

## Editorial

*By Sifu Lars  
Chief Instructor Weapons Combat Systems*

I hope everybody have had a good holiday and are now ready to start training again. I'm at the moment working on the seminar schedule for next year, not only to arrange seminars for myself but also to make this fit with the seminars held by other Weapon Combat System instructors. All seminars are of cause interesting but too many held the same month in the same place are not optimal.

On the other hand it is very important to show the full specter of our system to as many as possible. We are still a new system (in name at least) and I'm confident that this will all fall into place in the next couple of month.

At the moment we will be represented next year in at least 3 more schools one of them in a new country, more about this in later issues.

## The teaching structure for Historical Weapons Combat™ is finished

After a lot of thinking, discussions and writing, the teaching structure of Historical Weapons Combat™ is now finished. It is a bit different from Weapons Combat Escrima as it is divided vertically in weapon type and horizontally in levels of skill. This means that several types of weapons can be learnt simultaneously. Where in Escrima the grades go from 1 to 12 we here work with 3 levels in four Weapon type groups.

The instructor program will now be worked on for the next period and expected to be finished in spring – thereafter come a testing period.

## Medieval dagger seminar I WT Center

September 2<sup>nd</sup> Senior Instructor Bengt Abrahamsson taught a very interesting dagger seminar in WT Center. In the seminar unarmoured dagger fighting and defenses from German fight books from Liegnitzer to Meyer was trained.

As always it is fun to see that even techniques several hundred years old work perfect in its right contex.



Even if Escrima is your favorite system, I would recommend that you participate in some of the more historical seminars as they have a lot to offer.

WEAPONS

Combat Systems™

## “Fight day” in WT Center

September 15<sup>th</sup> was “Fight day” in WT Center and a group of students joined Chris for a couple of hours of hard drills and sparring matches with padded sticks protective gear.

I hope you all keep up the spirit and participate in Copenhagen Open 2007 in November (remember to contact Chris or Kenneth on this).



# WEAPONS

Combat Systems™



## Tournament?

We will have Copenhagen Open 2007 in November – in October we will arrange one or more tournament training days where you can get to know the rules. On these days it will also be possible to train as official (point- or ring referee and other capacities)

If you want to fight in the tournament or help as official contact Senior Instructors Chris Williamson or Kenneth Kyhe as soon as possible. You can also e-mail ([lars.lind@siemens.com](mailto:lars.lind@siemens.com)) me and I will pass on the information.

**Remember your system needs you!**

## Kunst Des Fechtens seminar October 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

If you are interested in taken part in the KDF in the Royal Armouries, Leeds, it is now time to order tickets and book hotel.

We (Bengt and me) are flying over Friday October 12<sup>th</sup> and back Monday October 15<sup>th</sup>. We are staying at Jury's Inn close to the armouries. The seminar is Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup> in the armouries. Friday there will be a dinner and Daniel from Leeds is trying get someone to give us a tour round the "cellars" of the armouries.

If you are interested in attending give me a call as soon as possible.

## Hammenhög

If you have not booked, we still have room for to or three more. But you have to be fast!

## The roots of Weapons Combat Escrima 3

In the following we will name some of the persons who first of all have influenced GM Rene Latosa and thereby the development of Weapons Combat Escrima. These are masters and some even grandmasters in their own right. Later we will take a look on those who have influenced the next developments. The names of these persons and what they represent should be know be all Weapons Combat Escrimadors as they are all part of our heritage and history.

### LATOSA FAMILY- ESCRIMA-HISTORY

#### **Esteben Latosa**

*Rene's Great Grandfather, Esteben, was a well-known (wanted) outlaw and a feared and dangerous Escrimador. As the story has it, he possessed the Anting-Anting, "the symbol of the supernatural" coupled with his martial arts skills made him a truly invincible man. As a young boy of seven years, Juan Latosa, Rene's father was the only person his outlaw grandfather Esteben would allow near him. Esteben saw a future Escrimador in the brave eyes of his young grandson Juan. He tried to teach him the finer points of fighting but Juan was too young. One day as Esteben, lay sick in bed dying, he asked his grandson to take the Anting-Anting protruding from his mouth. Even as a young boy, Juan sensed that this object had evil attached to it and refused to take it. Esteben smiled at Juan's wise decision and felt assured that his courageous grandson would be a successful fighter without the Anting-Anting. In his weaken state Esteben left for the mountains never to be seen or heard from again.*

#### **Juan Latosa**

*Juan Latosa, Rene's father, was a well-respected fighter within the province of Capiz, and in the city of Mambusao. Rene's father was the eldest in his family and a big man in terms of the average size of a Filipino. As a teenager, relatives introduced Juan to the Filipino martial arts at a young age. With his interest and skills sparked, Juan asked his mother for money to go to college in Manila. His mother's perception of study meant academics; whereas, Juan's interpretation was to proceed to the mountains to study Escrima. He never made it to Manila. For over a year he studied in a secret camp where his training extended to weapons of different sizes, shapes (kampilan, staffs, ropes, double swords, etc.), and ending with a weapon completely out of character, the Japanese samurai sword. When he returned to his village, he continued to season his skills in actual fights and by practicing with different vendors and travelers who had martial arts skills. In his village, he was the best fighter; it did not hurt him too much that his athletic skills were at his highest level (Philippine Olympic Track Team).*

*He departed the Philippines in the 1920s for America seeking fortune, adventure, and a better life.*

*On the ship to America, he confronted a Japanese Bo master because he was causing trouble and bothering the other Filipino passengers. Juan asked him to stop; consequently, the situation escalated into a death match. With the stage set, the match began with sticks against staff. The fight ensued with Juan rendering the opponent down and defenseless in a matter of seconds. Being a death match, the opponent requested that he finish the job; Juan refused. His opponent had to live with the humility and loss of face for the rest of the voyage. This story was told to me by other people, many years before I realized and verified that it was my Father who was the major part of this episode.*

#### **Pedro Latosa**

*Uncle Pedro was a wonderful source of training and stories. He told Rene fascinating stories of his brother Juan's temperament, fights, and reputation in the Philippines. Pedro learned Escrima from Rene's father. The training he received from my father was for survival rather than learning for learning's sake.*

WEAPONS

Combat  
Systems™

## Rene Latosa

Rene Latosa's initial exposure to the Filipino martial arts came through his ethnic and cultural environment. As a young child, Rene first witnessed martial arts during celebrations (after the crop season was over), cultural events, and hanging around the Filipino Community Center in Stockton, CA. At this community center he would watch the "Old Timers" amuse themselves by hitting their walking sticks together as if they were sword fighters and applying locks to each other.

As a teenager, many of Rene's friends were studying Judo. He asked his father if he could take Judo or Karate lessons. His father offered to teach his young son "jitsu." He didn't believe his father knew anything about martial arts, so he did not pursue that avenue. His mother recommended taking self-defense classes taught by a long time family friend, Angel Cabales, at the Stockton Escrima Academy.

## Stockton Escrima Academy

His first visit to the Stockton Escrima Academy was in 1968. Rene was greeted by Angel, holding a cigarette in one hand and a rattan stick in the other. Angel, having known Rene since he was small, told him to grab a stick and Angel proceeded to demonstrate a quick technique. From this point forward, Rene was hooked and he continued to study and eventually taught at the Academy for over five years.

At the Stockton Escrima Academy in 1968, "formal training" did not exist. The method of teaching employed at the academy was strictly on a teacher to student basis. Rene remembers the ambiance at the academy was very casual, Angel was just "Angel." For all the students at the academy, the title "Grandmaster" was inherently Angel's, and his alone. To Rene's advantage, during his first five months of training, he was the only one of three students who showed up for lessons. Rene's initial training, with a ratio of four instructors to one student- Angel Cabales, Max Sarmiento, Leo Giron, and Dentoy Revilar- provided plenty of diversity in styles. These four individuals played a definite role in shaping the basic format of the Escrima Concepts system; however, his greatest influence was his father.

During those early days at the academy, Angel did not have student certificates or rankings. They did not exist. You were an instructor when Angel said you were (Rene did receive an instructors certification from Angel and another one from Max Sarmiento, the only one ever given in Kadena de Mano. Angel always said that certificates, belts, and titles meant nothing without the ability to back it up.

## Training with Dad - "Never judge a book by it's cover"

Learning from his father was very difficult for Rene. His father was a fighter and every reaction to a situation was combat oriented. When Rene asked to see a movement for a second time, he was shown something else. Because his father did not use techniques, no two movements were ever the same.

Rene's enlarged ego was instrumental in his introduction to his father's prowess in the Filipino martial arts. Rene was practicing for a demonstration when he became concerned that he did not look as flashy and impressive as he should.

He asked his father, who was working in his garden, if he would care to be his practice "dummy", The elder Latosa noted for his quick temper remained calm despite this arrogance. He had watched as his son practiced his techniques, smiled and said "boy, you need more training", the younger Latosa asks him what he knew since he was only a "dummy!"

He dropped his hoe and walked quietly towards his young egotistical son and picked up a stick. Rene asked his father if he would hit him over the head, but warned him to be careful because of his deadly speed and dangerous skills. Instead, the old man in a calm voice asked his son to strike at him. There was some hesitation on Rene's part; fearing that if he went too fast his father might get hurt. Rene directed a slow hit at the old man. Before he saw what had happened, his father's stick hit him on the head. "This must have been an accident," thought Rene. He again struck at his father but this time faster. Again, Rene's head was the final destination for the end of his father's stick. In a serious fury, Rene went after his father with a strike that was strong, fast, and headed toward its target; as a result, his target moved and a stick landed between Rene's neck and shoulder knocking the young man to the ground. His father walked away laughing and went back to tending his garden. Rene's mother came out of the house, yelled at his father, and consoled her son with the bruised ego. Rene spent some time soul searching, trying to get a grip on what happened. Rene was under the impression that with his speed and technical skills he could not be beat. His father took him aside and told him about his rough and dangerous background and informed him he had much to learn. Rene's attitude towards the Filipino arts changed. The first attribute to be disposed of was his enlarged ego. His father started to train Rene in the finer points of fighting concepts, different weapons, and his philosophy. Rene realized the importance of concepts in relationship to techniques

Extract from Grandmaster Rene Latosa's homepage. GM Rene was the first to introduce Filipino martial arts to Europe in the beginning of the seventies. GM Rene was Chief Instructor Lars Lind's first teacher, Grand Master and founder of Latosa Escrima.

WEAPONS

Combat Systems™

## In September

**September 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Hammenhög - Weapons Combat Systems weekend

## In October

**October 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>** - Leeds, Royal Armouries - Kunst Des Fechtens seminar

**October 14<sup>th</sup>** – Tournament seminar

**October 21<sup>st</sup>** - WT Center - Weapon Combat Escrima grading seminar

## In November

**November** - WT Center - Copenhagen Open 07 Weapons Combat Escrima Tournament  
(exact date will be announced later)

**November 10<sup>th</sup>** - WT Haderslev - Weapon Combat Escrima grading seminar

**November 11<sup>th</sup>** - WT Odense - Weapon Combat Escrima grading and instructor seminar

**November 24<sup>th</sup>** - WT Malmo - Weapon Combat Escrima grading seminar

**November 25<sup>h</sup>** - WT Malmo - Weapon Combat Escrima grading and instructor seminar

## Seminars

If any schools want to host seminars in Weapons Combat Escrima or Historic Weapons Combat in 2008 it's now you should contact me!

Planning is half the job.

---

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

*Sifu Lars, Chief instructor Weapons Combat Systems*