

DECUERDAS SELF DEFENSE ORGANIZATION

*Honor * Courage * Commitment * Strength * Discipline*

www.DSDO.org Manteca, CA

Welcome to the DSDO Newsletter. This newsletter and future newsletters will contain articles about our organization, its students, and past and future events.

1-Year Anniversary

-Guro Mike

Hello all,

Well, it has been just over a year now since the DeCuerdas Self Defense Organization first started from its humble beginnings in my driveway. Our first official class started back in November of 2009. What started as a select group of students has now grown to an easy dozen.



Photo: Original Core Group

I enjoy teaching more than you know and I am extremely happy to share a skill that I am very passionate about. I am filled with joy every time I see one of my students execute a technique or drill to my expectations. I want everyone to realize that even though I am confident that DeCuerdas Eskrima can hold its own against any other combative system, having each and every one of you trained to my standards and those of GM Gonzalez is not a simple task.

Please remember that this is my first attempt at running a full-fledged school. Since I am learning just as you are, we may encounter a few hiccups along the way as we build this organization together and create a culture that not only defines us, but also separates us from other traditional schools and their methods of instruction. I have a vision of where we need to be as an organization

and what skills I need to immediately pass on to you in order for you to effectively protect yourself and possibly others if the need should arise. This has, and will always be my priority in training. Happy Anniversary!

Last Year's Events

-Guro Mike

Over the last year we've had a few DSDO outings that are worth mentioning. Notably, DSDO students attended a few private training classes at GM Gonzalez's ranch in Acampo, the September 11 promotion ceremony and BBQ, the Martial Arts Collective Society Gathering in Sacramento, and the Kilohana Deep Roots Seminar and Banquet Ceremony in Campbell. What the two latter events symbolize is the importance of cross training and collaboration with other martial artists who have something to offer to our already diverse martial art system.



Photo: Sacramento Martial Arts Collective Society



Photo: Travis Pond & Robert May at Kilohana Event

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I believe cross training is extremely beneficial to any martial art foundation and so we should always attempt to capitalize on cross training events whenever possible.



Photo: September 11th Promotion ceremonies (Guest instructors from Bahalana Eskrima, Serrada Eskrima, and Judo were in attendance). Manteca Cortez Dojo



Photo: Promotion Ceremony BBQ, GM's Gonzalez's gift



Photo: Ray and Juan working out at the promotion ceremony

As the head instructor of the DSDO, I promise that I will never attempt to isolate you from what other systems

may offer. Doing so would be cheating you from the true purpose of why we do what we do; which is to defend ourselves and our loved ones from physical harm to the best of our ability. I believe that by using the DeCuerdas System as a foundation art, you will become better martial artists and have a better understanding of hand to hand combat than the general public as well as many other martial artists.

New Facility (VEA Gymnasium)



-Guro Mike

I am sure I am not the only one who can appreciate having the luxury of finally training indoors. We have been given a great opportunity by the Acaya family for allowing us to train at their awesome facility. We will also do what we can to help Sensei Larry with his Kenpo program, such as implementing Eskrima fundamentals into his kids program.

The opportunity for growth and for hosting cross training events wasn't possible from my home. With this being said, we are guests in their house so let's do our best to leave it cleaner than when we found it. We have some great events planned for the upcoming year and some out of the box thinking that will allow us to better ourselves and the community. Everyone is progressing as I had hoped which has resulted in some recent belt promotions. While you progress, remember to enjoy the journey and try not to think of it as a race to get your new belt.

Why the Martial Art is more than just punches...-Guro Mike

To many, martial arts may seem non conducive to the positive development of a child or an adult. By some, its practice may be viewed as barbaric and counterproductive to a civilized society. As you can probably guess, I disagree. Martial Arts, under the proper guidance, has the ability to teach individuals about physical fitness, goal setting, determination, team work, discipline, leadership, and the value of hard work.

While I do not consider myself a scholar by any stretch of the imagination, I have utilized the values learned through my martial arts study to effectively complete academic certificates and degrees from 5 different colleges and Universities. My point being; if I hadn't have grown mentally through my martial arts practice I would have never have had the courage to complete my first college degree or have the courage to set other worthwhile goals in life.

I learned on the Dojo floor that I can always do better than I think I can. I can set goals and accomplish them if I work hard enough, I realized that the amount of practice you put into developing your skills is directly proportional to the results you obtain. What one may also gain through martial arts practice is pride and a different level of security than those who don't practice martial arts.

For example, most martial artists who have progressed far enough in their training would have a plan if someone came up behind them and put them in a choke hold. The reactive combative skills we obtain through our study help protect ourselves and our loved ones from the uncivilized. I have trained and dined with many martial artists over the years and have found that nearly all of them are the nicest people I have ever met. They are caring individuals who spread good will and life skills to others.

I believe it is through the teaching and practice of martial arts that society can change for the better.

DeCuerdas Roots -Guro Mike



Photo:

Gilbert Tenio & John Eliab

If you study DeCuerdas Eskrima long enough, you will soon discover that it encompasses many different methods of hand to hand and weapon techniques. After talking to those who studied under our founders, it is evident that GM Tenio incorporated anything and everything he found useful to his martial art foundation for the purpose of making it even more effective than it already was.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find elements of Karate, Judo, Jujitsu, Aikido, Kenpo and other arts that GM Tenio studied blended into DeCuerdas. From what GM Gonzalez and Professor James Muro have shared with me, GM Tenio was primarily focused on combative techniques while his partner and fellow DeCuerdas Instructor, John Eliab, was more refined in his practice and teaching methods, having instructors of different mindsets offered the best of both worlds to those who studied under them.

While it is easy to simply claim that DeCuerdas Eskrima has its roots in Filipino Martial Arts, one has to remember that it has continued to grow and branch into its own unique martial art system. GM Gonzalez has also blended some of his own ideas and martial arts experience into the DeCuerdas System, adding yet another layer of combative principles and techniques. Due to this additional element, he now refers to his system of DeCuerdas as "DeCuerdas Diestro Fighting System", paying homage to his instructors while also recognizing the additions he has made to our art.

What are DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts?

By GM Arthur Gonzalez



DeCuerdas-Diestro is an Advanced Fighting Concept and methodology of combative training. The DeCuerdas-Diestro Concept is a unique, ever-evolving method of self-defense and hand-to-hand combat founded by GM Arthur Gonzalez. It

emphasizes maximum threat neutralization in a real life, practical context. DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts were specifically designed for everyone - from beginners to the most advanced martial artists. Everyone can benefit from these modern training methods and no-nonsense principles. The DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts reality training gives you the correct mental toughness that can be applicable to a sport or combative situation. All movements focus on maximum efficiency in realistic conditions. It generally assumes that an attacker will give no quarter and is armed. Therefore, responses are typically intended for use in potentially life threatening situations.

A DeCuerdas-Diestro practitioner will make use of devastating attacks to vulnerable areas with bare-knuckle strikes, head butts, elbows, and other body parts. Using any method to defend against a brutal attack is strongly emphasized. DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts emphasizes simplicity, practicality, and efficiency of movement. It teaches individuals how to overcome fight paralysis and trains the body to take the proper course of action. This totally changes a person's mindset and readjusts it for reality based survival. DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts teaches that the closer you get to the reality of self-defense the more you can own it. And when you own and know what that reality is, you can use it to your advantage. If you don't accept reality, things will naturally work against you.

DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own well-being. It teaches individuals how to turn the tables on an aggressor and how to make the attacker the victim. Be the aggressor, advance immediately, strike first and continuously move while simultaneously attacking and defending from possible threats. Surprise an attacker by putting the pressure on them and move the situation into a devastating close-quarters range. Continue moving forward at every opportunity and staying with the opponent. If you are unable to strike and disable your opponent, make contact with some part of their body (arms, legs or torso) and stick to it with constant forward pressure until the delivery mechanism is neutralized.

DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts training is often quite different from other martial arts training. It stresses fighting under worst-case conditions or from disadvantaged positions. For example, we often train in scenarios with faster or stronger opponents, against several opponents, while protecting someone else, when injured, and even when blind-folded or in low lighting conditions. DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts emphasizes quick learning and the continuous motion, with the number one goal of combative effectiveness and survival.

DeCuerdas-Diestro Concepts' training emphasizes that there are no rules in a fight and that the best defense is an attack. Training is an intense mixture of aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, relying heavily on the use of free-flowing partner drills, heavy bag work, pads and hardwood training dummies. A variety of tools and methods are used in order to experience both offensive delivery and defense of strikes at full force. This is important because it allows the student to practice the technique at full strength. Students will also wear head guards, mouth pieces, and groin protectors during practice so that a realistic level of violence may be experienced without serious injury. Most importantly, we emphasize full-contact sparring with headgear intended to familiarize the student with the stresses of a violent situation.

What We Have Here...

- a student's perspective

By Travis Pond

Enter the Dragon was the movie that started it all for me. I was mesmerized by Lee's speed and power; even more so, I was in awe of his confidence. He was unafraid of his enemies and they soon learned to give him a wide berth. I wanted that. I wanted to be unafraid of my enemies like he was, and so my martial arts journey began.

At age seven, I asked to take karate lessons. At the time, I didn't know the difference between karate, kung fu, tai chi, or salsa dancing for that matter. I didn't care, either. I just wanted to learn to defend myself against the mob of bullies that had put me in the hospital. Paradise Elementary was a predominantly black school in Louisiana. As a white minority kid, I learned that racism favors no color over another.

At my insistence, my mother obliged and I was enrolled in Okinawan Karate. At first, I was ecstatic. I loved wearing the gi; putting on the belt was a treat. Punching and blocking the air satisfied me for a while. However, as time progressed, I felt more distant from the goal that I set out to achieve. After a few years, I gave up because I never understood the concept. I had no idea how to apply it, therefore it was useless.

Shortly thereafter, we moved to New York and I was enrolled in my father's Alma Matter school right at the start of wrestling season. I signed up immediately because it was the closest thing to a martial art that I could take. Being considered a sport, instead of a fighting style or martial art, took some of the stress out of the learning process. I was in a better environment as well so I relaxed and had fun with wrestling. I excelled

at it and would go on to win two state titles in high school.

Throughout high school and my subsequent military career, I trained in Judo and kung fu, as well as boxing. There was always something missing, though. I always felt that I never learned that "final step" that made the art I was training in as deadly as what reality required. I learned the movements well, but I still did not know how to apply them. I always caught myself asking, "How does this work on a person?"

That all changed when Guro Mike Cardenas introduced me to DeCuerdas Eskrima. Not only is this art an extremely efficient and effective fighting style, but the concept based method in which it is taught allows for an immediate understanding of the application. Understanding how to apply what you are taught is the key to successful self defense.

I'm writing this article for the students who have no other martial art to compare DeCuerdas Eskrima to. What we have at the DSDO is priceless. We cannot afford to pay a fraction of what this training is worth. Having access to two master instructors and the Grand Master of the system is literally unheard of. I promise this cannot be found elsewhere. I have trained all over, in dojo's large and small, and while they might have better gear or highly decorated walls and fresh paint, we have the understanding that they covet. We are fortunate to be the foundation students of a soon to be world class organization.

So when you are frustrated or down on yourself because you have failed a belt test or you are having difficulty understanding a new concept, keep in mind that your training and your training environment are one of a kind; what we have is priceless and it won't come easily... nothing worthwhile ever does.
Semper Fidelis, DSDO family!

The DSDO Creed

The DSDO Creed

I am a DeCuerdas student. I am bound by honor, courage, commitment, strength, and discipline.

I am **LOYAL and DEPENDABLE**

To my loved ones

To my Guro

To my DeCuerdas Family

To myself

I am **RESPECTFUL and JUST**

To my loved ones

To my Guro

To my DeCuerdas Family

To myself

I am **TRUTHFUL and UNDERSTANDING**

With my loved ones

With my Guro

With my DeCuerdas Family

With myself

I am **PROTECTIVE and SELFLESS**

To my loved ones

To my Guro

To my DeCuerdas Family

To myself

I will not be boastful.

I will not instigate.

I will not bully or demean.

I will not fight,

but if you force me to defend myself or my loved ones,
be prepared because I am.

Congratulations to Sifu Jim Mirador!



Congrats to my good friend and colleague, Jim Mirador, for his promotion to 4th Degree Black Belt in Kajunkenbo on December 10, 2010. Sifu's Jims' Kajunkenbo background and Eskrima experience make him a great asset to our training; he is a great instructor who truly enjoys

helping others reach their martial art goals and potential. It is always a pleasure having him make the trip out from San Jose to be with us. Great job Sifu Mirador!

Upcoming Events and News!

January 2011: Starting our Wednesday night classes
7:15- 8:30pm

January 9th Kui Lima Kilohana cross training event
at the VEA.

10:00am-1:00pm Workout

\$10 for Kilohana Members

\$20 for Non-Kilohana Members

DeCuerdas Camp, 2-Day Event. April 2nd and 3rd, 2010