



# Wado International Karate-Do Federation

## DOJO CONNECTION

February 2005

### Masters

Every time I turn around I find someone else who claims the title of “Master” or even “Grand Master”. Look in your local phone book and I’ll bet you’ll find a few in your area. Just last week I received two different tournament flyers. One was from a Master and one was from a Grand Master. Then I got an email from a “Grand Master” who has been training at least 13 years less than I have. Give me a break! So it was refreshing to me to talk with a “professional warrior” who doesn’t worry about what rank he is and is only concerned with teaching effective martial arts to men who may well have to use it in defense of their lives and country.

Devlin Spradlin started training with me when he was 11 years old, received his Shodan from me when he was 18, and enlisted in the Marine Corps after finishing high school. Today he is Captain Devlin Spradlin, USMC, and still “only” a Shodan 19 years after he started. He is currently a Company Commander at Paris Island who has the job of training instructors for the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP). The following is what he wrote at my request:

*“As the Instructional Training Company Commander, I am in charge of the satellite school for the Southeast located here at Paris Island. We have the responsibility of training every Marine recruit who comes to Paris Island, the local units, and all subordinate units throughout the Southeast. We train over 21,000 recruits annually. I presently hold the rank of Black Belt Instructor Trainer. There are levels of Black Belt Instructor Trainer but presently no Instructor Trainer I know of is too concerned with adding more stripes to their belt.”* (Contrast that to the Masters noted above---editor)

*As the commanding officer I say which recruits get retained in training and which ones get held back for remediation. I control swim*

*qualification, academics, and martial arts certification. I don’t actually teach recruits but I do train Marines to be MCMAP instructors. I run an instructors course every three months for three weeks of 18 hour days. It’s rough on everybody, but worth it. All my classes have a familiar Wado air.*

*The “Wado air” comes from taisabak). The founders of MCMAP were big into ground fighting. I teach ground fighting but I do not emphasize it as the foundation. I emphasize evasive body movement to gain tactical advantage over your opponent while in a standing, easily maneuverable position where you can engage one, two or more opponents with better return. If you were to engage the same number of opponents on the ground your butt would be grass. I emphasize generation of power through hip rotation and movement. I also emphasize continuous training so that when you need to throw a switch and go on auto pilot the programming is there. I also preach fore thought is better than after thought. Don’t put yourself in situations you don’t absolutely have to be in. So basically every thing you taught me gets passed along to Marines in my classes.”*

Our Marines are modern day warriors and not fake wanna be’s. I am pleased that our Marines receive instruction with a “Wado air” to it from one of our own WIKF Black Belts...even if he isn’t a master or grand master.

### STILL MORE

Just after writing the above article I got an email from Doug Jepperson about another “Grand Master”. Doug wants to know how his school can compete against a guy who claims 6<sup>th</sup> Dan in 14 different styles and teaches “old school” martial arts. Here is what the flyer said:

#### **Martial Arts Seminar**

**Grand master XYZ** (name changed to protect the guilty)

*“Grand Master XYZ is internationally certified to instruct in 14 disciplines as a student of some of the greatest masters in the world including Funakoshi Sensei (who died about 1958-editor), Toshi Taka Yamaguchi, Sokaku Takeda (died in 1943-editor), Okazaki Sensei (Shotokan Instructor in NY), Shimbaku Sensei (Shoren Ryu also dead-editor), Tino Tuilosega, Grand Master Nuviwa, Akk Yueh Wong, Professor William Chow(died in 1987-editor), Nishimura(which one???)-editor), Yoda (from Star Wars???)-editor), Master Matura and Grand master Tien Kwai Suu. Grand Master XYZ is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> degree or higher in most of these styles. Don’t miss this opportunity to train with one of the last true “old school” martial arts masters still passing on his incredible knowledge. Friday’s Ladies Self Defense will cover Dirty-Filthy-Nasty how to defend yourself or your family with practical easy-to-learn techniques.”*

There was more but you get the idea. Years ago I thought that eventually quality would win out in the Martial Arts over chicanery and lack of expertise. I guess I was naïve and wrong. What seems to have won out is business marketing aimed at a movie oriented public looking to entertain their kids. I happened to look in the window of a karate school where I live because it is next door to a golf shop where I had ordered a club. They had a moon walk set up inside with a bunch of kids jumping all over the place. Good business I guess but where was the Martial art in that?

**“More and more I am concerned about our countries lack of values. I don’t mean family values. I mean value the difficult things, value the things that require effort. Value that which is not immediately apparent. MTV teaches us that we need about 30 second’s attention span. Time magazine now makes their articles shorter and shows more photographs. Our doctors want to prescribe drugs so we can get better immediately. We have television shows like “Extreme Makeover” where they take someone who is not attractive, overweight and depressed and in two months they completely rehabilitate this person. Liposuction to rid the fat, a nose job to improve the face, new hair, new make-up. Wonderful. I am glad the person feels better but what concept does that tell us? No need to feel bad if you are fat, take the quick fix, liposuction, depressed Zanax. Prozac**

**and so on. We are starting to value the short cuts above hard work. I know hard work stinks but that’s why they call it hard work. But in the end at the final step of the process we have a more balanced human. Employers complain that all of the young workers do not want to start at the bottom. They all want to be in charge. This carries over to martial arts. People do not want to find out that it is simply hard work and exercise. They want short cuts so much they decide ok, I am going to believe bull because that guy is easier, his method is easier. I am probably not going to get into a life and death battle so what do I care if it works. I get the uniform, the patch, and I can tell my friends how deadly I am.**

**My mom keeps telling me about a lady in her neighborhood that teaches martial arts at her home and she has over 100 students, and makes lots of money. Why can’t you do that she asks? I don’t know. Are we willing to invest the time to find out what is true? Is it too scary to make a judgment on our own?”**

Arturo and I think Doug should attend the seminar, challenge the joker to a duel and clean his clock. Now that would truly be “old school” martial arts.

### **WIKF USA MESSAGE BOARD**

You may not be aware of the Message Board that can be found by going to our WIKF USA Web page. It has been modified since we first started the web page. Even if you don’t feel you are able to add anything yourself you might find some of the conversations interesting. Check it out at [www.wikfusa.com](http://www.wikfusa.com)

### **WIKF USA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

It is time to renew your WIKF USA membership for 2005. You can do this on the web page as well. You can even pay on-line, but if that bothers you then you can print out a page and send your membership dues the old way... U.S. Mail. Membership fees enable the Federation to carry on business. Last year we were able to fund a team for the Pan American Championships and send a representative to Spain to promote the 2005 World Championships in Dallas among other things.

