

# Kitty Hawk Sailor helps shipmates achieve clearer 'vision'

By JO1 LANCE R. LINDLEY, *USS Kitty Hawk* Public Affairs

The sign on HM2 Pablo Ramos' office door aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Kitty Hawk* (CV-63) reads, "*Hawk Vision*." Those who know Ramos can tell you the sign is appropriate for more reasons than meet the eye. True, Ramos the corpsman is tasked with taking care of his shipmate's eyesight by repairing their spectacles from dawn to dusk. But after working hours, Ramos the martial arts instructor has become a regular spectacle in the ship's hanger bay, as he trains his shipmates to see by more than eyesight alone.

Ramos teaches primarily Brazilian jujitsu and grappling during the evening while the ship is underway. But while passersby may notice only the physical exertion of the students, Ramos is quick to point out that the most important lessons of his art are learned on a much deeper level.

"Martial arts training teaches a person to see the essence of things," Ramos explained. "It allows you a wider understanding of whatever is in front of you, whether it is a task, a mission or even a person. You can see right to the root of things and can

understand the best way of approaching any challenge."

If that sounds like a mystical quote from the old TV show "Kung Fu," it may be because Ramos' resume' also includes an instructor certification in Jeet Kune Do, a Chinese style of kung fu founded by legendary martial artist/actor Bruce Lee. Lee is credited with originating the idea for the Kung Fu TV series in the movie "Dragon - The Bruce Lee Story."

Ramos' entry into the world of martial arts could also have come from a Hollywood script or an ad in the back of a comic book: a small, unpopular kid gets picked on frequently and finally decides to do something about it. He starts taking martial arts classes and eventually becomes an acknowledged master, growing spiritually and mentally as a result of his training.

"I was a little wimpy and I didn't have a lot of social skills," Ramos said of his childhood in San Juan, Puerto Rico. "Frankly, I used to get beat up a lot. So, I looked into martial arts as a chance to socialize and also to gain self-defense skills."

Ramos began training in 1973 in Japanese jujitsu and judo, two grappling styles that use a variety of throws and wrestling

holds. He chose those disciplines because he felt they were more practical and realistic in their approach to self-defense. But he soon found he was getting much more out of the experience than grappling skills.

"I learned confidence and mental discipline," said Ramos, who has also studied Buddhism. "I got stronger physically, but mainly I got stronger mentally. I learned how to focus my mind."

Now Ramos, who transferred to *Kitty Hawk* in March, is passing his knowledge on to his shipmates three nights a week while the carrier is deployed to the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Southern Watch.

"I encourage people with all levels of experience to attend," Ramos said of his class. "I don't want them to discard their old style, I want them to bring that knowledge with them and share it with us." In fact, that is the reason Ramos is calling his class "grappling" instead of teaching a particular style. "I don't teach techniques, I teach principles," he explained. "I don't change a person's style, I just teach them to be more efficient using the basic principles of kinetics. I do want students to find themselves in the art and to feel - not

reason, but feel - the right thing to do when presented with any challenge."

Ramos said he really enjoys the social aspects of teaching a group of martial arts enthusiasts, but he has a higher long-term goal. When *Kitty Hawk*, which is America's only competitive jujitsu team, which he hopes will be able to compete in tournaments sanctioned by the U.S. Sport Jujitsu Association.

Meanwhile, Ramos and his students are enjoying working out on *Kitty Hawk*.

"I really enjoy the class," agreed DN Nadean Barton, a dental assistant aboard *Kitty Hawk* from Bronx, N.Y. Barton had never taken martial arts classes before, but she likes active sports and wanted a way to spend her free time while underway. "Petty Officer Ramos is a good instructor. He spends time working with everybody and he really gets us motivated. He's a good role model."

"Actually, I learn a lot from the students," Ramos conceded. "They help me to be a better teacher and they keep me motivated and excited about the class."

And that helps Ramos sharpen his own focus as he helps *Hawk* Sailors achieve their own clarity of vision.

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