

## Editorial

By Lars Lind

Master & Chief Instructor of Weapons Combat Systems™



Since last Newsletter we have had a visit from GM Rene.

It's always a pleasure to see the concepts interpreted by the man himself. Though I have heard many of the explanations before and done most of the exercises, there are always small differences and things I had forgot.

After the seminar GM Rene commented, that it's always a pleasure to teach good students. Well done to all participants.

I have already planned for GM Rene to come back in April 2011.

We have planned for April because August turned out to be too close to the summer holidays and the turnout was below what I had expected.

At the moment the instructors and I have started to work on a three year plan for the development of both instructors and the system. This plan will be finished before October.

Next month will be the first time Historical Weapons Combat is introduced outside Denmark, as I am doing an introduction seminar into Lichtenauer longsword in Turku, Finland in September.

Last week I also had an interesting meeting concerning a Chateau in southern France, summer 2011 and Historical Weapons, more on this in one of the coming issues of the Newsletter.

But for now, let's get started on September where a lot is happening, just look in the back of this Newsletter.

Good training to all  
Master Lars

## Weapons Combat Escrima - GM Latosa in Copenhagen

By Chris Williamson, from his Blog

The week-end with GM Latosa was a great one. 2 days of training and learning is always good.



I was lucky enough to pick up GM Latosa at the airport in Copenhagen. That gave me some one on one time with the man I model my martial arts by. For anybody that has spent some time with a role model like GM Rene, you know what a boost it can be regarding drive forwards in your life.

The closed group training on Saturday was intense and good. By body felt it when the day was over with. Don't get me wrong, I am not complaining. When we were eating lunch on Friday we talked about people giving their all and burning out early on in a week-end like this one. There is always a real danger of this. Training the different drills with Sifu Riis helps keep the intensity up and the BS at a minimum. I was lucky enough to train with Søren "doc Death" and Erik, an instructor from another part of Denmark, on Sunday. I can only say thank you to my lovely wife for the shoulder massage when I came home. She also slept beside me the whole night. You can call me "Mr. Tiger balm" As always there were a few beers, some good food and some good company after the training.

I had not spent much time with my son Saturday, so it was perfect that we were starting at 12:00 on Sunday. Once again it was another day filled with inspiration as well as confirmations of many drills and ways of training. After learning from GM Rene in California, I had built upon the drills GM Latosa has given me. The many times he has been in Copenhagen made it easy as well.

When comparing the two days, there was a good combination of knowledge for instructors and for anybody training martial arts. The idea of using the same basic movements to transition from unarmed to knives to sticks and to what ever you could imagine was reenforced once again. Once again I see no reason for me "to master" two systems. Training other systems is great. There will always be room for private lessons in BJJ, firearms training and other subjects but Latosa's concepts and program is the path.

All of the explosive drills like shoulder ripping and many more have once again, reinforced the strengths of combining kettlebell training etc. with martial arts. So for all the people out there that are learning one with out the other, you are missing out.

I will leave you with some pictures and an example of how GM Rene works individually with people that come to his seminars. Rolf, the man in the video, is an up and coming instructor in escrima. Look for great things from him.

## Weapons Combat Escrima – GM Rene’s seminars

*By Master Lars Lind, Chief Instructor Weapons Combat Escrima*

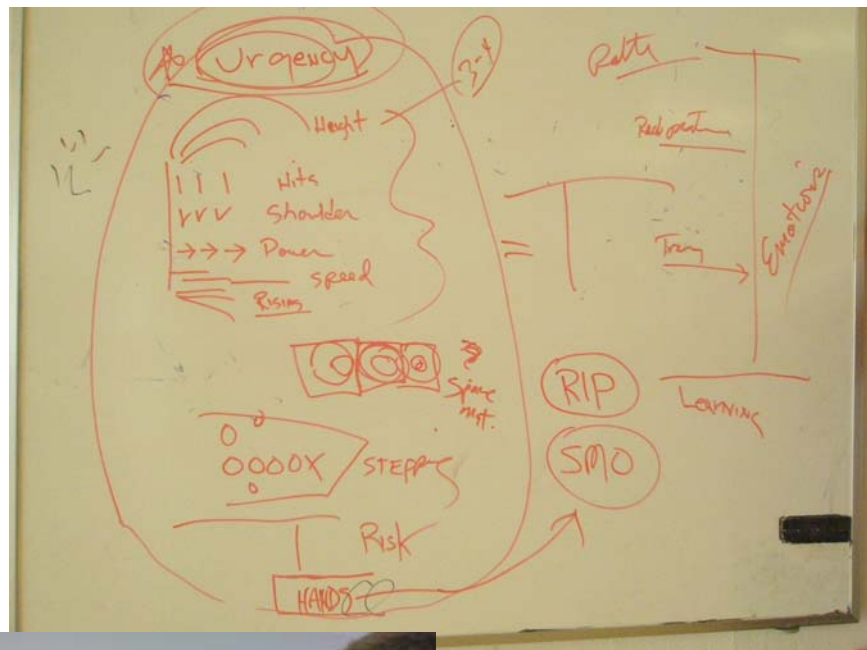
After we had to cancel the last planned seminar with GM in June, it was good finally to get GM Rene here.

The seminar weekend was divided in small group training Saturday and a general seminar Sunday. The small groups were on: The Concepts and Figure eight.

But the two subjects more or less grew into one.

Next day, the seminar, followed up on the concepts in general.

The whiteboard came into good use on both days.



GM Rene answering questions from Kenneth and Erik

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Participants in seminar



Participants in small group training

## Weapons Combat Escrima – Escrima’s secret power concept

From article in Black Belt Magazine May 1987

# ESCRIMA'S SECRET POWER CONCEPT

Maximal Force = Minimal Muggings

Story and photos by Jane Hallander

Rene Latosa (below right) demonstrates escrima's combat concept: As he blocks (1) an opponent's stick strike, Latosa is moving forward (2) into a counterstrike (3) without pause. The block and strike have occurred without interrupting Latosa's timing and fluidity.



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*Rene Latosa, ducking and countering a stick attack above, started his escrima training with noted expert Angel Caballas in 1968 and became Caballas' top teacher.*

Much has been said about ancient Chinese, Korean and Japanese masters who took their fighting secrets with them to their graves, lost forever to mankind. Perhaps these individuals were insecure and could not stand the thought of another martial artist possessing their knowledge. Or maybe their so-called secrets were so basic that the old masters believed a dedicated martial artist would be smart enough to figure them out on his own. Sometimes the simplest lesson is the most difficult for the mind to comprehend.

As people search for the secret of ultimate martial success, they often end up adding more confusion and useless clutter to systems already overloaded with too many intricate theories and techniques. Take, for instance, one of the most sought-after secrets—how to obtain maximum power. Some individuals believe that power comes from making a vacuum out of the chest cavi-

ty. Others claim the secret to power lies in combining blinding speed with body mass.

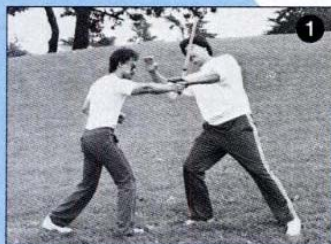
The answer may be even simpler than that, however. It could be lying just slightly below the surface of one of the most elementary martial arts: *escrima*.

Escrima is built around six basic defensive blocks, which lead into counterattacks. The key to the art's power lies not in the techniques themselves, but in the way they are used.

One escrima instructor who knows something about developing maximum power is Rene Latosa, who teaches escrima with a *concept* in mind, rather than a particular technique. Latosa started his escrima training with Angel Caballas in 1968, and worked his way up to the position of Caballas' head instructor. At that point in Latosa's martial training, he made a fascinating discovery.

Part of the folklore of the Philippine martial arts is the secrecy surrounding its membership. Direct family members often didn't know their relatives were martial experts. Such was the case with Latosa. Only after he had established

*The power concept also works in empty-hand defense, as Latosa demonstrates. As he blocks (1) a stick attack, Latosa is already starting to counter—in this case, a right cross (2) to the temple, followed (3) immediately by a hard left punch to the face.*



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himself with Caballas did his father inform him that he too had trained in escrima. Latosa discovered his father not only practiced escrima, but was an expert at it as well. So Latosa started to learn from his father and was taught what he calls "the concept of combat."

Latosa soon learned that without this concept, escrima techniques were simple force-against-force movements, improved upon by the addition of speed. However, when escrima techniques were interfaced with the combat concept, defense became adjustable and directional, not confined to a single attack or direction. Latosa also found that he could apply the same power (or combat) principle to other martial arts with equal success.

The concept used to obtain maximum power and penetrating force is so simple it eludes many martial artists. Power is generated from the very beginning of a technique by the forward momentum created from stepping toward an opponent and coordinating the punch or strike with the footwork.

To make the best use of this hand and foot coordination, martial artists must first have their bodies "connected" into a single unit which delivers maximum force. If there is a break in the connection, the power is broken.

After the critical body connection into one undivided unit, the practitioner coordinates foot and hand movements. In other words, if a fighter first steps forward and then punches, the connection is broken, weakening the final expulsion of power. The same applies if the hand technique comes first, followed by the footwork, again breaking the power chain.

Footwork and hand techniques must occur at the same time. As the fighter steps forward, his punch should simultane-

ously find the target. This applies to both offensive and defensive techniques. The entire body mass and momentum must drive the punch to its target to utilize maximum power and effectiveness.

Latosa's escrima students will move forward at the same time they block with their sticks or bare-handed techniques, and then continue forward another step when they simultaneously switch the blocking movement to an offensive strike.

The main principle behind the power concept is that the entire body mass propels the block or strike by moving it forward and giving it momentum. At no time does the arm or hand move independently of the body, a mistake many people make. The arm by itself carries very little power. However, when powered by the momentum and mass of a moving body, a martial artist's arm and hand become formidable weapons.

This combat concept is one of the reasons the best Philippine fighters of the past never gave up their positions.

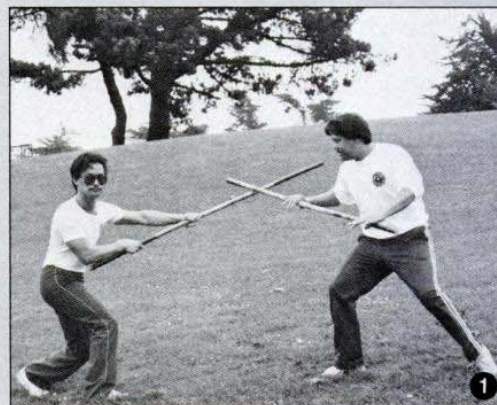
They always kept moving forward; they advanced even while blocking. The word "retreat" was not part of their vocabulary.

Once the fighter's body becomes connected into a single unit, he can drop his center of gravity and add more momentum to his forward movements. As he moves forward, power comes up from the back leg and into the hips, which rotate to give extra torque to the entire body.

Throughout the entire process, the martial artist's back must remain straight and unbroken (not swayed). If the lower back loses its strength by swaying, the body connection will be broken and the martial artist will have power coming only from the shoulders and arms. The back is the necessary bridge through which power from the legs and hips travels to the upper body. When everything is connected, sudden, explosive power is produced.

Forward-moving fighters with well-coordinated hands and footwork, whose bodies are functioning as single,

*Escrima's power concept can be utilized with any weapon, including a long staff, as Latosa demonstrates here. He first blocks (1) an attacker's staff strike, then continues his unbroken movement forward (2), changing his block into a strike (3) to the opponent's head. Note that Latosa's back remains straight throughout his advance to maximize power.*



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*In this sequence, Latosa combines the stick with empty hands to illustrate escrima's combat concept. He checks (1) a stick strike with his empty hand and counters (2) with a stick strike that is blocked. However, Latosa has already commenced with a punch (3), rotating his hips without interrupting his rhythm.*

connected units, are *balanced* fighters. Even if they throw a punch and miss, their bodies are balanced and set up to punch again from the same position without losing any momentum or power.

So well balanced are the martial artists who understand this principle that they move from block to counterstrike as if it were one motion, rather than two separate techniques. After the block, their bodies are already positioned for the counterattack, eliminating additional time-consuming footwork or body maneuvering.

In escrima, there is no reason to treat weapons any differently than if they were your arm or hand. Both the arm and a weapon are propelled by the directing force of a connected body. This is why knowledgeable escrima practitioners, such as Latosa, consider a stick or bladed weapon and their own hands to be similar, employing the same techniques and concepts with each.

According to Latosa, "Sticks of any length and knives are interchangeable with hand techniques. The only thing

you have to know is how to adjust the technique between hitting and cutting, and the amount of force needed to accomplish each variation."

A striking technique, such as that with a stick or bare hands, requires a solid impact rather than a slicing motion. Cutting something uses less forward force and more "sliding" power to make the slicing action.

In earlier times, Philippine martial artists learned many different weapons: sticks, knives, swords, chains, etc. They were all employed with the same basic combat concept. An example of this is the belief that anything that can be struck with the power of an escrima stick can be hit empty-handed with equal power.

Even differences in weapons are overcome when the power concept is applied to them—both long and short weapons. For instance, staff and short-stick fighting use the same concept. The actual techniques differ only in movement, which is adjusted to the length of the weapon. The footwork and

blocking areas are the same for both types of weapons.

Even the difference between bladed weapons and striking weapons becomes a matter of knowing the difference between cutting and hitting. Blocks and the angles of attack remain the same for any kind of weapons, as well as bare hands. A defender should be able to pick up anything that will serve as a weapon and use it with the same power theory.

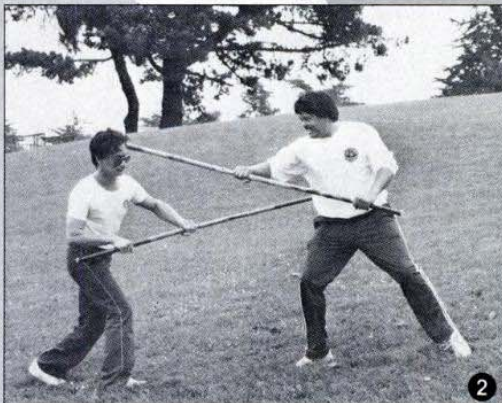
Latosa supplements the power concept by instilling a winning attitude and aggressiveness in his students. He does this by having them train as if they were in a real fight. This doesn't mean they try to hit each other with full contact and the intent to cause injury. Rather, they learn and practice forms and techniques as they are traditionally set down.

For instance, escrima techniques often include a circular behind-the-neck movement called a "roof" block. It is a necessary block if the escrima stylist were protecting against a blow to the head from behind. As with many other techniques, roof blocks are added liberally throughout the forms to make sure the escrima student becomes familiar with them.

In actual sparring practice, the roof block is usually eliminated in favor of quick, no-nonsense fighting blocks and strikes. Latosa's students practice sparring with efficient, coordinated techniques, which will give them an edge in a real situation.

The fact they learn escrima's secret power concept doesn't hurt their chances any either. ✂

*About the Author: Jane Hallander is a freelance photojournalist living in San Francisco.*



## Historical Weapons Combat – On Messer and Dussack

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

### Großes Messer

A **großes Messer** or Gross Messer "great knife", also called **Hiebmesser** = "cutting knife") was a type of German single-edged one handed sword similar to a falchion, that was used during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. *Großes Messer*, or simply *Messer*, was the term used in the 15th century, and the weapon in the 16th-century evolved into a type of training weapon known as a **Dussack**.

Much less expensive than other types of available swords, it was the weapon of the common man: Used for menial work in addition to battle, the *großes Messer* sported a blade with a single curved edge that led to a clipped-back tip (like a kilij). Its hilt included a straight cross-guard and *Nagel* (a nail-like - Nagel literally means 'nail' - protrusion that juts out from the right side of the cross-guard away from the flat of the blade) to protect the wielder's hands. Quite notable in its construction was the attachment of blade to the hilt via a slab tang sandwiched between two wooden grip plates that were pegged into place. Also of note is that many pommels were 'drawn out' or curved to one side of the hilt (edge side), a feature known as a "hat-shaped pommel". Extant examples seem to have an overall length of 30 inches with a 24.5 inch blade, and a weight between 2 to 2.5 pounds.

The *Messer* was part of the curriculum of several fencing manuals in the 14th and 15th centuries, including Lecküchner, *Codex Wallerstein* and Albrecht Dürer, and was displaced by the Dussack in the 16th.

Although often confused with the Kriegsmesser "War Knife", it has to be clearly distinguished from the Grossmesser, being more than 1500 mm long and shaped more like a scimitar, originating as the Hungarian version of the German *Zweihänder*. Kriegsmessers were used by professional soldiers, typically Landsknechts. An example of this, also called a "Long Knife," is preserved in the Hofjagd- und Rüstkammer, Vienna.

### Kriegsmesser

A **Kriegsmesser** is a large, curved, single-edged two-handed sword typically around the same length as the longsword or hand-and-a-half sword. They were popular in the 15th and 16th century Germany. The name literally translates from German to "War Knife."

It was named so because the hilt configuration resembled that of a knife handle, having two slabs of material (often wood, bone, leather, or a combination thereof) on either side of the wide, flat tang. The robust tang and acute distal taper common among these swords gave them attractive handling characteristics. The pommel was usually curved towards one side, while the cross guard was frequently equipped with a ring, plate, or lug which offered additional hand protection during the advanced winding maneuvers often associated with these types of swords.

Primarily used by professional soldiers, most notably Landsknechts, the kriegsmesser was put to use in much the same advanced fighting technique as its double-edged counterparts established in the German school of fencing by master Johannes Liechtenauer. Having saber-like qualities, the war knife's curved geometry allows the edge to have more surface area contacting the target while cutting, thus giving it superior slashing capabilities. Its blade length normally falls between 33" and 36" inches , with a 10" to 12" hilt, and surviving swords generally weigh between 2.5 to 3.5 lbs.

Although these blades were usually single edged and curved, there are surviving examples which sport a wide variety of blade types, causing this type of sword to be defined more by its hilt configuration, rather than its blade geometry. For example, a Falchion can have the exact same blade as a messer, yet it could still be considered a different type of sword because of its more traditional hilt.

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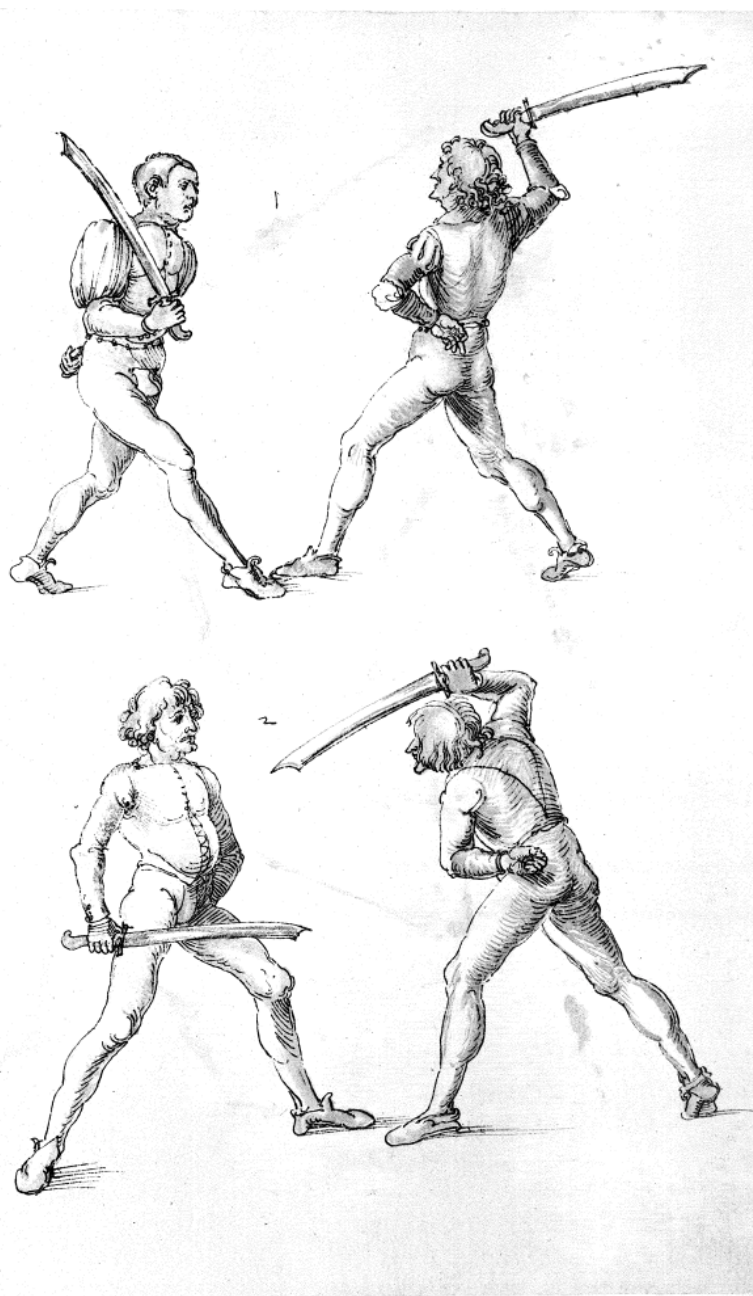
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## Dussack

A **Dussack** (also dusack, dysack, tesak, tuseckn, thuseckn, disackn, or dusägge, dusegge, dusegg) is a type of short, single-edged sword from Central and Eastern Europe, and also a type of German practice weapon that originated around the 16th century, of similar design. This dussack was intended to represent various short, single-edged weapons in a training environment. Using a dussack, one could train for the falchion, or cutlass, *Hiebmesser* or *großes Messer* (which translates to English as "big knife"). As usage of the dussack became more widespread, various schools turned use of the dussack into a sport as opposed to training for a real weapon.

Based primarily on the *Messer* rather than the falchion, dussacks had a short, thick, single-edged blade measuring between 25 and 38 inches (65 and 95 cm) long. A dussack was usually made of wood. Additionally there is a single reference to dussacks also being made from leather, and at least one metal dussack is known to survive. The dussack was gently curved and brought to a point at the tip. The dussack often lacked a hilt. Instead, the handgrip was merely a hole cut inside of the blade; without a pommel or upper guard, it looked something like a large hole for gripping scissors.

No wooden (or leather) practice dussacks are known to have survived; unsurprising given the perishable nature of the dussack, and only woodcuts and training manuals from the period document their existence.



## **Historical Weapons Combat Tour 2010 – November 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> – Kunst Des Fechtens seminar in Leeds**

By Master Lars, Chief Instructor, Weapons Combat Systems™

As our tradition bids, we will again visit Royal Armouries in Leeds for a KDF seminar. The tour will be open for our training partners in Historical Weapons.

The teachers on the seminar will, as far as I know be: Daniel Smith, Leeds, Adam Roylance, Nottingham, Bert Bruijnen, Tilburg, Bengt Abrahamsson, Malmo and myself and maybe Konrad Kessler from Jena.

I am still working on details and trying to arrange meetings with some interesting people. The showing of manuscripts and weapons from the collections in the Library is also arranged this year. For those who have not seen the I.33, this is a must.

I would like a mail, if you decide to participate in the arrangement, but you do your own booking, either as individual or as groups.

### **Expenses**

Everything in the Royal Armouries (entrance, special exhibitions, visit to library and shows) The price is around £50; you book your own flights, train ticket to Leeds and hotel stay.

You can fly to Manchester and take coach or train from there to Leeds (traveltime 3-4 hours), go via London and train or fly from Copenhagen to Leeds, Bradford via Brussels or London with BMI or British Airways – the price are a bit higher, the travel time is about the same via Brussels or London (4-6 hours), but you don't have time in London.

Price for flight Copenhagen - London or Manchester DKK 600-1600 (depending on airline company), from Sweden and Germany you might have to arrange other connections. Flights via Brussels or London around DKK 3000.

Train to Leeds from London Kings Cross – return saver £86

Train to Leeds from Manchester Airport – return saver £42

Coaches are cheaper but takes longer.

### ***Link to trains***

<http://www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com>

<http://www.virgintrains.co.uk/default.aspx>

### ***Link to Jury's Inn and Holliday Inn hotel chain***

[www.jurysinns.com](http://www.jurysinns.com) or [www.hiexpress.com](http://www.hiexpress.com)

Price pr. night for double/treble room between £49 - 60 (be aware that it can be cheaper to book day by day – check prices! - the rates vary from £ 49 - 85).

### ***Link to Royal Armouries***

<http://www.royalarmouries.org/>

## Program

(New things might be added and there might be changes in times and venue)

### Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup>

- 16.00 - Visit to the Royal Armouries, *maybe visit to Library.*  
18.00 - 20.00 Training in Royal Armouries with Chapter Master Daniel Smith

After this, drinks at local pub and talk with Dan



### Friday November 12<sup>th</sup>

- 10.00 - 16.00 Visit to Royal Armouries to see  
- *Library*  
- *Interpretations*  
- *The galleries*  
- *Special exhibitions*  
This can be done everyday during breaks, lunch and after seminar or a trip to York

### Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup>

- 10.00 - 12.00 KDF seminar in Royal Armouries  
12.00 - 14.00 Lunch  
14.00 - 16.00 KDF seminar continued  
20.00 Dinner in Leeds

### Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup>

- 10.00 - 12.00 KDF seminar in Royal Armouries  
12.00 - 14.00 Lunch \*)  
14.00 - 16.00 KDF seminar continued  
Around 17.00 Beer and food at the Palace pub

### Monday November 15<sup>th</sup>

- 8.00 - 10.00 Departure for from Hotel

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## What is happening?

### In September

September 4<sup>th</sup> – Turku – Weapons Combat Escrima – grading seminar  
Master Lars Lind

September 5<sup>th</sup> – Turku – Historical Weapons Combat – German Longsword seminar  
Master Lars Lind

September 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – Nyborg Castle – Medieval Fight Camp

September 18<sup>th</sup> – Lund - Weapons Combat Escrima – grading seminar  
Master Lars Lind

September 19<sup>th</sup> – Lund – Weapons Combat Escrima – Historical Escrima – Roots of WCE  
Master Lars Lind

September 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> – Tilburg – Dutch KDF summercamp

September 25<sup>th</sup> – WT Center - Weapons Combat Escrima – grading seminar  
Master Lars Lind

### In October

October 17<sup>th</sup> – WT Center – Weapons Combat Escrima – Knife seminar  
Master Lars Lind

October ?? – Haderslev – Weapons Combat Escrima - Special seminar \*)  
Master Lars Lind

\*) To be confirmed

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Questions on this letter, seminars or Weapons Combat Systems™ can be put to me personally  
on telephone +45 40 30 48 39 or by mail to [lars.lind@siemens.com](mailto:lars.lind@siemens.com)

Master Lars, Chief instructor and founder Weapons Combat Systems