title "Grandmaster" and handed down his style to him.

Afterwards Grandmaster Mongcal retired from teaching, knowing that Grandmaster Veeck will continue his way of Arnis, in the way Grandmaster Mongcal wanted to see his method flowering further. Shortly after Grandmaster Mongcal had retired from teaching, he suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. Due to the still lasting effects of the stroke, Grandmaster Mongcal could today not teach anymore, even if he wanted. But it is a hard fate for him that he can no longer spar even with his close friends.

This is short biography of Grandmaster Arnulfo Mongcal, based on interviews with him several years after he suffered a stroke, from which he never fully recovered.

Born in September 24, 1924 at Kabankalan, Bacolod, Arnulfo Mongcal was the second son of Hilario Mongcal and Agripina Lanquin-Mongcal. He has six brothers and a sister. He is the only member of the family who plays Arnis.

At a very young age, he was already a wrestler where his interests trace from his father who was a professional wrestler. Mongcal had a reputation as a blustering kid in his childhood days, which was why he often got a fight with his classmates and with his elder brother. In elementary school, Mongcal once had a

fight with a classmate, where his mate was into karate, but the fight resulted in a victory for Mongcal with a knockdown. From then on, Mongcal had interest in wrestling because of the experience that he had just fought with his mate and wrestled with him even without the use of his kicks.

Though his father was reluctant to teach Mongcal wrestling and was worried that he might just use it to bully other kids, he finally submitted to the high interest of his son for the sport.

Mongcal came to Cebu at the age of twelve after his mother had died. He sought shelter from his uncle who was a younger brother of his mother. The family of his uncle had a farm. His uncle, Leonardo "Adot" Lanquin was a professional in Arnis. Mongcal asked a favor from his uncle to teach him Arnis and its techniques. His uncle only granted him the favor under the condition that he would work for them. Mongcal agreed and became a helper in the agricultural land of his uncle and aunt and also did household work from then on.

For almost four years, he trained with his uncle and managed to continue his studies where his only support were the allowances he received from his uncle. His uncle taught him the style of "Largo Mano", which was an old style of the art, and the basics.

One day, Mongcal accidentally broke an antique aparador from his uncle and aunt. His aunt having had a very strict personality because of her Spanish roots, Mongcal left their place before his

uncle and aunt would find out about the incident.

From that time on, Mongcal has been an independent person seeking part-time jobs on different establishments for him to meet his own basic needs. He even had a janitorial work cleaning comfort rooms.

After a while of landing to different jobs, a relative helped him find a job. This was then the time when Mongcal worked for Cebu Stevedoring, customs for foreign vessels, which was situated at the seaport. He was just a helper in the company and of course earned not that much. So he continued to do side line jobs by teaching Arnis to his acquaintances at the port for extra money. At the same time, he continued his secondary studies. He studied at a night school at the University of Visayas where he graduated.

Mongcal stayed at the place of Teodula Magbulugtong's aunt. Teodula also stayed at the same place where she was trying to finish her studies in college. This was where the two met and built a beautiful friendship, which eventually blossomed into a stronger relationship. With such relationship, Mongcal had volunteered to support the financial needs of Teodula, especially in her studies. Everything went well for them; Teodula finished college and made it as a professional educator. This ended up with the two getting married.

While at Cebu stevedoring, Mongcal was given quite a tough job as watchman. He was given an authority from his manager not to allow certain goods to pass through. An incident like this happened when a group of co-employees, who were not permitted to

bring goods they bought, got irked at Mongcal's order as directed to him from his boss.

Then at dawn the following day, 18 persons from the group, headed by Dading Ebarita, tried to attack Mongcal. He was able to escape from them unprepared of the attack by jumping to the sea. For three days, he had cross-trained and then got back at them by three. He fought them with just bare hands, doing kicks and combat judo. Six of the 18 persons were able to escape from such surprise.

Mongcal continued to study Arnis on his own, until he met the Canetes who are relatives of his wife. He then trained with the Canetes. Then he met Grandmaster "Anciong" Bacon at the club at Balintawak. Mongcal's first impression of Grandmaster Bacon while at the club at Balintawak was that Bacon was no good because he was short. Mongcal never expected Grandmaster Bacon was good in such art until he saw him "at work". He had underestimated the grand master but it turned out that Grandmaster Bacon then became his teacher. Grandmaster Bacon taught Mongcal the "short cut" style and break of style. This style involves fatal blows on nerves and all methods and techniques, which could use everything from fingers, fist, and palm to the head. The grand master also taught Mongcal "Punta y Daga" which involves fighting with a knife and stick. Mongcal carefully studied such kind of fight from what Grandmaster Bacon had taught him. He then developed his own style of knife fighting, for which he got the basics from his teacher.

After sparring with Grand-

master Bacon, when Mongcal went home, his wife would find him bleeding and with bruises on some parts of his body. His wife would cry seeing him like this so she tried to talk with Grandmaster Bacon. The grandmaster explained her that he had to make such hard strikes so that Mongcal could learn the effectiveness of the techniques being taught. He also said that it's ok for him to be bleeding for Mongcal to be stronger. Mongcal describes Grandmaster Bacon to have had great dedication to the art of Arnis. He was very fast and had deadly strikes.

During his studies under Grandmaster Bacon, Mongcal also sparred with Timoteo Maranga, Delfin Lopez and Villasin, who were their neighbors in Cebu. Mongcal also fought with the other good fighters in Cebu.

Eventually, Mongcal developed his own style. One of its specific characteristics is launching a series of strikes (usually about 3-4) after an opponent makes a single strike. Mongcal had studied and observed the different styles of his opponents or the people he had sparred with in order to be able to learn more and improve his own skills and to develop a deep knowledge on the art.

It was now time to move on with life and so Mongcal and his wife had to settle in Cagayan de Oro. Around 1962, he found a job at Phil. Packing Corp. (PPC) as a security guard. He voluntarily taught Arnis to twelve of his co-employees. He even taught the top officials of the company. One late afternoon, about 28 co-employees of Mongcal from just nearby towns of Agusan, Baloy and Tablon attacked him. The disturbance was due to envy of his



co-employees for Mongcal because he was given special treatment from his boss at the same time he taught the art to his bosses. Mongcal was also known in the said company because in times of trouble, his local and foreign employers would call him to handle such situation. Mongcal together with Teodulfo Dorado, a co-employee of PPC, would try to calm any fight that arises from the employees of the company.

The attack at that one afternoon caught Mongcal empty-handed at first till he was quick to remove his own belt and found firewood, which he then used to fight with the attackers. The fight had created such commotion that it had caught attention from the barangay official, Ramon Jabar, who shouted “Tama na Opong!” (Stop Opong!) It was only then that the fight reached an end. Mongcal’s wife saw the incident at a distance from their house but was not worried, as she knew the capabilities of her husband.

Among those who attacked Mongcal were Yacapin, Riti and Abroguena. All were co-employees of Mongcal at Phil. Packing. Mongcal was laid off in 1968 because he was blamed to head an employee union (ALU). But Mongcal was not really a member because he said the union was composed of employees from Cebu.

After being jobless for a few months, Mongcal continued to teach Arnis and Puro Velez was then his current student. Mr. Velez had introduced Mongcal to Governor Concordio Diel. He became the bodyguard of Gov. Diel. Mongcal was sent to Manila to study photography for him to be the official photographer of Gov.

Diel on every occasion. When Gov. Diel’s term expired, he was then a mayor. Mongcal was then transferred to Puerto Market and became its chief security guard.

By 1979, Mongcal had joined and attended the national Arnis competition in Manila. He had a match with a participant from Bacolod in which Mongcal broke his opponent’s stick. There were two draws and on the third match, Mongcal won. Finally, he won second, next to the National Champion Ciriaco “Cacoy” Canete. Mongcal stayed in Manila for a week and Pres. Marcos gave all the participants P100.0 each day for pocket money. They were also given a Barong Tagalog. As Mongcal returned home from the competition, he was welcome by Mayor Canoy with a band.

In 1982, a special award was given to Mongcal from Doce Pares Philippines and the National Arnis Association of the Philippines (Naraphil). A “Master Award of Appreciation” was sent to him, which was signed by Eulogio Canete, Pres. of Doce Pares, and Gen. Fabian Ver, Pres. of Naraphil. The award cited Mongcal’s untiring and unselfish effort in the revival, promotion and further development of the Filipino martial arts of Arnis. For Mongcal, it was a great honor to receive the award.

In 1987, Mongcal had a neighbor whose friend from Bukidnon was an eskrimador whose knowledge in Arnis was the old style. The said eskrimador challenged Mongcal on a surprise visit. The eskrimador was bragging that he has greater skills than Mongcal. But Mongcal didn’t ask for a fight, instead he just defended himself from the eskrimador.

After just two moves, the boastful eskrimador found himself disarmed under a large dining table. Hurt and ashamed, the eskrimador and Mongcal’s neighbor left at an instant. Mongcal can only shake his head for such display of arrogance.

As far as Grandmaster Mongcal can remember, his teacher Grand Master Bacon had told him that he was a fast learner and considered him to have a “golden hand” which is at par with karate’s “golden legs”, which means the player is adept to the footwork of karate.

Grandmaster Mongcal always made a point to tell his students that they may cherish his works. He encouraged them to a continuing research and development of the art of Arnis. He had taught his students good and had inculcated in their minds that the art is used only to defend one’s life.

Although tears roll down on Grandmaster Mongcal’s cheeks when he remembers the past, he knows he has done his best in Arnis and has contributed to the development of the art, for he knows how much dedication and will he had for the art. This is how Grand Master Mongcal would like to be remembered by his students and the rest of the eskrimadors.

The following is an interview with Grandmaster Arnulfo Mongcal (denoted as Grandmaster in the interview) by Rino Balinado (denoted by RB in the interview). Grandmaster Mongcal is 75 years old at the time of this interview. His wife to make his answers clearer to the interviewer, because of his condition, accompanied him. In 1995, Grandmaster Mongcal suffered a stroke. It was then

the time that ended the master from playing Arnis because he was partly paralyzed. He can still walk and can manage to converse. As Grandmaster Mongcal remembered his past experiences during the interview, he would shed tears because he knows how much he would still like to play Arnis.

**RB:** Grandmaster, at what age did you start learning Arnis and how about your training?

**GM:** I have started learning the art at the age of 12. Prior to my Arnis, I was into wrestling. My father was a professional wrestler. At an early age, I learned to wrestle through the teachings of my father.

I had my first lessons of Arnis from my uncle, Leonardo Lanquin, the younger brother of my mother. I had lived with my uncle in Cebu. He taught me the basics and the “Largo Mano” style, an old style of Arnis. I was with my uncle’s supervision for four years as I stayed with them.

Grandmaster Bacon was then my second teacher when I met him at the club of Balintawak. Under his teachings, I have learned the short cut method and the “Punta y Daga”.

**RB:** Do you have any idea about the history of Arnis as one of the Filipino Martial Arts?

**GM:** Arnis first started from Filipino fighters who fought for our country against the invaders. An example was our own Lapu-Lapu who fought the Spaniards and the rest of the invaders who tried to conquer our land. I guess, because of this, Filipino Martial Arts came into existence. It was then further developed. It was deadlier because more techniques have sprung from the Great Grandmasters passed from generation to generation.

**RB:** As an eskrimador, what can you say about Arnis?

**GM:** Well, Arnis is a martial art that has a weapon, which is the stick, or the Olise; bunal is used as an extension of one’s hand. This is a close range fight and almost all of the parts of the body are used which include the head, arms, legs, elbows and even the fingers. The fingers are used as a blow. Arnis as a martial art is a way to discover new possibilities to make one’s body accessible to experience body behaviour, instinct and feeling the right way to develop these according to a given situation.

**RB:** Arnis as an art that which uses sticks. How long are the sticks being used?

**GM:** It really depends, some uses shorter and other longer. My sticks range from 26 to 28 inches. The stick is used as an extension to one’s hand.

**RB:** In real fights, do you have to use sticks?

**GM:** No, as I have mentioned, the sticks are the extensions of one’s hand. In fact, without sticks, it is deadlier because you can grab, push, punch or even kill a person. As an example, when an opponent makes a punch, a cross, it is just like number one in the Arnis basics. So it is easy to block and counter and do the combat judo. With opponent’s front kick, it is just like the number five in the basics. Just do a back stance or side step and simply then is what you have to do. All the bare hand fight techniques came from Arnis.

**RB:** You have mentioned earlier that you had two teachers. Which of them do you think is better?

**GM:** It is not that my uncle’s teachings were the old style that I consider them obsolete but I do

believe that Grandmaster Bacon’s styles were better and more effective. There is actually no comparison to the two of them. My uncle was older so he had learned the old style. Grandmaster Bacon’s styles were improved from the classic techniques.

**RB:** Can you say that Grandmaster Bacon’s and your styles are best?

**GM:** I don’t think there is such a thing as best but I do believe that our techniques are effective. Style can depend on the eskrimadors skills and knowledge on the art. One can develop his own style and even name it. There is always a continuing development on the art.

Unlike other martial arts where the moment you reach the highest level, you can now say that you have learned the techniques, in Arnis there is no end to its improvement of new concepts. So, I think Arnis is best.

**RB:** How known is Arnis in the Philippines?

**GM:** I think 60 to 70% of the population does not know that such art exists. It is sad to note that a Filipino Martial Art is not as much appreciated by the Filipinos compared to Karate, Aikido, etc. This is because the art lacks support from the government. The government should consider this Filipino origin art.

**RB:** How do you compare Arnis to Taekwondo or Karate?

**GM:** In Arnis, having a lot of power is not so important because when you fight with bigger persons, one doesn’t have to be equally strong. Just go with the force and let the power of your opponent hurt him.

**RB:** Have you had experienced a fight with other styles like Karate?

**GM:** Yes, I had one but I forgot my



opponent's name. It was a match held in Cebu. My opponent attempted to kick me with a front kick but with my side step, I was able to block his kick and caught his ankle. I made a twist on his leg and which ended with my opponent landing on his back. Not that I underestimate Karate or other art that involves high kicks but I do believe that Arnis is better. I do believe that if you can block a stick, how much more with the leg.

**RB:** Any other actual fights?

**GM:** One was in Cebu. I was attacked with 18 persons who were co-employees of mine. I was able to escape from such surprise as I jumped to the sea. For two days I had vigorous training. On the third day, I went back to them 3 by 3 on the 12 persons. The six went away and escaped. With use of my bare hands, I made direct hit on the face, neck and used my elbows, too.

Then, another was when I was with Phil. Packing Corp. This was when 28 persons came to me because they were envi-

ous of my special treatment from my bosses. I had used my belt to block and then I got firewood, which I used to hit them. Every strike, I made a counter strike with my elbow. Then I remember they were "chickens". The commotion stopped as the barangay was present.

Finally, I had a fight with the eskrimador from Bukidnon. We had a neighbor back of Bugo and he brought a friend who was an eskrimador. This eskrimador tried to brag about his skills and challenged me with a fight. The eskrimador used two sticks, first makes the Sinawali, then he attacked. I disarmed one of his sticks. While I blocked the other stick, I twisted his hand and he fell down then I did a combat judo. Well, after that we just found him under our dining table. He then left together with our neighbor.

**RB:** Do you believe in amulets?

**GM:** No, but I know they do exist. I had only my faith in God and it is deep enough to make me strong.

**RB:** Do you use disarming in fighting?

**GM:** No, because when use the techniques of Grandmaster Bacon, it is just like disarming. Once the opponent can no longer move it is then considered like disarming. This is the short cut style of Grandmaster Bacon. But I have emphasized disarming to my student to have a great advantage in fighting.

**RB:** What advice did you implant to your student's mind?

**GM:** The only way to learn and to be a good eskrimador is to love the art of Arnis. With such dedication, one can train hard physically and mentally. Arnis can only be used to defend one's self.

One must not underestimate other martial arts because he can learn from them rather than compete with the artist. Arnis is a continuing development and one should have profound knowledge in the art acquired through his experiences.

## Master Joe Napial

[1958 - 2004]

Doce Pares and the BDP School



It is with heart felt regret that we must announce the un-timely passing of one of BDP's most loved and admired instructors. Master Joe Napial was an innovative and charismatic instructor of our school.

The Eskrima world knows of the impact he had made in his short lifetime. His love for the Filipino Martial Arts and his devotion to Doce Pares and the BDP School has left a legacy that will be remembered by the lucky students who had the opportunity to have trained under Master Joe. His spirit of Aloha was always his trademark. Master Joe was only 46 years old. He was the younger brother of Master Sonny Napial.

"I will miss my baby brother for the rest of my life!! "

WEKAF - USA is saddened to announce the passing of Master Joe Napial. On Monday, Joe suffered a massive heart attack while doing what he loved, Surfing.

Joe was a Master Instructor of Bandalan Doce Pares in California under Grandmaster Alfredo Bandalan, Sr. Most of us saw him recently in the WEKAF Nationals in Denver and/or at the 8th WEKAF World Championships in Cebu. (He was at all national and world events).

Joe did a lot for many people, many times. He always talked of and was proud of his family, as well as his students. He was an inspiration and a good friend to a lot of people. When he wasn't busy taking care of his own people, he would be helping others. Everything I've known him to do was done with honesty and integrity.

Joe is survived by his wife Marietta, sons Joseph Jr. (J.J.), Jeremy and Joshua.





## Master Chian Brozula Ong Jr.

Baton Masters  
[1953 – 2008]

Master Chian Brozula Ong Jr. passed away 12:24pm 10 July 2008, leaving behind his wife, 3 sons and 9 grandchildren.

*Services were held at:*

Our Lady of Grace Chapel/Columbarium  
11th Ave. Caloocan City, Philippines

Edwin Ong the eldest son of Master Chian Brozula Ong Jr. explained that his dad suffered a fall last Wednesday (July 2, 2008); he couldn't stand up and urinate by himself, so Edwin rushed him to the hospital (MCU).

He went through a series of tests and x-rays and the doctors found out that his spine had been compressed, which resulted on a slipped spinal disc... he could move all his extremities but he didn't have the ability to stand up or even roll to his side. A fever developed and his blood tests showed signs of infection, which then the doctors prescribed antibiotics to combat the infection.

Over the course of 7 days, the doctors had tried different kinds of antibiotics, which he did

not respond to any medications, his antibiotics got stronger and stronger to the point that they double the dosage due to his size, but still to no effect. Master Ong state of mind started to deteriorate on day 3 at the hospital and it kept getting worse since the infection spread throughout his bloodstream.

Then on Monday (July 7, 2008) he started to have difficulty breathing so he was transferred to the intensive care unit. He was put on a respirator to help him breath, from there on his condition took turns for the worst as his blood pressure continued to plummet during the next 2 days, pneumonia set in coupled with internal bleeding, then on Wednesday, Master Chian Brozula Ong Jr. passed

away.

Master Ong believed to have the knowledge, but not practicing one will not achieve the goal of harmony or a competent executioner of the art. To excel one must practice daily to achieve the flow and capabilities of an expert Arnisador.

In Master Ong style Baton Masters there, are not flashy or flowery moves. In the style it is not believed that one should hit stick to stick, but to hit the opponents hand bringing about actual realism in its techniques and adaptabilities to encountered situations.

All actions start from the ready position. The movements to attacking and countering include evasion and the progressive penetration of the attacker's defense.



Master Chian Ong Jr. on the right

Opponent strikes with a forehand strike to the temple. Master Ong counters with a strike to the hand [to disable]. Continuing Master Ong parries with his empty hand and then strikes the opponent to the head or neck. Opponent strikes with a backhand strike to the head, countering with a strike to the opponents striking arm or hand for disabling. Using the empty hand parry and strike the opponents' head.



The opponent attempts a strike to the knee, Master Ong strikes the opponents forearm. Parrying with his 'live hand' Master Ong continues by striking the opponents body [ribs, chest, or stomach]. Using a backhand strike the opponent attempts a strike to the leg. Master Ong stepping back to avoid getting hit, simultaneously hits the opponents' arm and parrying it. Upon parrying the opponents' arm, the opponent is turned away from Master Ong and he executes a thrusting strike to the opponents' body.

There are 5 basic defensive actions to attain control and succeed in dominating your opponent.

1. Posture of readiness - Do not slouch, hold the cane without tension. Stand straight with the body weight equally distributed.
2. Moving away from the line of attack - In Baton Masters one must discern from where the strike is coming from, the power and speed, when time and space is available, move away from the line of attack, moving to the right or left, forward, backward. One might drop down to a kneeling position to dodge the strike.
3. Hitting the opponents hand or arm - The first hit executed on the opponent must be with speed and is utmost important, if to slow one will not be able to follow up. The execution of the strike must be sharp and crisp with power.
4. Controlling the opponents' hand - One must be accurate in executing the strikes. If for some reason one only hits the opponents stick, then with the empty hand must block or parry the opponents stick hand, so control is maintained so the opponent cannot follow up with counters.
5. Follow up - The first execution whether with the empty hand or the stick is aimed at the attackers' hand. The next is aimed at the opponents' body. After one or two strikes the technique has ended. For one reason is to allow for creativity. You are free to make choices depending on your skills as a martial artist.





## Lolo Guro Isidro Pambuan

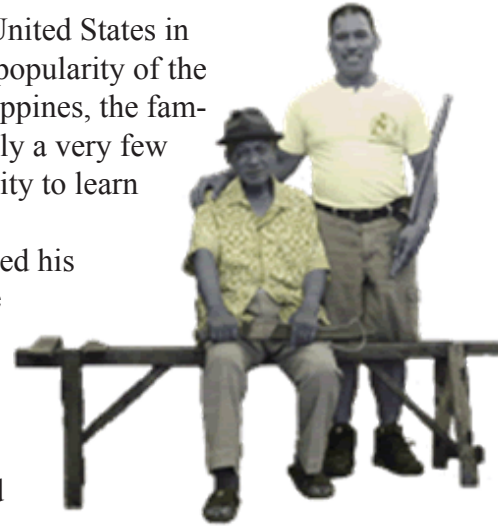
[1920 - 2008]  
Pambuan Arnis

Isidro Pambuan was born in Santa Cruz, Laguna, Philippines on April 4, 1920. He began his journey in the family art after hearing stories from his grandfather of how Arnis was used in the Filipino - Spanish revolution. He trained in several Filipino martial arts with members of his mother and fathers side of the family. He also trained outside the family, with Alihandro Javier of Batangas.

Lolo Guro made two trips to the United States in the 90's and was very amazed at the popularity of the Filipino martial arts here. In the Philippines, the family arts are closed to outsiders and only a very few select persons are given the opportunity to learn the Art of Arnis.

Ama Guro Raffy Pambuan inherited his family's system of Arnis from his father Lolo Guro Isidro Pambuan. He brought the art with him from the Philippines in 1983 when he moved to Orlando, Fl. In 1993, He was convinced to begin teaching his family art of Pambuan Arnis.

Ama Guro Pambuan continues to make trips to the Philippines in order to discover more of the closed art, family systems of Arnis, and exchange knowledge with them. He then brings this knowledge back and shares it with his few, very select, students.



the art. The Pedoy's School of Escrima was officially opened in 1961 and Batikan Eduardo was at the forefront of structuring the curriculum and training. Being a big man and power weight lifter in his youth, Batikan formulized a more powerful and direct style within Great Grandmaster's passive base of traditional Derobio that complemented his size and which translated greatly to the next generation of students; The Kramer brothers, Knut Peacock, Peter Schmall, Dan Medina, to name a few. After the passing of Great Grandmaster Pedoy and his mother Bartolomia in the early 1990's, Batikan Eduardo moved to the mainland to lay the seeds for the formation of the San Diego Branch of the Pedoy's School of Escrima, headed by

Chris Siangco and his sons. Batikan would then travel to established branches in New Mexico and solidify the name of Pedoy through the instructors promoted by Great Grandmaster Pedoy.

In 1995, he headed the first Derobio Congregation in which brought all heads of the school together for the first time. In 2004, he was promoted to his calling as Batikan or "expert" when Grandmaster Tyrone Takahashi resumed control of the Main Branch of the Pedoy's School of Escrima. Through a long battle with diabetes, Batikan Eduardo passed away on Oct. 22, 2008 and was survived by his step-brothers Ponciano, Alberto and Marshall Adaro; step-sisters, Martina Navares, Rosa Rapoza and Juliana Riddle (moth-

er of Tyrone Takahashi and Gail Siangco). Under Batikan Eduardo Pedoy the Pedoy School of Escrima has expanded from the Honolulu branch (The Master's School) in Hawaii to certified branches operating in Southern California, New Mexico, Georgia, and Florida as well as several Chief and Maestro Instructors teaching Derobio in various martial arts schools throughout the USA.

On December 21, 2007 at 10:15am, Proclamation Signing by Mayor Mufi Hanemann, acknowledging the International Martial Arts Hall of Fame Induction of Batikan Eduardo Pedoy. On December 30, 2007, Batikan Eduardo Pedoy was inducted into the International Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

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## Batikan Eduardo Pedoy

[1946 - 2008]  
Pedoy's Style Derobio Escrima



Only bloodline heir and son of Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy, Batikan Eduardo James Pedoy was the catalyst to which prompted the Great Grandmaster to begin teaching the art of Derobio Eskrima as it was taught to him by Gen. Faustino Ablen. Batikan Eduardo's first passion of the martial arts was Kenpo, a widely popular art in the islands, and he unknowingly urged to test his skills against his father's fighting style when he earned his black belt. As a young man, Batikan knew Great Grandmaster Pedoy trained with other manongs and friends in the banana patch in the old Filipino blade and stick fighting but never knew the extent of Great Grandmaster's prowess and skill. He was soon

humbled by his father and from that day on he put down his black belt and begged Great Grandmaster to teach him his art of Derobio. Batikan became the first student and Chief Instructor while training and teaching alongside Great Grandmaster's step-grandchildren, his nephews and nieces (step family, Great Grandmaster Pedoy married Bartolomia (Adaro) Pedoy) Tyrone Takahashi; now head and Grandmaster of the Pedoy's School of Escrima Organization, Gail (Takahashi) Siangco; who's family founded the Pulahan-Derobio Eskrima Organization.

Other family members have trained throughout the years; however, these are the two main families of

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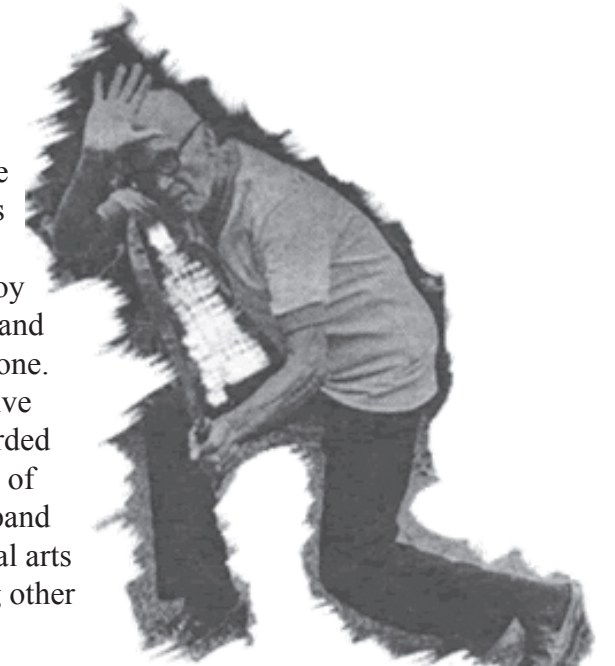
## Great Grandmaster Braulio Tomada Pedoy

Derobio Escrima  
[1900 - 1992]

A brief insight: Into the life of the Great Grandmaster of Derobio Escrima.

Age 92, Braulio Tomada Pedoy, of Honolulu, Hawaii, passed away July 29 1992 at St. Francis Hospital. Great Grandmaster Pedoy was born on October 16, 1900 in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines. At the age of six, he ran away from home and traveled into the mountains of the Southern Visayas where he was taken in by General Faustino Ablen. The General was a leader of the Independence movement against the occupying American forces on the island of Leyte. For eleven years, the Great Grandmaster lived and trained under the General in the art

of Derobio Escrima. At the age seventeen, Pedoy was tested by the General on what he has obtained in his years with him; their choice of weapon was the bolo. As it was told, the test lasted almost two hours with Pedoy receiving a cut on the chin and near the eye; the General none. Through his ability to survive the battle, the General awarded Pedoy mastership of his art of Derobio and the task to expand his knowledge of the martial arts and travel the land learning other styles of Escrima.





In 1924, his travels brought the Great Grandmaster to the island of Hawaii where he worked on the Olaa Plantation. During World War II he worked as a security guard for the Army. Later in life he worked and retired from Gaspro Inc. In 1961, Great Grandmaster Pedoy began the first Escrima School in the islands. The Pedoy's School of Escrima was born. The Great Grandmaster would come to be known for his prowess as a man of counters and as a healer in the art of Hilot; Filipino healing and bone setting art.

On April 9, 1976, he was awarded a Certificate of Recognition from the State of Hawaii, House of Representatives, awarded the entitlement "Escrima Expert Extraordinaire", House Resolution No. 633. In 1991, he was inducted into the International Martial Arts Hall of Fame for his outstanding contribution in promoting the Philippine martial art of Escrima. He also promoted his son Eduardo Pedoy to Master in 1991.

After his passing, the Pedoy's School of Escrima now reveres him as the Great Grandmaster of our system and his son as Grandmaster. The lineage of the Pedoy system lies with his son Eduardo Pedoy and his grandchildren Tyrone Takahashi and the family of Gail Siangco.

### "An Interview with Master Braulio Pedoy"

*Interview taken from the Fighting Arts of Hawaii Journal Volume 1 No.6, November 1977, edited by Carlton Kramer, used with the permission of Kent Lighter*

*(Two instructors of the Pedoy School of Escrima)*

**FAH:** Where in the Philippines did you come from?

**PEDOY:** I came from Ormoc, Leyte.

**FAH:** When did you come to Hawaii?

**PEDOY:** I arrived in 1924. My destination was Olaa Plantation on the Big Island.

**FAH:** Why did you come to Hawaii?

**PEDOY:** My friend told me, "We go Hawaii. Hawaii is good - easy to make money." The temptation was in my mind, a conflict already with what my Master told me on how I should live my life.

**FAH:** So you worked the plantations all your life?

**PEDOY:** No, I spent many years as a fisherman, and during the WWII, I was a security guard for the Army. After that, I worked 11 years for Gaspro. From that time until now, I haven't worked. That is my history from the time I came to Hawaii. But if you go to my history in the Philippines, there is a whole different story to tell. I went from island to island, like my Master told me, to further my studies in Escrima. In every village, there are different movements and counters. Kali has very different movements than Derobio.

**FAH:** How long did you go from island to island?

**PEDOY:** Over three years.

**FAH:** How old were you when you did this?

**PEDOY:** I was 17 years old. I was 20 when I decided to go to Hawaii.

**FAH:** How long had you been training with your Master?

**PEDOY:** Since I was 6 years old until I was 17. And from there I went island to island. First, however, my Master told me to study about the ocean, and of the philosophy of the sea. If you were to climb to the top of a tree and look into the ocean, you would see different shades of blue.

The darker the blue, the deeper the water, in the lighter areas it is shallow, rough, and noisy. Many are at this level, close-minded people with conflicting goals in life who tend to use their mouths loosely. We must look towards the deeper water where it is calm and peaceful, where your morals run deep and only pure thoughts come out of your mouth. Thus, you can observe for yourself what is shallow and what is deep. In every one of us the Lord provided seven gateways for us to observe the



environment. Each of us has two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and a mouth. Only the mouth can get us into serious trouble with our fellow man - thus, one should be very careful in what one says. Give good advice, don't lie, and never gossip, for it might not be true. Then you can get your humbleness from that.

**FAH:** When you came to Hawaii, were you a Master already?

**PEDOY:** Yes, I had developed already. I had been all over the Philippine Islands.

**FAH:** How did you meet your Master?

**PEDOY:** My father was a very mean person. Everyday he gave me lickings, at 6 years of age, I ran away. I went along the main trail until I came to a fork in it; one way to the big city, the other to the mountains. If I was to go to town, my father might still yet catch me, so I went the other way. I just walked with no destination. I just walked, walked, and walked. For 4 days, I roamed the forest. Then I saw a small shack where someone had, at one time or another built a fire. So I sat down and waited, for I thought to myself, someone lives in this place, thank God. Later in the evening, that man came back, and he was very surprised to see me. He asked how I had come to this place, and I pointed to the pass in the mountains I had come through. He said, "I know other people come from the opposite way to this place, but no one can pass through your way - it's too dangerous."

**FAH:** What was so dangerous about the pass?

**PEDOY:** There were plenty of poisonous snakes that get bigger than men. But at the time, I didn't see any snakes during the day and at night I climbed high into the branches of the trees. My Master told me, "God guided you to me. He wanted you to learn how to defend yourself - so he brought you to me, for that is the talent I have to give to you."

**FAH:** What was your Master doing in this out-of-the way place?

**PEDOY:** My Master was a wanted man with a large reward offered for him. That's why he hid deep in the forest. He was a general during the revolution against the Spanish and again later during the Filipino-American War. When the United States won and the Filipinos were required by law to salute the American flag, he would not. To the Filipino flag, he would salute, but to no other country's flag he would show respect. Too many of his men had died fighting for independence in the battlefields. That's why the

authorities put him in jail. That man had great powers - no jail could hold him. The guards were there, yet no one saw him escape.

**FAH:** And he went to the mountains?

**PEDOY:** Yes, he ran away to the forest. He was a man of great powers, powers he received from heaven through his prayers. Snakes wouldn't go near him animals wouldn't eat the rice he planted. There were plenty of wild boars, deer, and birds. But nothing touched his rice. We wouldn't chase them away either, just leave them alone. And when it was time to harvest, we would thank the Lord for our food. See what power's he had?

**FAH:** So when you were 17, you left your Master?

**PEDOY:** Yes, but before I was to return to civilization, I was told to study the movements of the trees and of the ocean, to observe carefully the motions of the branches in the wind. You must be able to get away from the force of the blow and return to an equal, balanced position. Thus, to be an Escrimador you have to carefully study the land and sea while also searching for those unusual things in nature God has created. After 11 years, I went back to my father's place.

**FAH:** Did your father recognize you after 11 years?

**PEDOY:** Yes, he tried to hit me with a stick. I just took it away. I didn't hit him back. He asked me how I survived all these years. I told him I found a man and we lived together in the forest. I stayed two or three weeks with my father, then I went away. I didn't tell him that I was going from island to island to practice, I just left. He never learned anything of what I had learned.

**FAH:** Didn't you regret leaving your Master after 11 years?

**PEDOY:** My Master told me that this was no place for me to live all of my life. He said I would have to leave after my examination.

**FAH:** What examination?

**PEDOY:** My final test to become Mas-





ter of the Derobio system of Escrima. Each of us had two sharp bolo knives. We were to fight in actual combat. My Master told me, "If you can kill me, kill me. I in turn will try my best to kill you. If either of us gets wounded badly, the other has to kill him because there is no doctor, we would only suffer, so better defend yourself well or else."

Before the examination, I prayed for days, asking my Lord Jesus Christ, to protect me. The battle was long and tiring; each of us used our best fakes and counters. When it was over, he was unhurt, whereas I suffered cuts on my hands and face. But only the tip of his bolos cut me, not deep enough that I let down my defense.

**FAH:** When was the first time anyone knew you were a Master in Escrima?

**PEDOY:** Oh, I never showed anyone I knew Escrima. But when there was trouble, my neighbors found out I knew how to defend myself. Especially with newly-arrived Filipinos, when there was trouble, out came the knife. When they would use it, I would take it away. That's how they know I know Escrima. But I never taught anybody before, only Eddie (his son).



**FAH:** And that was the first time you taught?

**PEDOY:** Yes, the first person I taught was my son, and only after he had taken Karate. One time, however, some officers of the Honolulu Police Department asked to learn. I showed them how easy it was for me to hit them with my sticks. Soon they stopped coming over.

Do you know why I started training Eddie? Because I thought to myself about the Chinese martial art of Kung Fu, about the Japanese with their Judo and Karate, and about the Americans with their boxing. I know the Filipino community in Hawaii has some good Escrimadors, but they never show or share their talent. That's why I began teaching Eddie - so that we could preserve a valuable part of the Filipino culture and heritage, and to give an opportunity to the younger Filipinos who don't have Escrimadors in their families a chance to learn Escrima, thereby increasing their pride in themselves and their heritage.

I then told Eddie to find instructors and to teach them well. Teach them to pray, because that is also an important part of being an Escrimador. And when you get your instructors ready, open a public Filipino Martial Arts School. That is how our school began over five years ago, when we first opened in Waipahu.

Today I have nine full instructors under my son, who of course is my chief instructor.

A few decades have passed since this interview. The school has grown and branched out. Now revered as Great Grandmaster; the late Brulio Tomada Pedoy's legacy of Derobio lives strong in the hearts of his Ohana in San Diego. Grandpa and Grandma Pedoy, We truly miss and will always love you both.

## Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas

[1945 - 2010]

Kombatan

Ernesto Amador Presas, Sr. was born in May of 1945 in the coastal fishing village of Hinigaran in Negros Occidental. His father José Bonco Presas, a renowned Arnis fighter in the area, began teaching Ernesto the fundamentals of Arnis at the age of eight. A capable learner, he mastered his lessons well and soon expanded his martial arts education to include the study of Judo, Jujitsu, Karate, and eventually Kendo.

In the time-tested custom of Arnis practitioners of that era, Presas trained intensely and fought many challenge matches against other practitioners. One memorable encounter in 1970 saw him facing an Arnis fighter from the Manila suburb of Paranaque, who wanted to test the skills of the upstart who had just moved to the city from a rural area. The two fought in the middle of a rice paddy, where lateral movement was severely limited, and falling into thigh-deep mud was a distinct possibility. They began with a trial to see who could disarm the other of his stick. Using his complete knowledge of levers and disarming methods, Presas successfully took the other fighter's stick away in two successive clashes. Not satisfied with this turn of events, the other fighter insisted on an all-out skirmish. Presas went on to disarm his foe once again and delivered a rain of blows that knocked his opponent into the mud.

Other fights would follow, with the frequent condition that the other fighter was always the challenger - Presas did not seek conflict, but never backed down from

it either. Because his knowledge was not limited only to combat with weapons, Presas also bested karate practitioners while fighting barehanded, including one opponent who fell into the river the two were struggling near after Presas pounded him with hard punches and kicks. These battles, he would later divulge, formed an important facet in the development of his comprehensive fighting system.

In 1972, Presas secured teaching positions as a physical education instructor at the University of Santo Tomas, the University of the Philippines, Far Eastern University, the Lyceum of the Philippines, and Central Colleges of the Philippines. He also began teaching Arnis at military and law enforcement institutions including the Philippine National Police Academy, the Far Eastern Military Academy, the General Headquarters Military Police Academy, and the Officer's Schools for the Philippine Army and Air Force.

During those formative days, the Arjuken Karate Association held classes from Monday through Saturday and also held special events and demonstrations on Sundays. Arnis classes featured basic training in groups, with students executing blocking, striking, and disarming techniques with single or double sticks. Sparring was practiced both with and without the use of protective equipment such as headgear, body armor and gloves. Equipment allowed students to make hard contact, while sparring unprotected called for more controlled action as only rattan sticks were available (the soft,



foam sticks later developed in the U.S. for training and tournaments would never gain popularity in the Philippines). Instruction on anyo (forms) and practice with bladed weapons were largely conducted on a one-on-one basis because of spaces limitations and for safety reasons.

In addition to the Arnis classes, students could learn; JKA-line Shotokan Karate, Jujitsu throwing and locking skills, Okinawan weaponry (tonfa, bo, nunchaku and sai), as well as Kendo. (There exists today, particularly in Australia and Canada, a system known as Arjuken karate, popularized by early Presas students). Presas was a firm advocate of cross-training, as he believed that this better prepared the student to deal with the greatest variety of possible attacks and weapons. Exponents of other martial arts could often be seen visiting, observing and practicing alongside the school's regular students.

Great Grandmaster Presas will greatly missed by all and remembered for his contributions to the Filipino martial arts.



Grandmaster Remy Presas  
[1936 - 2001]  
Modern Arnis

The Legacy of Remy A. Presas  
Born a Warrior,  
To Fight and To Lead!

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

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

After exposure and traditional training from his Grandfather Leon Bonco, Remy A. Presas left home at the age of 14 years

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

In an excerpt from the book "Modern Arnis Philippine Martial Art Stick Fighting" written by Col. Arsenio de Borja (Ret.) the following quote can be read about Remy's dream: "He believes that a good art should be shared by the whole world. This is his ardent



dream and when this dream shall have flowered, the world will have to thank not only Remy but also his wonderful wife, Rosemary, whose inspiration, perseverance and priceless assistance made this book possible. Also their children Mary Jane, Mary Ann, Remy Jr., Maria Presas, and Demitrio Jose, whose innocent laughter's have lightened the mental load in the awesome preparation of this book. Modern Arnis will go a long way and Modern Arnis is incomplete without bringing into the picture the athlete and the crusader, Remy A. Presas, The Father of Modern Arnis"

#### Early recognition

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

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

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

*\* Resolution Number 388\**

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

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

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

#### Dreams and acknowledged accomplishments

Later around 1969 when he brought his family to Manila Remy A. Presas established the National Amateur Karate Organization (NAKO), and the Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines. Further propagating the beauty and value of the cultural art of Arnis, Professor Presas implemented many instructional programs

within the Bureau of Public and Private Schools, colleges, police agencies, and different military units throughout the Philippines. Proudly he shared his art with all who were interested and through further professional perseverance founded the Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines. It was at this junction of his life he had the opportunity to demonstrate and perform before the late Philippines President Ferdinand E. Marcos in Antipolo Rizal.

As popularity of modern Arnis grew so did his status as a great diplomat and representative of the cultural fighting art, in 1970 Remy A. Presas went to Japan to teach and demonstrate the functional beauty and effectiveness of Arnis. This was truly a highlight in his life; even years later during a radio interview conducted in the United States he mentioned with great pride his Arnis demonstration for Japanese masters at the legendary Kodokan, the Mecca and center for all Japanese martial arts. This was an important milestone in the acceptance of Arnis as a world recognized martial art and was also personally important to Remy due to the fact he was a 6th degree black belt in Japanese Karate and a black belt in Judo, he felt it was a great honor to be the only Filipino in martial arts history to be acknowledged at the Kodokan!

#### Systemized methodology, the foundation

The 12 foundational striking and deflecting techniques of Arnis that Remy Presas emphasized were also complemented by traditional patterns of movement including rompida (diagonal slashing), palis palis (go with

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

#### Have stick, will fight

Professor considered the Balintawak style of Cebu to be the most aggressive and deadly arts he ever encountered. Realizing the dynamic potential of Balintawak, Remy sought to develop an art form with the same degree of effectiveness yet modernized to



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

### **Anyo, the same, yet different**

Another ace in the hole that should be attributed to Remy A. Presas is his integration of Filipino kata or anyo into the mainstream cultural art of Modern Arnis. To a large degree Filipino martial arts owe its cultural revival to Japanese or Okinawan arts. These arts laid a foundation for the systemization of the Arnis arts. Looking into the historical lineage of most Arnisadors', evidence exists as to the participation of Arnis practitioners also training in karate, judo or jujitsu. This is a commonality most westerners have misconstrued; for the most part many find the essence of kata or forms in Filipino martial arts non-essential. This prospective no doubt comes from western-

ers being strung along within the Karate-do systems and learning very little about form other than block, punch, kick, and jerky static mobility.

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

### **Kumpadres, brothers of the art**

The late Dr. Guillermo Lengson, the late Antonio Mendoza, and the late Professor Remy A. Presas were all "kumpadres" and much of the foundational insight of the Modern Arnis anyo came from this interactive exchange of knowledge. Each individual Anyo isolates specific concepts, angles, and techniques while drawing from Professor's in-depth study

of karate, judo, and jujitsu. In truth the strategy of developing the anyo was an ingenious revelation to help draw interest into Modern Arnis. The creation of anyo and its relativity to karate kata formed a transitional conduit for Filipino practitioners of karate, judo, and jujitsu. The anyo served as a connecting link allowing them to embrace the beauty and function of the Philippine cultural arts while still maintaining a structural and systemized method of training. No matter how simplified the anyo is formatted some practitioners will never be able to free themselves from the bonds of rigidity.

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

Technically if we were to analyze a boxer fluidly executing a jab, cross, hook, uppercut combination, we would perceive his maneuvers to be naturally performed. Yet if he were not polished and refined in the techniques we would immediately condemn his "form." All movement is form based and Professor Presas understood this, but westerners are impatient and pragmatically he felt it was much simpler to teach ballistic form than

to bring life to static form or overly ridged students. Additionally Professor Presas believed it was up to the practitioner to seek the balance in combat efficiency and advance himself in order to thoroughly comprehend the dynamics of all movement. It is that distinction that separates a good player or teacher from a great one, Professor Presas was a great overall practitioner and teacher!

### **Anyo evolution or revolution**

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

text."

### **Brief Acknowledgements**

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

### **The Big Three**

Remy was new to the United States and personally felt he had to prove his worth, therefore he sought out and embraced students that had already established a position of authority in the diverse arts being taught in America. Here in America he became great friends with Wally Jay and George Dillman and together they toured the world presenting their seminars as the "Big Three." It is common knowledge the three exchanged ideas and concepts to broaden the knowledge of all their individual arts. So much more should be mentioned in regard to the brotherhood these three martial arts leaders maintained; Remy considered them both two of the greatest teachers and innovators in the world. Furthermore in personal discussions I experienced with both men, they shared their mutual

respect and love for Remy A. Presas without hesitation. According to a quote from George Dillman, "Remy established a market no one else was tapping into, the seminar market. Worldwide, it was Professor Remy Presas himself who literally created the seminar instructional circuit single handedly." Additionally George shared, "What has been established as acceptable teaching through seminars should be directly credited to Remy Presas as a historical president, no one comes close to him in that arena."

Together the Big Three opened the doors to cross training and allowed practitioners from all arts to experience a dynamic blending of advanced theories and concepts with not strings attached. Wally Jay was quoted as saying, "Remy was the fastest person I have ever known at putting someone down with controls and locks." That's quite a comment since Wally Jay has known so many dynamic martial artists. Keep in mind; the only other person Wally has spoken so highly of in this manner was "Bruce Lee!"

### **Open door policy**

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

By becoming the teacher of leaders he felt his Modern Arnis



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

### **A teachers teacher**

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

The fact that Remy was immersed in teaching and refining his art almost every day for the last 50 years has much to do with his personal development. Remy was known to travel worldwide and teach several seminars per week. In this regard Remy crossed sticks with a great number of skilled practitioners and thousands of people called Remy Presas their teacher. Interestingly were some of the things he would say during an instructional engagement. For instance if someone shifted off line and forced Remy to respond instinctively he might say, "My

God, I didn't know I knew that, I am very good!" Additionally a common response was, "You are teaching me," and "Oh Wow, You got it Baby." Of course, then he would lock you up and dump you on the floor!

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

### **Making the Connection**

His conceptual approach of adapting the art to the student would guide the practitioner to establish a strong comprehension of flow, natural movement, and style relativity. Professor Presas literally created the art within your art approach for simplicity and self-realization, truly an accomplishment equal to the contributions of the late Bruce Lee and his art of Jeet Kune Do. In prospective, the progressive art of Modern Arnis is literally the "Jeet Kune Do" of the Philippines, truthfully instituting an in-depth amalgamation of

concepts extracted from countless martial art systems. In this regard Modern Arnis has the future capabilities to expand and thrive beyond any perceived structural guidelines. Modern Arnis under Professor's leadership was a progressive art. Openly and willingly he felt all arts offered something of value and therefore incorporated whatever techniques he deemed functional. This approach of adaptability further adheres the interactive conceptual bond between Modern Arnis and Jeet Kune Do.

### **Social consciousness and acceptance**

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

### **Who's really on the edge?**

Furthermore Professor's main focus was on the modernization of Arnis, thus Modern Arnis

was propagated as a self-defense art. Professor Presas felt the stick was easy to share without public fear or criticism; contrarily individuals with knowledge of the bladed arts could potentially instill fear in the average citizen. Possibly, Professor Presas felt he was protecting his students from legal liabilities or the impact of a negative social image that some knife dominate systems project. He felt by directly adhering to stick and empty hand aspects a more socially acceptable art could be presented while still maintaining the essence of the art. In that regard, few students received extensive training in the bladed aspects of the art; instead Professor demonstrated only basic patterns from rompida, crossada, or palis palis during his seminars. When Professor came to the Natural Spirit Int'l Tacoma gym in 1984 he mentioned my proximity to the Northwest Army, Air Force, and Navy Military Bases and felt it was important for me to specialize in knife training and capitalize on the potential interests of Military men in the area. He also felt that the average citizen was instinctively afraid of knife techniques yet for military men it was a natural inclination to seek out knife training methodology. Consequently Professor shared his knife fighting knowledge specifically with me and very few others. I was fortunate in that regard as we bonded and became close friends; this friendship was due primarily to our radical upbringing as young men who sought out the excitement of the fighting arts at an early age.

It was this connection that opened the door for Professor to choose me as his primary knife exponent in Modern Arnis. I am also sure this is the reason as to why he

assisted me in the development of the Filipino Sibat system and in 1988 promoted me to the title of Datu of Modern Arnis. This was a distinction and honor that created a great deal of jealousy which increased within the ranks as few others were awarded the title again until years later. In the mid 1990's I was a writer and assistant editor for Full Contact and Fighting Knives Magazine and produced "Four" Knife Fighting Instructional videos. It was this time in my career he named me the Blade Master of Modern Arnis, a title he acknowledged to his final days. With the release of several tactical knife designs and finally the knife I handmade personally for him, The Presas Legacy he was quoted as saying "the others are just chasing my tail." This statement was referencing the political struggle that seemed to be prevalent in his final days during hospitalization and the care facility where he passed away. When I presented him the Handmade Custom Damascus Presas Legacy Knife he would not release it, and embraced it tightly for several hours. I told him "Professor, steel will outlive us all, when we have both passed on our knives will be a part of our legacy to the arts!" This statement brought a tear to his eye and he blessed the knife as his official Modern Arnis knife. To this day no other knife has been officially accepted by the Presas Family or has been authorized to use the Presas name as a trademark or name, only The Presas Legacy!

### **Art within your art**

Modern Arnis is considered the art within your art and to some degree the methodology of the art is uniquely different in ev-

ery part of the World. Many if not most of the senior Modern Arnis teachers are also disciplined in multiple systems which has added a great deal of diversity to Modern Arnis. In essence the interaction of Modern Arnis with other arts has created a natural evolution, without exception Professor Presas encouraged every student to broaden their personal expression and knowledge base to further deepen the roots of Modern Arnis. It is hard to conceive the prospect that Modern Arnis is a pure art, to perceive or preserve it as that or label one aspect and not another as pure Modern Arnis would take away from the adaptability of the system. This in turn would lead to the stagnation of Professor's own research into creating the "art within your art" approach of diversity and functional adaptability. The progressive nature of Modern Arnis cannot be stopped or contained, as some practitioners believe it should be. Without question the foundation elements of the art are ingrained within the context of the art and therefore even a gross deviation could not change the original premise or teaching of Professor's work, his essence and systemization will always shine through. Additionally Professor's efforts will continue to impact systems that are not even related to the original art. This element of evolution was apparent even when he was living, some traditional arts incorporated Modern Arnis stick patterns, lock flow, and self defense techniques to add depth and a functional strength especially if they relied primarily on the simplicity of kick-punch strategies.

### **Memories of a small boy**

In June of 2001, Roland



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

#### **Presas bloodline and legacy**

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

The following week, finally rejoined with their Father, the family was understandably shocked at his state of ill health. Troubled, confused, and angered at the situation at hand, Remy's children recited prayer after prayer as they rejoiced for their reunion with the father who left their side so many years ago. Extremely weak and dehydrated, he spoke about going to California to spend his final days of hospice in their home with his beloved children. He shared his dream of their involvement in the Presas family legacy of Arnis, passed from generation to generation evolving into the Presas Style Modern Arnis. Remy Jr. swore an oath of dedication to his father that day, he would take up the stick, embrace his Philippine Culture and Modern Arnis, continuing the Presas Legacy into the future. These words are factual, shared directly with Roland Dantes and I in per-

sonal conversations with Professor prior to his passing on August 28th 2001.

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

Demitrio Jose Presas is in my opinion is a "Golden Child" possessing amazing skill, and a unique balance of physical and

spiritual sensitivity. Demitrio's ability to feel and respond to an individual energy is mystical, during training I witnessed him escape and reverse every lock or control maneuver that was applied no him, with his eyes closed!

Mary Ann is the eldest of all the Presas children, her personal skill is deeply rooted in the very traditional foundation arts that formed Modern Arnis in the beginning, as a female warrior she is strong, dynamic, and disciplined in the cultural ways of old. Mary

Ann emulates a balanced blend of her Mother Rosemary's stability and her Father Remy's indomitable spirit.

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

MARPPPIO is acknowl-

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### **Grandmaster Rafael Reston**

(1927 - 2006)

Combat Judo Karate

Judo Karate Masters Association  
(Member: Philippine Karate Federation)  
Angeles City, Clark Air Base, Philippines  
Goju Temple, Okinawa. Manchurian Comjuka Kempo  
Combat Judo Karate  
Sinko Tiros Arnis  
Balintawak Arnis Kali Eskrima



Grandmaster Reston - 1979

Grandmaster Rafael Reston was a retired member of the U.S. Army and one of the pioneers of martial arts in the Philippines. His first instructions in the art of self defence were from his father who was a practitioner of the Balintawak system of Arnis Kali Eskrima. His father was also in the U.S. Army, as a member of the 31st Infantry stationed in Manila, Philippines in 1934 when Grand-

master Rafael Reston was only seven years old.

During World War II Reston watched his family burned alive when the Japanese poured gasoline in the cells of Intramuros. He escaped by jumping into the Pasig river. Before the end of 1942, Reston joined the guerrilla movement who was operating at the east central Luzon area.

Reston survived the liberation of Manila by American troops in 1945. After Reston's discharge from the Philippine army in 1945, he continue his training in Eskrima, with his father's old friend, Maestro Andres Montero, who was then a Master of Balintawak

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

Eskrima and one of the seven members of the legendary Pitong Lukban Estokada (seven Grapefruit Estokada society of Batangas). He trained with him until May of 1946, when he enlisted in the Philippine Scout (US Army).

After basic training he was stationed in Japan and Okinawa where he pursued his mastery of Karate studying the martial arts of Goju Ryu Karate and Chaun-fa (Kempo) which he was trained by an Manchurian born Okinawan resident by the name Yamamoto. Master Yamamoto taught Manchurian Kempo to occupation forces in Okinawa just after WWII. Master Yamamoto taught pressure-point



fighting to some students including Rafael Reston. September 1948, Reston was send back to the Philippines and was appointed chief instructor of both Karate and Eskrima at the 515 and 738 Military Police battalion (US Army).

Following Reston's discharge from the U.S. Army in 1949, he continued his training while at the same time he taught Karate in some private schools. February 1949, Reston was appointed official representative for the Philippine Okinawa Ryukyu command Semi Olympic tournament. At the Armed Forces western, Pacific Command (AF-WESPAC) held on Guam Marianas islands, Reston won the karate event in his division and was promoted to 4th degree Blackbelt.

In 1967, Reston Founded the Manchurian Judo Karate Club, also known as Manjuka, in Angeles City, Philippines. Most of the students were U.S. Military stationed at Clark Air Base. Meanwhile, he never stopped training and participating in various Karate tournaments. He also changed the name of Manjuka to the Judo Karate Masters Kempo Association (Comjuka Kempo). Its permanent training centre is in Balibago, Angeles City, Philippines.

In 1970 to 1974, Reston trained in Sinko Tiros Grandmaster Francisco Viray (Apong Viray) of Pampanga. From 1975 to 1978, he trained under Grandmaster Ponciano Aimurong, who was then 83 years old, a Master of Sinko Tiro Sinawali of Bamban Tarlac.

On the 10th of September 1972, The Judo Karate Masters Kempo Association was recognised by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines with the Securities and Exchange Com-

mission. Registration #48779.

Grandmaster Reston was promoted to 8th degree black belt in 1975 and in the following year he was appointed by the President of Philippine Karate Association, Dante Q. Nagtalon, to coach the Central Luzon team which participated in the 1976 Philippine National Karate Championships.

The American Martial Arts magazine, BLACK BELT, issue released in December 1979, featured an article titled "Karate in the Philippines, A Joint Effort". This article was based on the efforts of Grandmaster Rafael Reston and Kuntaw Grandmaster Carlito Lanada and their efforts through Martial Arts to create a friendly relationship between the American Service Personnel based at Clark Air Base and the local Filipino community. The article also mentioned their efforts through the Philippine Karate Association to stamp out corruption in Martial Arts in the Clark Air Base region as some instructors at the time were selling black belt ranks to Americans who had not put in the effort and were not deserving of the black belt rank.

Grandmaster Reston has

also been the recipient of the Pioneer Award from the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, Philippines.

In June 1991 the volcano, Mount Pinatubo, had a massive eruption causing mass destruction of Angeles City and Clark Air Base. Due to the destruction of the Air Base the United States Air Force closed down the base and evacuated never to return. Grandmaster Rafael Reston left the Philippines and resided in Hawaii from 1992 to 2000 where he taught Eskrima in Honolulu. In 2000 Grandmaster Rafael Reston returned to his beloved Angeles City, Philippines. Grandmaster Rafael Reston had retired from teaching Martial Arts due to serious illness (emphysema) in 2003/04. Grandmaster Rafael Reston passed away in August 2006.

Unfortunately I never had the chance to meet and train with the instructor of my Sensei, Robert Fitton, who trained under Grandmaster Rafael Reston throughout the 1970's and up to the mid 1990's when he visited the Philippines.

## Black Belt magazine December 1979

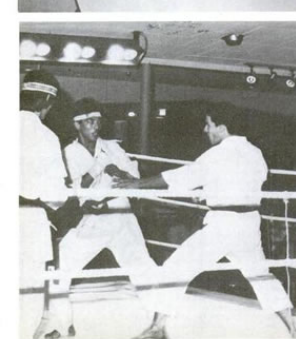
The Philippines, with the help of professionals like Dan Inosanto and Ramon Presas, is steadily increasing its martial arts reputation. In the same magazine, Dan Inosanto and Ramon Presas, who were in the same magazine, were interviewed. They said that the martial arts scene in the Philippines is growing rapidly. They mentioned that the martial arts scene in the Philippines is growing rapidly. They mentioned that the martial arts scene in the Philippines is growing rapidly. They mentioned that the martial arts scene in the Philippines is growing rapidly.

### KARATE IN THE PHILIPPINES A JOINT EFFORT

By Herbert P. MacArthur  
To add the AMAA in its identification of the martial arts in the Philippines, the AMAA members are working hard to identify the martial arts in the Philippines. They are working hard to identify the martial arts in the Philippines. They are working hard to identify the martial arts in the Philippines.



At left: Manchurian kempo expert, Richard Adams, has helped better relations between U.S. Air Force personnel and Filipino citizens. In a bout at Clark Air Base, Rodrigo Ramos referee while Richard Adams (left) referee for an attack by Sam Guillot. Opposite above: Oscar Medina Jr. and David Cliff spar in Angeles City, Philippine dojo. Opposite below: Arthur (left) spars with Carlito A. Lanada, founder of the Philippine style of kung fu.



three most widely recognized Philippine arts. Lanada is considered the founder of kung fu as it was his efforts that developed the ancient Philippine fighting sport to the point of being accepted by martial arts.



\$200 contract guaranteeing the buyer a black belt at the end of one year if he/she completes all lessons. In many cases, the buyer is also compelled to complete all lessons or forfeit the amount paid. This business practice especially has had a direct adverse effect on all true martial arts instructors in the Philippines, regardless of style.



**THE JUDO TEXTBOOK**  
by Howard Nishikawa and Jim Wolf  
\$5.95

**Bruce Lee's Fighting Method**  
By Bruce Lee & J. Peters  
\$24.95

**PHILIPPINES**  
CHI MIND CONTROL  
MIKE DAYTON'S  
CHI MIND CONTROL  
Discover how you can develop your full mental and physical potential!





## Master Christopher Ricketts

(1955 - 2010)

Kali Ilustrisimo

“A Pioneer in Full-Contact Fighting in the Philippines”

A pioneer in full-contact fighting in the Philippines, Master Christopher Ricketts is known for his high emphasis on intensive basic training and regular full-contact sparring. Training with Topher, as he is better known, is a demanding and challenging process. Seemingly tireless, given a chance, he will teach and train for hours on end, leaving his students exhausted, but definitely fulfilled and raring to fight. One of the original five pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo, Master Ricketts has produced numerous champions in the Filipino fighting arts, full-contact karate, and kickboxing.

In 1963 Ricketts started his training in the martial arts with karate, when he met Dr. Guelfermo Lengson, then the President of the Karate Federation of the Philippines, who was also an Arnis practitioner and was the one that actually taught Remy Presas

Sinawali, when Remy Presas was still in Manila. Christopher Ricketts was 13 years old at the time and witnessed Dr. Lengson teaching Remy Presas, while also training at the school. Also Christopher Ricketts trained under Jimmy Galis, who was instructing a style called ‘Spinx’ (Spanish/English) in name, but was a Filipino martial art.

### Creation of Bakbakan

It was when Master Rey Galang returned from Australia, in a discussion with Christopher Ricketts, that a name was needed for their brotherhood for he wished to go international in promoting the Filipino martial arts. So it was a friend of Christopher’s who suggested since they liked sparring so much that they should call the organization Bakbakan. At the same time Master Rey Galang also had also been thinking of the name



Bakbakan Group. And so with Master Rey Galang as the Director and Master Christopher Ricketts as the Chief Instructor, Bakbakan International was formed.

Master Christopher Ricketts has been in San Diego California relocating from the Philippines. His main goal was to share and spread the art of Ilustrisimo Kali. In the Philippines Master Ricketts made a living in teaching, but found that here in America that it was a different situation and until he could form a base of students in San Diego he had to take on a

regular job to make ends meet.

Master Ricketts was an excellent teacher, in that he broke the movements down with explanation, giving insight to each theory of movement. A pioneer in full-contact fighting in the Philippines, Master Christopher Ricketts was known for his high emphasis on intensive basic training and regular full-contact sparring. Training with Christopher, was a demanding and challenging process. Seemingly tireless, given a chance, he would teach and train for hours on end, leaving his students exhausted, but definitely fulfilled and raring to fight. One of the original five pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo, Master Ricketts has produced numerous champions in the Filipino fighting arts, full-contact karate, and kickboxing.

Master Ricketts also offered training in boxing, experienced while in the Philippines. He trained Peter Sescon a flyweight and number one contender in the Philippines, and Junior Bantamweight, Dodong Santa Iglesia and Salvador Darlo.

Master Ricketts will be missed greatly; a true professional practitioner of the Filipino martial arts.



The following people are recognized by the Ricketts Family and are among the guardians of Master Topher’s legacy. They fully support Master Topher’s sons who are his rightful heirs in preserving and propagating the late Master’s interpretation of Kali Ilustrisimo.

Mauro Marchiori (USA)  
John Jacobo (USA)  
Dino Flores (USA)  
Rick Alexander (USA)  
David Foggie (Australia)  
Viko Perrine (Australia)



Topher Ricketts training with Grandmaster Ilustrisimo



Last ‘Masters’ group picture with Edgar Sulite taken March 15, 1997  
Tony Diego, Edgar Sulite, Topher Ricketts, Rey Galang and Alex Co

Photo by Steve Tarani



## Grand Tuhon Baltazar “Bo” Sayoc

[1934 - 2007]

Sayoc Kali



Grand Tuhon Baltazar “Bo” Sayoc, was one of the pioneers of Filipino martial arts in the US, and lived 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. The art of Sayoc Kali hails from Imus, Cavite and spans five generations.

After his time in the Merchant Marines, Tatang Bo immigrated to the United States in 1962 and introduced his children to the Martial Arts at a very young age. By the time his eldest children were in their early teens they were already assisting in running his school in Queens, New York. This was the time of the largest migration of Filipino Martial Artists on the East Coast. They were all welcomed and hosted by Tatang Bo Sayoc and the Sayoc family. The then relatively unknown weapon masters would dine, train and exchange ideas about the direction of their equally obscure art. As those

With sadness we announce the passing of Tatang Baltazar “Bo” Sayoc. He passed away on January 3, 2007 at his home in Cavite, Philippines.

who have known him will all state, Tatang Bo was always open to all ideas and evolution of the arts.

In time, these men would become a veritable who’s who in the Martial Arts. His children exposed to some of the very best weapon experts on the planet on a daily basis. “That’s was just the way it is” as Tatang Bo would often say.

By the early 80’s Tatang Bo quietly moved his family to Southwest Florida and worked as a correctional officer until his retirement in the early nineties. He worked quietly; the inmates never knew he taught martial arts until they had seen a local TV crew cover his school years later. He would often tell his students of which techniques he found useful and what he felt was unusable in that environment. Everything he taught was based on whether or not it could be of applicable value. He did all this with very little need for personal acclaim or self - promotion. Although he never stated it out loud, one could tell that he valued the Filipino martial arts so much that instead of keeping it a family art he would open his doors once again in such a small Southern community. One that collectively barely even knew where the Philippine islands were, let alone the words Kali, Arnis or Eskrima.

The Florida schools were literally small humble warehouses of concrete and sweat, and many students who came looking for a commercialized school or a traditional “eastern” martial art would

eventually realize Tatang Bo’s school was not for them.

If Tatang Bo didn’t like what he saw the individual was kindly turned away or directed elsewhere. A student’s first day was spent getting finger-printed, photographed for ID and evaluated. Then you were handed live machetes and sticks. The evaluation never ceased. Only those who could peel away the layers from Tatang Bo’s teachings were allowed to hang around. He was developing Feeder- based students without ever stating so. In time, he knew that his sons would eventually take over the family art and would often say so. In the meantime, he would always take students to see the now established FMA luminaries if they were anywhere in the state of Florida. He wanted the Florida students to experience a small slice of what it was like during the old days. A sense of the history of the Filipino arts. Tatang Bo was always greeted by them as a brother.

**“Where had he been?”**

**“What have the Sayoc’s been up to?”**

Tatang Bo was doing what he had always done, stayed in the sidelines and allows others to shine. Promote everyone’s events as much as he can. Hone his skills. Evolve his art. Get his students out there in the public doing demos, almost every weekend - up and down the Florida coastline, often in open tournaments when they wouldn’t be allowed to participate unless they had on a traditional white gi.

Tatang Bo would often come in to class from an overnight shift still wearing his uniform. Or get ready to work right after the night classes. He would change into his work-out attire and he was good to go. He would never miss a day, he was always in his school teaching the handful of students. The schools he had were always small in number, it always felt like you were a family just gathering around to train and talk. He often spoke about his family and their accomplishments in Filipino martial arts. By the time a student met Tatang’s sons it was if they’d known them all along. As quiet as he was about his own skills, he was in contrast very eager to let everyone know about his family’s accomplishments. He was always placing the spotlight on those he felt were worthy of it.

By the early nineties, Tatang Bo had established his school and retired to Imus, Cavite in the Philippines. He visited the states a couple of more times, once more to record his Finger Touch curriculum. Several years later, in frailer health due to several strokes Tatang attended the annual Sayoc Sama Sama and witnessed how much his family art’s had grown. He was still in good humor, and perhaps it was because he was able to see that all the effort had been worth it. It was left unsaid but many knew it was probably the final time they would be in his presence. As always, Tatang Bo was more interested in what you had done than what he was going through.

**“That’s was just the way it is.”**

While the system used to maintain twelve weapon categories, today, however, under the direction of Christopher C. Sayoc, the system’s focus is almost en-

tirely on the use of knives and their related uses. The Kerambit may also be used. Sayoc Kali emphasizes the correct and effective use of the blade, including single knife, multiple knives, projectiles, and secondary support to firearms.

No doubt, such a focus has made this dynamic art one of the most thorough and well-structured knife-fighting systems in the world. Sayoc Kali can also be taught as part of the general Sayoc Silak System (formerly the Sayoc Fighting System. Sayoc Silak is described as “the luster of the Blade”. Silak translates as a “beam, luster or ray” in several Filipino dialects. Silak are the components that add polish to Sayoc blade work. Sayoc Silak includes the empty hand methods, the non-blade aspects, primitive (headaxe) and exotic weapons (whip) which further develop the skill sets of the Sayoc Kali student.

Sayoc Kali prides itself as



a constantly evolving system. The Sayoc family was host to the largest wave of Filipino Martial Arts masters arriving at the east coast of the United States during the 1970’s. This gave them the brief opportunity to be influenced by styles such as Doce Pares, Pekiti Tirsia, and Dan Inosanto amongst numerous others. However, Sayoc Kali’s evolution did not halt in the 1970’s. The rich history of the Sayoc family, and their involvement in the security, law enforcement and military fields for the past thirty years has greatly altered their perspective and revolutionary approach to the blade. Dan Inosanto described Sayoc Kali as, “*A highly evolved Filipino Martial Art*”.

Sayoc Kali is headed by Chris Sayoc, Sr. Master Level Sayoc instructors, all with over twenty years experience respectively are Felix Cortes, Raymond Dionaldo, Rafael Kayanan, Ricardo Kayanan and Thomas Kier.

Sayoc Kali is the knife-based curriculum of Sayoc Kali - Silak. It is a family system, headed by Christopher Sayoc, Sr. The motto of the style is, “*All Blade, All the Time*”.



## Punong Guro Edgar Sulite

[1957 - 1997]

Lameco Eskrima

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

**La** = Largo (long)

**me** = Medio (Middle)

**co** = Corto (close)

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

Edgar created training drills that he called Labon Laro (Play Fighting). Labon Laro would allow the practitioner to come as close to real combat as possible with out injury, it was also designed to make you get an uncountable number of repetitions in, in a short period of time. Following the theory "repetition is the key to success". Edgar was always looking for unique training methods to improve Lameco. He devised training armor for the hand and forearms that let the practitioners train more realistically.

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



## Guru H. Yasser Tanadjalan

[1950 - 2007]

Silat Sawdara

1990, he returned to the Philippines and thereafter worked in various positions, as chief of tourism in the Muslim Affairs Office, Quezon City Hall, as a foreman in the Hopewell Geothermal Plant in Quezon and finally, in 1995, as the Head Coach for the Philippine National Pencak Silat Team.

Guru Yasser was born in Boheh Bessey, Tuburan, Basilan Province. As a young boy, he learned his family's martial arts style, Silat Sawdara, from his father. He was also exposed to other silat styles under his father's guidance, such as Lantung, Tawing, Bangkoy, and two versions of Supring. In addition, he also learned Kuntaw. Later on, while travelling around Malaysia and Indonesia, he was exposed to other systems such as Cimande, Binasaluyo, Sendeng, Cingkrik and Naga. His stint as Head Coach for

the National Team brought him into contact with Guro O'ong Sumaryono, then the foreign coach, who shared with him the jurus and techniques of the Keluarga Pencak Silat (KPS) Nusantara, a synthesis system from Indonesia. In addition, as Head Coach he knew the methods and rules of silat olahraga or the competition version of silat. His primary specialization in the competition version was silat seni or the forms competition, although he was also very tough in silat wiralaga or sparring. Not only was Guru Yasser knowledgeable in various styles of silat, he also held a 2nd dan in Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate from Sensei Roberto Gonzales and was a proficient Arnisador as well.

I first met Guru Yasser back in 1997, on a bus going along Quezon Avenue back to Quezon City. I was sitting quietly in the bus, reading a book by Donn

Draeger, "The Weapons and Fighting Arts of Indonesia." I noticed a rather large man peering intently at my book. When he saw me looking at him, he said to me in perfect English, "Excuse me, may I look at that book?" At the time, I found it simply amazing that I would meet somebody like him on the bus. I had become fascinated with the art of silat from reading about it in books and magazines. I was looking and hoping to find a teacher - and now I was talking to no less than the Head Coach of the National Team!

We maintained contact and eventually my training with him began. I told some of my friends about him and soon a small class started. At first, we were exposed to the basic movements - punching, striking, blocking, kicking, sweeping, locking and throwing - but all of them having a distinctive flavor that none of us had seen before. Then we began training in the jurusan or forms. The first sets we learned were called the jurus nasional, short sets of 10 - 12 movements each. We only got up to the fifth juru when Guru Yasser decided to start teaching us jurus-wajib or the required competition juru. I remember having difficulty with this juru as it was long, being composed of twelve sections with 10-12 movements per section. I later found out that many of the components of the jurus nasional were part of the juruswajib. We were also exposed to juru from different styles such as Naga, Binasaluyo, Sendeng, Cingkrik, Cimande and the KPS Nusantara. Only a few of us were allowed to learn some of the techniques from



Guru H. Yasser Tanadjalan  
and Felipe Jocano

the various styles he had learned from his father.

Although we did learn competition juru, the emphasis in our class was different. Guru Yasser taught us how to apply the movements in the various juru for self-defense. He showed us how to evade and follow up with a swift counterattack. He showed us some of the meanings of the different postures and how their use affected one's strategy. He also taught us some of the methods used in Silat Olahraga in order to help round out our training. Guru also believed in the value of cross-training and he always encouraged us to go and explore other styles apart from his own. Many of us who came to him had backgrounds in other martial arts styles, and he encouraged us to keep on practicing these as well, as he believed that the more we knew the better for us. As an example of practicing what he preached, at one point, he showed us boxing techniques and drilled us in them. Then the icing on the cake - he showed silat responses to boxing attacks. The implication was clear - we had to know and update ourselves on what other styles had so as to

better prepare for them. On top of that, knowing how to duck an attack is useful any time.

Many people sought him out. Few were accepted. Fewer still stayed on. Many of his former students left for different reasons. Some had gotten married and left for their provinces. The demands of family life proved too much for others. But for some, Guru put a ceiling on their training and finally, not having gotten what they wanted, they left.

Why did this happen? After they had begun, it became clear to Guru (and to me later when he pointed it out) that either they did not understand what it meant to be a student of silat, or else they were not willing to abide by the dictates of their role.

To learn silat requires that the prospective student be willing to empty himself/herself of self-pride in order to be able to accept what the guru has to offer. A student of silat has to be willing to sacrifice in order to support the guru. On these two counts alone, many fail. One consequence of self-pride is that sometimes students with previous training cannot set aside their prejudices long enough to absorb what is being taught to them. This becomes a hindrance to learning and so they leave, thinking that the system is worthless when in fact it is their attitude that prevented them from progressing any further. Another consequence of self-pride is that students who have learned a little bit think that they have learned a lot and begin teaching and showing others. This is more unfortunate since normally it is the guru who can and should tell the student when to teach.



On December 25, 2007, one of the Philippines' best martial arts teachers passed away due to massive organ failure as a result of pneumonia. Guru H(adji) Yasser Tanadjalan was then in his fifties. During his lifetime, he had a long and colorful career. He had travelled around Southeast Asia, working in various places such as west Malaysia and Indonesia and went on to work as far as Saudi Arabia, as a heavy equipment operator, and later on as an assistant manager in a company. In



If self-pride is a hindrance to learning, the unwillingness to support the guru is worse. It is a common observation among local martial artists that you can't get rich (with a few notable exceptions) in this country teaching martial arts. Most teachers get by with the support of their students. But getting by is possible only with the willingness of the students to help their teacher out. Unfortunately, many students expect to be taught for free (and to gain access to the style's secrets). They miss out on the fact that the teacher more often than not has a family to feed. They forget that teachers are human too, with needs that have to be met and responsibilities to face. A student should be willing to assume the burden of sharing in the support of the guru, for this demonstrates his/her humility and willingness to make sacrifices in order to learn.

Guro Yasser had remarkable abilities, both physical and otherwise. For someone of his age, he constantly demonstrated an outstanding flexibility that made us students (many of whom were twenty to thirty years younger) envious. He could bounce an attacker's energy back where it came from, causing the attacker to hurt himself instead. To demonstrate this ability, he had me slap



him on the back as hard as I could. The moment my palm made contact with his back, I became aware of a wave of excruciating pain reverberating through my hand, up my arm, into my body and down at my knees. Instantly, they buckled and it was all I could do to attempt to remain standing. Many people may doubt my story and attribute it to credulity - but they can say all they want for after all their knees didn't give way the way mine did.

Another time, we had just finished training and we were preparing to leave. A half-grown dog came near us and started barking. Guru raised his hand and gestured in the dog's direction. Instantly, the dog stopped barking and ran off whining in fear. Guru just smiled at me and we went on. The dog's owner came out and asked us if we had hit the dog. I spoke for Guru and said no, the dog was still far from us when it ran. There were no other witnesses except for Guru and myself. I asked Guru later how he did it and he simply smiled again. I never did find out how.

Guro Yasser had many plans for the future. At first he had wanted to put up an association for the promotion of the Silat styles found in Mindanao. In the beginning it was to cover all the three major parts of the country, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Later on, we began discussing the creation of a center that would promote local music and martial arts. Finally it was to be an association that would promote original Mindanao martial arts. We began preparing the incorporation papers but we were ham-



pered by the need to raise the funds for the required fees. We began discussing the writing of a book that would promote Silat. All these plans were cut short when he passed away.

Guru taught many things and I cannot say that I learned them all well. But for me, the most profound of his teachings had to do with how to live one's life as a martial artist. He taught me that the way we disciplined ourselves both in and out of martial arts training reflected how we lived our faiths. For him, faith and life were inseparable, and that included the martial arts. He was a true example of a martial artist - forever patient, gentle with his words, yet having the strength and ferocity of a tiger.

Guro Yasser is survived by his wife and several children, one of whom has begun training with the Philippine Pencak Silat National Team. It is our hope that his styles would continue to live on in his family.

## Grandmaster Bernardino Gallamo Tanique

[1933 - 2005]

Tanique Arnis

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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## 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 3rd round when Villabrille felt a hit bounce off his skull. At the same time, Villabrille's bali 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 sev-

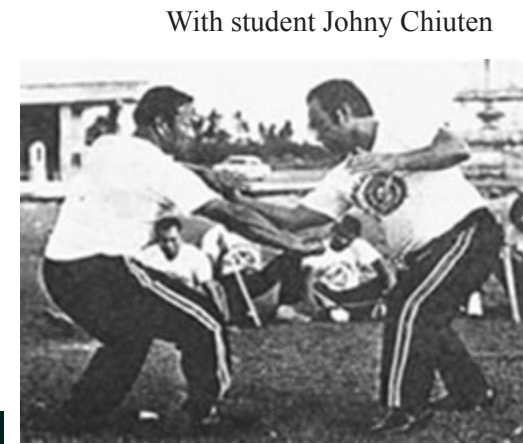
eral more matches in Hawaii. In 1948, he fought his last match and shortly after, the death-matches were banned. Villabrille pooled his knowledge of the various styles in the Philippines and along with his combat experience in the ring developed his own system of combat known and the Villabrille System 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.



With student Sam Buot



With student Johny Chiuten



With student Bobby Taboada



With student Roland Dantes

### Great Grandmaster Atty. Jose Villasin

[1923 – 1988]

Balintawak



The late Atty. Jose Villasin was born October 2, 1923. He was an excellent father, who taught all his children the art of Balintawak Arnis. Two of the children, Ver: aka "Boy Villasin" and John studied Balintawak Arnis seriously, continuing until they became instructors themselves. Atty. Jose Villasin represented one of the biggest Labor Group in Cebu City the Allied Labor Union also known as ALU. He was the first President of Balintawak International Self-Defense Club then a misnomer at that time when the Club was hardly even recognized outside Cebu City. But now, with the increasing popularity of Eskrima abroad, the name Balintawak has become a buzz word in the international Filipino Martial Arts community.

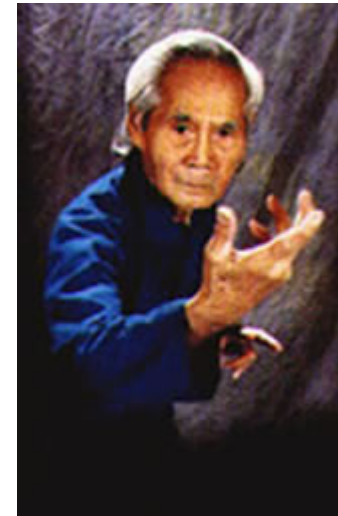
Atty. Villasin was one of the few articulate students of the legendary Balintawak inventor Grandmaster Venancio Anciong Bacon. He documented the salient moves of the diminutive Grandmaster and organized it into groupings. It was an attempt for the first time to systematize the genius and Art of Venancio Bacon as a tool to teach the Art efficiently and with a progression that is designed not only to produce proficient fighters but instructors as well.

Among the illustrious students of Atty. Jose Villasin were Grandmaster Johnny Chiuten, Sam Buot, Nilo Servila, Isidro Bardilas, Dom Lopez and Eddie de la Cruz. Atty. Jose Villasin died on November 5, 1988 at the age of 65. With the humility of his late Dad rubbing off on him, John Villasin insists that the ailing Nilo Servila is still the incumbent President following the line of succession laid down by his father. With the squabbling and bickering over succession prevalent in many Eskrima organizations nowadays the example set by John Villasin is indeed rare and worthy of emulation.

### Professor Florendo Visitacion

[1910 - 1999]

Vee Arnis Jitsu



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

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

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

tial arts was very appealing to him.

This soon led the young Visitacion on a personal journey where he was to devote many years to the study of different fighting styles. Along the way, he realized that mastery of a particular system was not always necessary. What was essential, however, was the ability to understand its useful principles and how to apply them effectively in a given situation. It was important for a student of the fighting arts to absorb only what was applicable and to tailor the art to his or her needs. That was why he also advocated the researching of other systems. It was by doing so, he felt, an individual could learn and choose from a variety



of techniques thereby improving one's fighting skills.

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

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

Thanks to a renewed interest in Filipino martial arts, Professor Vee began a ten-year study of Arnis Lanada under Master Aman-te Mariñas. He also learned additional techniques from Grandmaster Remy Presas of the school of Modern Arnis. In addition, he also received training from Leo Gaje, a noted expert in Pekiti Tirsia, a Kali system. In 1978, the Arnis

America Organization headed by Grandmaster Gaje gave him the Datu award in recognition for his work in promoting Filipino martial arts. Five years later, he also received the prestigious instructor's rank from Master Mariñas and the World Arnis Federation.

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

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

He continued to refine and make changes to his system. As it evolved, so did its name. At one point, after adding Kenpo Karate forms, he renamed it Vee Jitsu Te. In 1965, Professor Vee introduced Vee Jitsu '65, an improved version of his art. The following year, the AJJF conferred upon him the title of Professor and awarded him a 10th Dan ranking in his own art. The AJJF repeated the process in



1971, after Professor Vee presented them with another update of his system, now called Vee Jitsu Ryu Jiuujitsu. In 1983, he discarded the Kenpo katas in favor of Arnis and later adopted the name, Vee Arnis Jitsu. Later, he approved the addition of Muay Thai boxing techniques, making the art more powerful and effective.

In 1993, in recognition for his contributions, Professor Flo-rendo Visitacion was elected to the Martial Arts Hall of Fame and given a "Life-time Achievement" award.

Since his passing on January 4, 1999, his martial art continues to flourish thanks largely to the effort of David James, the present chief instructor of the Vee Arnis Jitsu School of New York. He is a worthy successor to Professor Vee in that he continues to make improvements by updating certain concepts, adding new techniques, or by just modifying and making minor changes. Professor James is firmly committed to bringing his students the best self-defense system available today.

## Master Sonny Umpad

(1948 - 2006)

Visayan Corto Kadena



### My Father Sonny Umpad Brian Umpad

How will I remember my father?

I'll remember my father most for his discipline, the way he lived his life (his way), his sense of humor and most of all his love for his family and his art.

I'll also remember eggs and rice. You see living in low income housing as a kid any food is good food, especially if it's hot and freshly cooked. My dad cooked the best eggs and rice and a variety of other can foods or whatever was available.

But I say eggs and rice because it was treat. My father (Sonny) was never concerned about material items, though he did appreciate them. Nor was he concerned about making a lot of money. He did make enough to get by and also feed his children. Dad did different jobs from painting, apartment maintenance and becoming a landlord before he started teaching martial arts fulltime.

My sister and I would go back and forth between my mom's, lola's and dads place during his

split from my mother. When we were living apart from dad I remember he would pick us up and take us to McDonald's. Oh boy, I was the happiest kid around. I would be so thankful for the meal that I would actually save the food wrappers. It sounds silly now, but as a kid it meant a whole lot to eat out.

We were a poor family based on what society says, but as a kid you never really thought about it. As I did get older and started making money I made it a point to make enough money to make sure I didn't have to go back to where I came from. I didn't want to have my child go through what I did.

Now I think about it, growing up wasn't that bad. It made me a hard worker and appreciate things more. This was the path that was set forth for me and I made it out okay. Without knowing my dad taught me a very important lesson in life, material items are exactly what they are, you can live life just fine with what we have available and a whole lot of love which is a given. If I had a choice of changing the way I was raised I would do it exactly the same way.

Since my father's first surgery in February 06' I started to spend more time with him and started to meet all of his friends and students. I came to realize he has had such a positive influence on so many lives and now I could only wish I can touch half as many people as my father did. I only wish as I was younger I would



have kept up with his training and spent more time with him over the last 20 years. I do know with all of my fathers' friends and students that there is enough training I can have for a lifetime.

My father's art will live long and continue to grow with the unique group of people he has passed his teachings on to.

I as I'm sure others miss my father... Which is normal when someone you love and care about leaves you, but it hurts more knowing he's not coming back. I am comforted in knowing that I will be with him again one day when it's my time to go. But until then I could only live my life my way, with a discipline, a little bit of humor and a whole lot of love as he did and make him a proud father.

As my sister Nancy told me, "It's easy to get caught up in the rat race, slow down, take risks and enjoy life when you're in good health. We have one life and dad's life confirmed how important friends, family, and loved ones are. It's important you reach for your dreams and passions".

### How Will I Remember My Father, Sonny Umpad?

Jackie Quilalang (Umpad)

Well, he was a quiet man who passionately loved the art of martial arts.

I remember my father



spending much time working out with students and creating his own weapons. Back then; he focused more on creating wood sticks. I watched him as he patiently carved each stick and made distinct burn marks. Occasionally, my dad would make me work out with him. I remember the training to be very tiring. He would make me practice the same moves over and over until it was flawless. Because I was a typical girl that was more into Barbie dolls, I lost interest and stopped training. I regret that I stopped training with my dad. After meeting many of my dad's students, I admired them and everything they learned from my dad and wished I continued my training. But sometimes while "rough housing" with a friend, I catch myself using the same moves my dad taught me when I was young.

There was a time when my dad was practicing using a "butterfly knife". I was probably 7 years old when I was standing in front of my dad talking to him while he was playing with the knife. The knife had accidentally slipped through his fingers (that's right folks, the knife slipped through the fingers of Maestro Sonny Umpad) and landed on my foot. I remember being in shock when I saw the knife in my foot in an upright position. After I realized what had happened, I screamed with such fright as my dad rushed me up the stairs to the bathroom to bandage the wound. My dad and I shared this story just shortly before he passed. He admitted he was actually scared. I laughed about it and I showed him the scar on my foot I have been carrying all my life. Not only will the scar remind me of the accident but will always remember the pain on my foot every time I

see a butterfly knife.

Some days, after a long day at work, my dad would bring home a small paper bag that was perfectly folded at the top filled with "goodies". I would ask him with much excitement "daddy, did you bring home a surprise for us". He would smile and say "yes". Today, I ask my boyfriend the same question anxiously when he comes home from work "did you bring me a surprise". What can I say? It's a habit that was developed when I was young. You can thank my dad for that one. Now that I have 2 puppies, I have to bring home a surprise or two for them. I just enjoy watching their excitement when I give them their surprise. I guess that's why my dad would bring home a surprise for us. He enjoyed watching our excitement when he came home with a surprise.

So I guess you can say, some of the things my dad brought into my life as I was growing up is still with me and will always be a part of me as my dad will always be a part of me.

I was devastated when my brother informed me of our dad's health conditions. I admit, I was in denial and convinced myself that he would beat the cancer and it was not a dire urgency to come home from San Diego to visit him. But when I found out that the cancer came back shortly after surgery, I was slapped with reality and realized my dad will be leaving us soon. After rubbing my cheek softly from being slapped with reality, I made arrangements so I can be back in Alameda at least every other weekend to visit my dad. I regret for not visiting my dad as often as I should in the past, but am grateful that I was

able to make peace with him during his last 6 months of life.

I will always remember my father as a man who loved his children and raised us as best as he could with little he had. After he left us in August 2006, I realized that I did learn much from him. Not just bringing home a "surprise" to my loved ones (or vice versa) or the intense training he put me through as a little girl but he taught me to appreciate everything I have in life. To not get caught up with society and know it's OK to live a simple life and still be happy.

I love you dad. Thank you for giving me life!

### Maestro Sonny Umpad George M. Yore



Sonny Umpad. The name, if you have heard of the man and his reputation invokes visions of a deep reverence for the Martial Heritage of the Philippines. His speed, precision and ghostlike evasive qualities are the stuff of a modern Legend. One of the gifted Forefathers of the cherished art.

Through Sonny's insight and perseverance he took a bold step in founding his own system of Filipino Martial Arts: Visayan

Style Corto Kadena & Larga Mano Eskrima. His work ethic was tireless, his commitment unrivaled, his passion timeless. He was content to respect the Old Ways, keeping his Art private and personal...ever the Journeyman destined to become the Master.

By way of his relentless devotion and dedication to his Art he made a significant contribution to the rich and colorful history of Filipino Martial Culture. This was his Tribute to those that had gone before him and will be the Legacy of Us to Follow and Uphold. The Art remains Alive.

If by chance you were able to witness the fluid Grace of his Expression of the Art, you would be rewarded with the Pure and True beauty of Eskrima. In his Kadena, his Caranza, my Brother could walk on Water. That rough Stone that began its journey in Bogo Town some 50 years ago became the Diamond that obtained International Recognition.

His Charm and Humble nature was ever present...this gift he left to us all to Cherish and Nurture. His Place with the Old Masters is Secure.

### *Recollections on Training with Sonny*

Sonny and I met around 30 years ago; we used to frequent the same nightclubs in and around San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. What was called "Hustle" dancing, men and women dancing together as a couple, a` la ballroom style, was the rage at many clubs. The dance form had elements of cha-cha, mambo, paso doble, disco, jazz and acrobatic movements (adagio) that were executed in various degrees by different dancers. We struck up a friendship; each of

us knew that the other engaged in some form of martial practice, however, at that time, this subject was never a focus of our interaction on the nightclub circuit. As one man observing another, to say that Sonny was an excellent dancer in this form of dance would be tantamount to a grievous understatement. He was the master of suave`. His fluidity and grace was clearly evident, his footwork and spins a thing of beauty. Many lovely women would wait patiently to dance a song or two with Sonny...they remarked about his gentle lead and ability to make them float.

With the passage of time, Sonny and I lost touch until the late 80's or early 90's. I thought that he might have moved back to the Philippines. A good friend and stable mate of mine was beginning to study Cabales' Serrada Eskrima and heard about a local seminar taught by an Escrimador that was known for being very esoteric in his particular style of Eskrima. He and I decided to attend the seminar, and low and behold, Winston 100 in hand, Sonny the gentleman with whom I had lost touch, was preparing to instruct us in some of his methods. The seminar was an "eye-opener" for me. I talked with Sonny both before and after the seminar...it was really great to see him and I wanted to study his Style. I wrote to Sonny, requesting consideration as a student. Another gentleman, Mr. Chris Suboreau, one of Sonny's first students and his first Guro vouched for my character; this step was necessary prior to Sonny accepting me as a student. Chris and I had, at one time, trained together at the same school in different martial disciplines; we had known each other



since 1973. Sonny would not teach just anyone, you had to be referred or were "hand-picked" for admission. Everyone I met in our early days of training was "seasoned" or already an instructor in some other Art prior to training with Maestro Sonny. Sonny taught out of his home, his Art was private and personal and followed the Old Ways. One must be tamed before one can learn. We were taught like family and expected to honor and respect that bond.

### *The First Lesson*

I went to Sonny's modest home about 3 weeks after attending the seminar. The walls were adorned with numerous types of Filipino weaponry, more gear than I had seen in most commercial martial arts studios. Many weapons were elaborately carved, later I would learn that Sonny was the sole author for the pieces: sticks, knives, swords, panabas, etc. We went out onto the back patio and he brought out two bolos, one for each of us. The bolos were both sharp enough and dull enough to keep one's attention. He demonstrated a pattern that he wanted me to replicate and then placed me in front of a homemade wooden dummy target where I could practice the



movement and he could observe and critique from the comfort of his kitchen. There was no elaborate explanation regarding meaning...just do the work.

After about 3 hours, training both arms, he informed me that I had learned both the number "1" and "2" strikes. Most critical was that by utilizing correct footwork during the pattern, I learned to avoid cutting my own leg. The other 15 things that one learned from this particular amarra (striking pattern) were for me to discover and inquire about over the next several months. After a short time, I began to train in Sonny's Visayan Style Eskrima to the exclusion of my other Arts. Something that was missing had been found. In full support of my other teachers and their contribution to my growth it was not a result of their instruction, they are individuals of the highest caliber and their guidance was instrumental in my journey. The Eskrima gave me a flow, a freedom deep in my soul...

#### *The Ensuing Years*

Lessons or training sessions conducted by Maestro Sonny could go on for hours, sometimes a slot that was scheduled for you for say an hour could last for 6 hours. You would work with whoever came that day and the material was tailored to each individual. You might train a particular theme that afternoon, but the feel evolved via cooperative interaction; the cross-referencing of movements was endless. Throughout the years

Sonny exposed us to countless types of traditional weaponry but never let us forget that our Art is based on the Blade. The blade work is the root foundation of all development; the pinuti, a short sword of the Visayan region, is a cornerstone of our Style.

Sonny was truly a Teacher's Sage in every respect. One may have had a discussion regarding a variety of topics during a break in training, however, it was not acceptable to vary for substantial lengths of time from the goals of cultural, physical, mental or spiritual development related to the Art. There were times that Maestro Sonny wanted to examine the workings of a particular weapon. If you were present on that day you might learn it. Our crew has camaraderie, many of us train together, sometimes we would exchange "lesson notes" and one of us may have learned a particular weapon and/or tactic while the other knew none of this information. This did not create derision; it fostered an environment to maintain dialog among the generations. We knew from whence we came and what we must do. On August 13, 2006 instructors representing 5 "generations" within our Art threw a benefit seminar for Maestro Sonny. Some had only met for the first time. However, the seminar, by all accounts, was seamless and participants left with tools they could hone. Maestro Sonny had charted the course for this work long ago.

#### *The Legacy of the Art*

Maestro Sonny had an enduring philosophy: Students must learn to add up, think for themselves and cultivate the spirit to work Intuitively. This self-expression is essential to the survival of the Art. No one individual knows everything; this is the quest that drives the Art. This is why Sonny's thirst for knowledge and innovation was unquenchable. This quality is to be embraced and nourished to ensure seeds and fruit for the generations that will propagate the Art in the future. The options and opportunities are there, but must be chosen wisely...be careful, your mind is not always your friend. It is important to understand that knowing the Path and walking the Path are not the same thing; the voyage will be rough and bumpy, you must put in your time and polish the Path. To know the Art is to claim it as your own, as a continual work in progress fraught with its trials and tribulations...the journey one must take to mastery of One-self. It is essential to acknowledge the existence of the Dark side of the Art; it is a powerful force and should never be taken with casual Indifference. The consequences of such Disrespect could put an end to your earthly existence, as you now know it.

One must give back to the Art and respect the Old Ways; this is the tradition that espouses Humility and Honor. To assure our Future, we must have reverence for our Past. The Art was born to... preserve Heritage and Life.

#### **Maestro Elmer Ybanez**

[1953 - 2004]

Lema Scientific Kali Arnis

[LESKAS]

Maestro Ybanez was born on August 13, 1953 in Masbate, Philippines as one of seven siblings. He has 2 brothers (Judge Elihu Ybanez, Edwin Ybanez) and 4 sisters (Dorcas Ybanez-Rocabo, Deborah Ybanez-Quinto,

Ropeccah Ybanez-Villabueña, Rebecca Ybanez-Liwanang) He met his future wife Maribel Padua at the Miracle Revival Church as teenagers. They were married on August 31, 1997. Maestro Ybanez passed away March 31, 2004 due to complications following his leukemia treatment.

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

The LSAI martial art system became widely known and accepted, first, in the Philippines, and now, in the U. S., mainly because of Maestro Ybanez's efforts and hard work to promote the art. Both he and Grandmaster Lema were delegates to the Martial Arts Federation for World Peace in Washington D.C. in 1997 representing the Philippines. Maestro Ybanez was also the first runner-up in the Second World Eskrima

Kali Federation Championship (Super Lightweight Division) in 1992 and was national champion in both the Philippine's National Kali-Eskrima Tournament and the Philippine Union of Martial Arts Arnis Tournament in 1991 and 1990 respectively.

Maestro Ybanez finished his degree in Business Administration, majoring in Accounting, at the Philippine Christian University, and earned his Diploma in Physical Education at the University of the Philippines where he founded and started teaching LESKAS style of Eskrima to a handful of dedicated students who now have their own organizations in the different parts of the Philippines. Since then, the University as part of the regular physical education curriculum has adopted LESKAS. LSAI/LESKAS practitioners are found not only in the Philippines and the U.S., but also in England, Hong Kong and Singapore through the enthusiastic propagation of Master Ybanez and his students.

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



organization are the children of Grandmaster Lema.

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

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

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

The head of the LESKAS Organization is the Ybanez family.



Conscious of the need of developing enthusiasm, interest and dedication in the field of Filipino Martial Arts Education, and in order to act as guardians of the noble and beneficial aims of Arnis de Mano and compelled by our desire to establish an Association which shall be the rallying point of all teachers of Arnis de Mano as a Filipino Martial Arts Education, the Mataw-Guro's hereby mutually agree to unite and associate ourselves for such a purpose.



**Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano**

[www.MatawGuro.com](http://www.MatawGuro.com)