

# Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

## Artillo Balintawak

Special Edition  
2007



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Filipino Martial Arts Digest is published and distributed by: FMA Digest

1297 Eider Circle

Fallon, Nevada 89406

Visit us on the World Wide Web: [www.fmadigest.com](http://www.fmadigest.com)

The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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## From the Publishers Desk

### Kumusta

Grandmaster Crispulo “Ising” Atillo is a practitioner of the Filipino martial arts that is dynamic, dedicated, proud, and is a practitioner that fully promotes the art of Balintawak.

This issue has an interview with Grandmaster Atillo, which was conducted by Paolo David not the FMA Digest. This is Grandmasters own thoughts and words on his arts history and events that have happened through the years. The FMA Digest is giving Grandmaster Atillo the opportunity to share with you the reader his thoughts and words.

Professor Max Pallen and Punong Guro Mark Mikita, Dieter Roser of the Stuttgart Police Department, Germany along with friends and students in the Philippines of Grandmaster Atillo let you know about the practitioner and the man they have learned the art of Balintawak from.

The FMA Digest wants to thank Guro David Paolo for all his efforts in obtaining and coordinating the articles in this Special Edition.

The FMA Digest knows that this Special Edition is controversial in certain aspects of its contents. However the reader must realize that the FMA Digest is just making it possible for you the reader to gain knowledge. It is up to you to digest and formulate the knowledge and come to your own conclusions.

**Maraming Salamat Po**

Grandmaster Atillo with Dan Inosanto



Grandmaster Crispulo "Ising" Atillo is available for seminars.

### Website

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## **What is Atillo Balintawak?**

Balintawak was established in 1952 not only by Anciong Bacon, Delfin Lopez, and Inting Atillo. There were also others who were involved in its establishment. Ising Atillo was an original member of that organization as well; he was the youngest member at the age of 14. Velez, Villasin, and Buot became members much later.

Ising Atillo's System is Balintawak but he added to it what he found to be more useful and removed what he thought was useless. Note that all other styles also customized Balintawak in their own way. Although the main foundation of all other Balintawak styles is the same, they are all different in some ways.

Ising Atillo claims to be original Balintawak, because he was an original member when it was first established. Anciong Bacon and his students alone cannot claim Balintawak because many of its original members were not students of Anciong Bacon.

As of now there is not one group that can claim to be the only original Balintawak because the original Balintawak was separated into 5 different groups in 1975, each of which claims to be the best and the original. Atillo is only one of them. But Balintawak is only a name; the system itself was rooted to Lorenzo Saavedra. Many ask why Atillo claims to be Balintawak if he claims to follow Doring Saavedra's style. The answer simply is: Don't fuss over it; it's only a name. What is more important to me is the effectiveness of the art. Call it what you want, it won't change the art.

## **Ising Atillo's style is simply called Atillo Balintawak**

Atillo Balintawak is a powerful Filipino martial art developed by Grandmaster Crispulo "Ising" Atillo based on the style of the legendary Grandmaster Doring Saavedra.

This art focuses on stick fighting and its application with bladed weapons, as well as empty hands. Efficiency, and power are put together to produce this fighting system. It is a highly efficient style in combat and tournament situations.

# Atillo Balintawak History

By Paolo David

This article was written from a conversation with Grandmaster Crispulo “Ising” Atillo by Guro Paolo David. This is the personal recollection of Grandmaster Atillo in his words.

## During Spanish Rule

When the Spaniards first came to the Philippines, Filipino warriors were fighting them with bladed weapons, sometimes using single or double sword. Eventually, Spanish firearms and their use of local rivals (divide and conquer) were able to overwhelm the Filipinos and this resulted in 400 years of Spanish rule.



Lorenzo Saavedra

The Spanish imposed a ban on the use of bladed weaponry and anyone caught using them or practicing Filipino martial art were thrown in jail and accused of being a rebel. During this time, Lorenzo “Tatay Ensong” Saavedra (born 1852) was arrested by Spanish soldiers on suspicion of being a rebel and thrown in jail. While in prison, Saavedra met a Frenchman who was a master of the fighting style of the 12 Peers of France, the 12 bodyguards or Paladins of King Charlemagne of France.

Over a period of time they became good friends and used to compare styles and techniques. They improvised and used wood used for fuel as their weapons. When they sparred, Tatay could not counter the Frenchman’s techniques. Eventually, the Frenchman taught his style to Tatay, who later mastered the art.

## A New Era - Doce Pares Organized

After Tatay was released from prison, he started teaching his new and improved art which was composed of 60 percent of the Frenchman’s style and 40 percent of his Filipino martial art. At that time, he started teaching 14-year-old Teodoro “Doring” Saavedra, his nephew, Anciong Bacon, and a few others. Young Ising Atillo witnessed Doring and Tatay practice. Anciong was a very capable fighter second to Doring. Grandmaster Bacon was the Godson of Ising’s grandfather. Atillo recalls Anciong Bacon running whenever Doring would overwhelm him with his strikes. Ising’s father, Vicente Atillo, and Delfin Lopez were good friends of Doring and learned from him.

In 1932 Tatay Saavedra organized the Doce Pares Club in honor of the Frenchman he met in jail. The first President of the club was Reverend Rendall. During this time Doring Saavedra was a famous fighter. The members of the club practiced different styles of eskrima, but no one could beat Doring Saavedra.



Grandmaster Venancio "Anciong" Bacon

Other notable eskrimadors during this time in Cebu were Islao Romo, Ambong Alicante, and the Ilustrisimo family.

### **Doring Saavedra - Fighter Extraordinaire**

Ising Atillo recalls a famous fight told to him when he was young by Tatay Saavedra. In 1933 Ambong Alicante announced an open challenge to anyone who thought they could beat him in a death match. Ambong was known as a fierce fighter who also used anting-anting to aid him in his fights. Islao Romo accepted the challenge, to be held in San Fernando, Cebu. One day before the fight, Romo backed out of the fight at the request of his wife who feared he would die in the fight. Since Romo backed out, Doring saw the opportunity to jump in and accept the challenge. This fight, witnessed by Ising Atillo's father, Vicente, his uncle, and other relatives was probably the most notable fight of Doring.



Teodoro "Doring" Saavedra

In the first round of the fight, Doring couldn't move - he was frozen in place. Tatay noticing this, figured Ambong was using his anting-anting and yelled to Doring, "Bantay" or watch out! Doring snapped out of it and became alert just as Ambong was swinging hard for his head. Doring was just able to defend the strike, which resulted in his stick being snapped in two as result of Alicante's powerful strike. In the second round Ambong couldn't hit Doring but Doring was hitting

Ambong left, right and center. Amazingly, with the help of his anting-anting, Ambong would use his handkerchief to wipe the bruises from his body and they would disappear! Before the start of the third round, Tatay Saavedra whispered into Doring's ear to strike the mouth of Ambong. While the fight was in play, Doring struck Ambong's mouth, which resulted in his anting-anting, a back-to-back crucifix of Jesus, flying out. This time lots of bruising and bleeding became apparent and finally, Ambong raised his hands in surrender. After the fight Ambong mentioned to Doring, "You are the first to beat me!"

In another fight, Doring fought an eskrimador from Negros, Philippines named Oman in Basak/Mambaling in front F. Llamas Street. The fight didn't last long and Doring knocked out Oman in a few seconds after it started. Oman said, "We'll fight again!" to which Doring replied, "I'll be waiting for you!" Doring fought so many fights and Doce Pares was a well-known organization because of Doring's fighting ability. Even if you were a member of the Doce Pares Club but not a student of the Saavedras, you were famous. In Pasil, Cebu, home of Islao Romo, (first cousin of Ising Atillo's grandfather, Pedro Atillo) Tatay Ensang and Doring Saavedra were invited to discuss the possible joining of Romo to the Doce Pares. Islao made one condition before he joined - he wanted Doring and Pedring Romo, son of Islao Romo, to fight and see who had the better skills. Just before the start of the fight when they were facing off, Pedring cheated and struck Doring in the forehead. At that instant Tatay yelled for Doring to fight. He went on the attack over-whelming Pedring with his strikes causing him to back up and crash and fall into the sabong (cockfighting cages).

## **World War II - Call to Arms, Call to Death**

During WWII, in 1942, Filipinos and American soldiers surrendered to invading Japanese troops, while others escaped into the mountains. In October of 1943, Delfin Lopez, Godfather of Ising Atillo, and champion amateur boxer, with cousin Vicente Atillo, a champion wrestler and weightlifter of Visayas and Mindanao, Doring Saavedra and nine others joined the Cebu Area command in the mountains of Cebu, lead by American Col. James A. Cushing. Before the war, Californian James A. Cushing, a Californian, who was working as a mining engineer in Cebu. All in all he lead a guerilla movement of 8,500 Cebuanos. Cushing witnessed the exhibition put on by Doring, Lopez, Atillo and the others and asked them to join their cause. The group of Doring had as their first mission the task of going into Cebu City at 4 a.m. to assassinate a Filipino traitor named "Husian" who worked undercover for the Japanese. Unfortunately, Husian got away and three trucks loaded with Japanese soldiers raced to the scene and the guerilla group had to retreat back to the mountains.

One month after, Doring's guerilla group, Company A, grew to more than 60 members under the command of Capt. Otik Macabuhay. This company was known for their proficient use of ambush techniques against the Japanese. One day, the company commander gave Doring an excuse letter to go into Cebu City to take advantage of the entertainment the Japanese were offering. This was enticement was a trap obviously, but Doring still went against the advice of Vicente Atillo and other guerilla members. At the same time Doring was going into town a guerilla group of 5 people led by John Asuncion ambushed a trainload of Japanese soldiers. As a result, the town was encircled for a 10-mile radius by soldiers ordering the capture of all Filipinos in the area to be arrested, interrogated, tortured, and most likely executed. Seven Japanese soldiers approached Doring and attempted to arrest him but Doring was able to resist and summarily beat them down to the ground. Subsequently, the Japanese had to aim their guns at Doring to convince him to stop and come along with them to a camp at Basak Elementary School. At this camp Filipino adults were being held and brutalized. Doring was bound by the wrists and the Japanese soldiers tortured him by swinging a baseball bat to body. A neighbor of Doring, Juan and his wife, Suylang were also being held there and witnessed Doring freeing himself from the rope and fighting empty hand against four Japanese with their swords drawn. Doring was so fierce, they had to shoot him to death in order to prevent the death of their poorly trained soldiers.

At another location a lot of older men, women and children were being held. Ising Atillo was there with his aunt, grandma, brother and a few neighbors. A couple of truckloads of Japanese soldiers came with the intention of shooting them all to death. Three minutes after the troops were ready to shoot, along came Navy General Shoriyama ordering them to stand down and let them go. As Atillo walked back he met up with his mother and with sadness pointed out Doring lying dead near a riverbed. Tatay Ensong was not interested in rejoining Doce Pares after the war and died of natural causes at the age of 93 in 1945.





### **Balintawak Self Defense Club - 1952**

Some of the Balintawak legends

1. Delfin Lopez, 2. Benancio "Anciong" Bacon, 3. Major Timoteo Maranga, and 4. Vicente Atillo

### **Doce Pares - Post War and Creation of Balintawak**

The Canete brothers now ran the Doce Pares. There was some internal bickering at that time. When Cacoy would always claim he could be anyone, Bacon asked him to fight but he would not. Eulogio Canete, a good man and peacemaker, calmed them down and emphasized that they were of the same and should not quarrel.

Eventually, Bacon, Delfin Lopez went to Ising's father's home and decided to form another club. Vicente Atillo advised them to continue to use the name Doce Pares as that was their original art and it was already famous. One of Bacon's students, Eduard Baculi, a watch repairman, offered to let them use a space in his shop that he ran out of his home. This shop was located on Balintawak St. in Cebu City.

Eventually, they named the club Balintawak Self-Defense Club. In 1954 Jose Villasin started Balintawak under Bacon.

Young Ising Atillo recalls seeing his father Vicente, training Villasin while he was waiting for Bacon to arrive to class, at which time Bacon would take over teaching him. Also in 1954, Arnulfo Mongcal began his Balintawak training under Vicente and Ising Atillo. Mongcal was a teacher to Remy Presas.



Vicente "Inting" Atillo

In 1962 Ted Buot claimed to be the right hand of Bacon in charge of teaching at the club. Delfin thought Buot was mayabang or too high on himself and invited Buot to a meal at his place. Unbeknownst to Buot Delfin also invited Ising and other eskrimadors to his home. To put Buot in his place, Lopez asked Ising and him to spar. At the right moment Lopez gave a signal and Atillo controlled Buot's stick and struck him behind the right ear on the head. Delfin quickly stopped the spar and they ate together.



The first president of the club was atty. Jose Causin. All the members at that time were of the Saavedra style. Their grandmaster was Anciong Bacon the main teacher. When Grandmaster Bacon wasn't there or was late to arrive, Lopez and Atillo would look after the training. Grandmaster Ising Atillo learned from his father, Vicente Atillo. At every fiesta Bacon would recommend young talented Atillo to perform an exhibition. Atillo is of the first generation of Balintawak. Atillo list the following as the real fighters of the Balintawak Club:

- 1) Delfin Lopez - Fought and won first death match against Artemio Paez in 1952. Fought and won second death match against Insiong Lasola in 1956. According to one report, there was a match between Lopez and Atty. Villasin with the latter coming out the victor – this is false. Lopez was never beaten by Atty. Villasin at any time.
- 2) Anciong Bacon - First death match against Pilo Bitin in 1954 at Lipata, Minglanilla. Second death match against a double stick player in Pangkapangka, Talisay (name unknown).
- 3) Isidro Bardilas - One death match.
- 4) Istong Briones - first against Cacoy.
- 5) Ising Atillo - Publicly documented - 1st death match against Lauren Sanchez; second against Antonio Irogirog; third against Bacon; and fourth against Cacoy Canete.
- 6) Tinong Ybanez - One death match.
- 7) Arnulfo Mongcal - One death match against Amado Canete, brother of Diony Canete.

### **Balintawak vs. Doce Pares – Atillo's Rise and Death Matches**

In 1956 the Doce Pares advertised that they would fight the Balintawak at the place of Otillo "Lolo" Larawan in Lagtang, Talisay. Ising went along with Maranga, Baculi, Lopez, Bacon and others. Always ready to fight, Delfin Lopez asked the Canete brothers if they wanted to use boxing, wrestling, eskrima, or whatever. There was some bickering going back and forth with Cacoy challenging them but not stepping up. Delfin said to Cacoy, "Do not talk too much, just fight!" Bacon finally stepped in and



Timoteo Timor Maranga

challenged Cacoy emphasizing that he would not use his left hand, just his stick hand. Eulogio Canete defused the situation and told Cacoy and Bacon not to fight. Suddenly, Insiong Lasola, who fought Cacoy earlier that year and ended up with both of them losing their sticks and playing wrestling in the mud, challenged Lopez to a fight, as soon as they started Lopez threw three fast strikes hard to Lasola's head. Bacon suddenly took the stick from Lopez for fear of him killing Lasola and said, "Insiong, you're eskrima is lacking, I will demo with you slowly." Suddenly, and perhaps to make it seem as if he was better than Bacon, Lasola disarmed him - but he ran pretty fast as Bacon was angry at Lasola for humbling himself to learn something beneficial.

At the 1979 NARAPHIL Championships, Timoteo Maranga was ready and willing to fight all the way to meet Cacoy in the finals but Ising stated he would most likely be eliminated due not to his lack of eskrima skills but because of pre-arranged and biased judging. In Maranga's first tourney fight, in which Ising bet 1,000 pesos, he faced and beat Fernando Candawan, the right hand of Cacoy Canete, by disarms in all three rounds. The rule was three disarms and automatic elimination. In Maranga's second fight he faced Ben Culanag. In the first round Maranga disarmed Culanag's stick. In the second round Ben attempted a snake disarm. Ising saw this and yelled, "Pull your stick Maranga!" Maranga successfully countered by pulling his stick out to trap and grabbing the other end gain leverage to throw Ben to the ground. When Ben got up he employed his amarra. As Maranga was blocking the strikes Ben extended his arm out which caused Maranga's stick to make contact with his hand. For some reason this was cause for forfeit and Maranga was eliminated.

In 1964, Ising fought his first death match against Lauren Sanchez of the Doce Pares. In 1961 Filemon Caburnay invited by Delfin Lopez to try his skills against him. Delfin hit him many times and Caburnay was not at same level. In 1964, Antonio Irogirog, a member of Caburnay's Doce Pares group, led by Ben Culanag, the right hand of Moymoy Canete, came with goons to Ising's father-in-law's house looking for Lopez, and looking to fight Ising. Ben Culanag also came asking for Bacon. Ising accepted a fight against Irogirog. On this day, Atillo was able to land many strikes on Irogirog whose style of fighting was "guerilla" or hit and run. At one point instead of running, Irogirog rushed and pushed Atillo to the ground and landed a hard strike to Atillo's ear. Atillo got up and tried to continue but he was very disoriented. This gave Irogirog the chance to disarm an already hopeless Atillo.

In 1975, Bacon sparred with Atillo in a test of skills that turned into a full contact fight. This occurred behind the Lourdes Parish church in Punta Princessa. The first round was even score. In the second round, Ising smacked the cigarette out of Bacon's mouth and disarmed his stick. After Vicente Atillo broke them up at the end Bacon thrust Atillo in the lower lip causing a gush of blood to flow out. Atillo was furious but his father urged him to respect Bacon, as he's family and the Godson of his grandfather. Ising proclaimed that he will not respect Bacon because of his actions and simply because he was not his teacher. He stated that he would quit Filipino martial art if he loses the third round against Bacon. The third round saw Atillo trapping Bacon's hands and stick opening up a volley of attacks on Bacon. Atillo's group lifted him up in celebration and headed to a restaurant to eat and drink to the occasion.



Vincente Atillo countering Ising's snake disarm attempt.

## **The Balintawak Split**

After this controversial fight with Bacon the Balintawak organization split into five groups. Bacon organized the Original Balintawak, Villasin organized Balintawak International, Teofilo Velez created Teovel's Balintawak Arnis Club, and Maranga started Santo Nino Self Defense Club 19, which was later changed to Tres Personas Arnis de Mano. Ising Atillo started New Arnis Confederation of Visayas and Mindanao, and later changed to Philippine Arnis Confederation and later to World Balintawak Arnis-Eskrima Association.

## **A Controversy - Ising Atillo vs. Cacoy Canete**

To counter claims reported elsewhere and to the best of Grandmaster Atillo's recollection of events:

- 1) During the meeting at Lolo Larawan's place in Talisay, Taboada was never there.
- 2) At a fiesta in 1954 before the Talisay fight, Cacoy said Balintawak was scared to challenge them and walked off the stage, but in fact the whole event was just an exhibition.
- 3) Lopez was never afraid to challenge Cacoy. It was Cacoy who dare not challenge Lopez.
- 4) Cacoy claims to have fought over 100 death matches. Grandmaster Atillo disagrees with this according to accounts from his father, Vicente Atillo, and some other Balintawak members. Cacoy's first fight was against Estong Briones of Balintawak in 1952 where he ran into a pole supporting a clothesline too overwhelmed with Briones' strikes. Cacoy's second fight was against Insiong Lasola and his third fight was against Ising Atillo. His fourth fight was in 1979 using headgear and body protector. This was the fight where he became a fake champion. In this tourney he first fought a guy named Honco...this ended up in Honco forfeiting according to the biased judges. Cacoy's second tourney fight was with Carlos Navarro of Black Eagle Eskrima in which he won. The third tourney fight was against Ben Culanag but it was announced they would not fight as they were from the same club so the referee declared Cacoy the Philippine Champion.

Grandmaster Atillo's fourth fight on Sept. 17, 1983 was against Cacoy Canete of Doce Pares at the PC Constabulary hall with about 3,000 people watching inside and another 30,000 outside hearing the fight over speaker. Claiming to be a superior stick fighter, Cacoy readily accepted the rules and conditions for this challenge match. Vivencio Paez, one of the best eskrimadors of Balintawak, wrote up the contract. Some of the rules and conditions were: no judo, kung fu, jiu jitsu, boxing, wrestling or grappling was to be used, strictly stick was to be used only. Any violation of these rules meant automatic forfeit. The picture shows the actual signed contract with all rules and stipulations. This contract was retrieved by Timoteo Maranga shortly after the fight and given to Atillo for safekeeping.

Cacoy and his group were unsure of Atillo's ability and improvement so they went to the home of Antonio Irogirog to ask what he had done in his fight against Atillo that ensured his win. The next day, Irogirog asked Grandmaster Atillo to a fight to which

Atillo replied, "Don't worry, you will be next to fight me after I dethrone your master and Philippine champion!"

When the fight against Cacoy started, Cacoy unleashed his signature abanico strikes. As his stick cleared centerline, Atillo struck out with a hard vertical snap strike to Cacoy's head. Cacoy, in desperation, jumped forward to adopt a headlock on Atillo.

Already, that was a violation and forfeit, but the fight continued. Grandmaster Atillo controlled Cacoy's stick and struck many times to the leg but it had no affect as Cacoy was wearing padding underneath his gi. The only other place the bent over Atillo could strike that had no padding was Cacoy's left ankle - three hard strikes were thrown after which a loud, "Referee, referee!" was heard from Cacoy. The ones who separated the two were Capt. Jojo Yap and Sgt.

Magdamit, and not Atty. Babiera. To prevent further damage to Cacoy's ankle, Atillo recalls either Capt. Yap or Sgt. Magdamit disarming his stick. The next day, Atillo confronted Atty. Babiera who was stated, in the newspaper only, as being the referee who separated him and Cacoy. This was a false newspaper article twisted in favor of the real loser - Babiera was obviously selected to cover Cacoy's shame. After the separation Cacoy wanted to fight but it was already too late - he forfeited. At this time in Philippine history martial law was in effect. Marcos' son, Bong Bong Marcos, was Cacoy's student. The Canete's had a political advantage and thus, media was controlled too. Channel 3, 7, and 9 recorded the fight but where did the videotape end up?

In the afternoon of the same day Grandmaster Atillo and Molo, one of the top students of Grandmaster Timoteo Maranga, went to the DYLA radio station and dared Cacoy to come down. Cacoy said to him, "You're there even after I struck your left and right temple?"

Atillo replied, "You're old and dreaming of yourself! Maybe I'd be dead if you really did hit me there. Come to the DYLA and I will declare myself the loser - but on one condition. We have to have an unbiased doctor present to examine both of us for injuries. I know I hit you, but you did not hit me." Atillo continued, "Cacoy, every morning when you wake up, you can always remember - 'I was hit by Atillo'. And at night before you close your eyes to sleep, you can always remember - 'I was hit by Atillo.'"

On Sept. 20, 1983 Grandmaster Atillo was called in to the military office at Camp Sergio Osmena. The personnel there advised Atillo to fight Cacoy in a rematch on September 21 and not December at the Cebu Coliseum. Also present at the office was Cacoy - arnis teacher of the son of President Marcos. The officers continued on and said that Atillo would be checked at the fight by one of Cacoy's doctors and declared unfit to fight because of high blood pressure. Atillo had to agree for fear of being shot dead. This diversion tactic was necessary to thwart a rally and protest by Marcos' political rivals at



Cacoy Cañete maneuvered a headlock on Ising Atillo.

the Plaza Independencia where they would also be showing video footage of Ninoy Aquino being shot to death as he departed his plane. If the fight were on the 21st, a lot of the people would come to see the fight and not rally at the Plaza. Sure enough, at the fight Atillo was declared to have high blood pressure and unfit - but he was 100 percent ready to rock and roll!

### PROPOSALS

We hereby agree and abide faithfully and religiously on the following Rules and Regulations to be adopted relative to the projected "ARNIS EXHIBITIONS" which will be held at RECOM VII HQ on 17 September 1983 at 3:00 o'clock PM:

- Referee and Judges must be agreed by both parties not belonging or member or an affiliate of contesting ARNIS ORGANIZATION of participants.
- Wrestling is strictly prohibited in the cause of playing and will subject any participant as player for disqualification and declared as defeated.
- Sticks or Club shall be made of rattan with a length of not more than 29 or 30 inches in length and diameter should not be more than 2 inches, and weighs 200 to 300 grams. Both parties shall agree whether to use the peeled or unpeeled rattan cane and using a single cane.
- Judo, side sweeping, kicking, boxing, or pushing an opponent is strictly prohibited or adoption of any karate, kung fu and the like is strictly prohibited and shall cause any participant to be disqualified and shall be declared defeated for using foul play.
- Participant shall strictly adhere to clean playing with the application of pure arms or eskrima. The Filipino Martial Art stick fighting, that is striking thrusting or blocking the cane or club of his opponent by the use of his cane only.
- The exhibition shall last for (2) rounds at 3 minutes per round.
- A disarmed opponent shall not be whipped or stricken he shall be asked if he is willing to continue the fight. An opponent who is disarmed for 3 times shall be declared forfeited and losses the tournament.



Contract for fight

### POINT SYSTEM

Head hits.....	50%
Arm hits .....	25%
Body hits .....	20%
Knee hits .....	50%
Leg hits .....	25%

Any opponent who violates any of the above-cited rules and regulations shall be considered as having been defaulted or defeated.





In 1982, Grandmaster Atillo had an eskrima club on P. Lopez Street. One of Cacoy's brothers, "Pening" Canete, came and told one of Atillo's students that if Atillo fights Cacoy he will receive 500 pesos. Atillo came down and heard the conversation and said, "WHEN? I will fight him anytime!" The time was set for 3 pm on Friday at Atillo's school, but Ising graciously offered that if he loses, he'd give Cacoy 1,000 pesos instead of 500 pesos. On fight day, Atillo, his father Vicente, and his students waited but no Cacoy. Finally, at 6 pm they closed the school down and as they were walking on the street near Manila Bank, there was Cacoy. Instead of Atillo being the one upset, Cacoy angrily said, "Why are you coming to fight me at 6 and not 3 pm?" Ising said, "You agreed to come to my school to fight and did not show up, we here now lets fight!"

Cacoy and Atillo agreed to go to the YMCA to fight and just as they were about to walk together, Cacoy turned and embraced Vicente Atillo and said, "Inting, we're friends lets not fight." This was witnessed by military officers Rogelio Atillo (Ising's brother) and Inting Abellare.

In 1989 a WEKAF tournament was held in Cebu City at the University of the Visayas. Atillo asked Canete for another fight. Cacoy wanted 10,000 pesos deposited in a bank as assurance in case one of them backed out. Atillo agreed but added that he wanted 40,000 pesos in prize money and percentage of ticket sales. Cacoy backed down. Atillo stated, "Cacoy, if you will not fight I will declare myself as World Champion."

In 2000 Cacoy asked Atillo to another fight. Atillo said, "We should just have a running contest! You are old now and will get no honor in fighting you now."

### **Atillo's Bio and Achievements**



Grandmaster Atillo supervising the sparring of his students in Cebu.

Grandmaster Crispulo "ising" Atillo was born on June 10, 1938 in Mambaling, Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines. He's married to wife, Beatriz Enriquez Atillo and they have four children - three boys (Rene, Nathaniel and Crispulo Jr.) and one girl (Marietta). Ising has 13 grandchildren, four granddaughters and nine grandsons.

In 1983 Professor Max Pallen went to Cebu to study more arnis under Vicente and Ising Atillo. He came and studied every year staying at Atillo's home and eventually mastered the art. On January 26, 2001 Grandmaster Diony Canete and Professor Max



Pallen sponsored Atillo to the U.S. to spread his art and conduct seminars in different States.

- Instructor of Military PC Region 7 from 1976 - 1993.
- Instructor of Pre-licensing Training Course for PC Security Guard from 1973 to 1993 with total of 19,000 students trained.
- Awarded and conducted to Hall of Fame as Most Distinguished Grandmaster at Norwalk, Connecticut on May 15, 1999.
- Hall of Fame Icon awarded at Baltimore, Maryland in June 2001.
- Appeared in Black Belt Magazine Dec. 1998.
- Organized first affiliate arnis group (New Arnis Confederation of Visayas and Mindanao) under NARAPHIL, headed by General Ver.
- 1998 - conducted seminar at WEKAF Tournament with attendees from 18 countries.
- 2000 - conducted seminar at WEKAF.
- In 2004 Mayor of Los Angeles, California awarded Atillo Certificate of Appreciation as Great Grandmaster



Ising's Philippine Arnis Confederation Club with 2 students from Germany.  
The one on Atillo's right (yellow tank top) is Dieter Roser, Atillo's German representative.

Since his arrival Grandmaster Atillo has conducted seminars in San Leandro, Los Angeles, Maine, Philadelphia, Texas, and New York. He's met and trained with notable martial artists and appreciates their arts and skills. Presently, Grandmaster Atillo is teaching out of Cherry Valley, CA and will continue to travel and conduct seminars and share his art with those who are interested. He can be contacted at (909) 363-6435.

## Some Basics of Atillo Balintawak

Salute and Numbering System



Wrists meet in sign of brotherhood in the art.

**Angle 1**



Strike to opponents  
left side of head/neck

**Angle 2**



Opposite of angle 1

**Angle 3**



Strike to opponents  
left hip/floating rib/elbow

**Angle 4**



Opposite of angle 3

**Angle 5**



Thrust to abdomen

**Angle 6**



Thrust to opponents  
right chest/shoulder/eye

**Angle 7**



Opposite of angle 6

**Angle 8**



Upper diagonal strike to  
opponent's left side.

**Angle 9**



Opposite of angle 8

### Angle 10



Downward vertical strike to head

### Defense and Counter

Illustrated using one side only.

#### Block Check Hand



After blocking the stick, Grandmaster Atillo uses live hand to check and control attacker's hand.

#### Block Check Stick



After blocking the stick, Grandmaster Atillo uses his live hand to check and control attacker's stick.

#### Block no Check



After blocking the stick, Grandmaster Atillo's live hand is ready but not checking the attacker's stick.

#### Direct Defense Strike



This is a simultaneous block (of the hand/wrist/arm) and strike.

### **Chain Style - No Check**

This one is called Chain Style using the four methods of defense and counter. In this drill the attacker strikes once and leaves stick in position to allow the defender to work on certain attributes. Start slow and speed it up.

The reason the drilling of the chain style is important is because Balintawak is defense oriented. You may not be sure of the opponent's timing, changing of angle and level or use of feints, and mutual kills may occur, especially at close range. You may even have to transition your strike to a block on the other side. So getting back on guard after (almost - it is situational) every strike is important and the chain style builds your timing, form, structure and speed in this regard.

#### **Chain Style Using the Block and No Check Method**

##### **Block 1**



Grandmaster Atillo defends the strike.

##### **Chain no Check Method 1**



Live hand is ready but not checking as Grandmaster Atillo strikes.

##### **Block 2**



Grandmaster Atillo immediately brings stick back to guard.

##### **Chain no Check Method 2**



Live hand is ready but not touching stick as strike goes to another quadrant.

### Block 3



Grandmaster Atillo quickly gets back on guard.

### Chain no Check Method 3



Strike to another quadrant with live hand at the ready but not checking stick.

### Block 4



Grandmaster Atillo quickly gets back on guard.

### Chain no Check Method 4



Grandmaster Atillo steps out and under strike to return strike. Notice his hands at the ready but not checking.

### Chain Style - Check Stick

This series is called Chain Style - check stick, the second method of defense and counter. The descriptions for the jpegs are pretty much the same as the chain style - no check, except that the hand is now checking the stick and in: Chain Check Stick Method 4 - the live hand parries the opponent's stick and then strikes.



### Block 1



### Chain Check Stick Method 1





Block 2



Chain Check Stick Method 2



Block 3



Chain Check Stick Method 3



Block 4



Chain Check Stick Method 4

### **Chain Style - Check Hand**

In this series of photos Grandmaster Atillo is using the chain style application with the third method of defense and counter - block and check hand. The descriptions are the same as the others except the live hand is now checking attacker's hand and in: Chain Hand Method 4 - Grandmaster Atillo now uses his live hand to parry attacker's stick hand.





Block 1



Chain Hand Method 1



Block 2



Chain Hand Method 2



Block 3



Chain Hand Method 3



Block 4



Chain Hand Method 4

### **Chain Style - Direct Defense and Strike**

In this series, Grandmaster Atillo is using the chain style drill with the fourth method of defense and counter - direct defense and strike. This can occur in extreme corto range with strikes using stick, butt or elbow

#### **Guard 1**



Grandmaster Atillo is on guard.

#### **Chain Direct Method 1**



Instead of blocking with the stick, Grandmaster Atillo simultaneously blocks the wrist/arm and strikes to opponent's head.

#### **Guard 2**



Grandmaster Atillo gets back on guard.

#### **Chain Direct Method 2**



A direct defense and strike to floating ribs.

#### **Guard 3**



Back on guard.

#### **Chain Direct Method 3**



A direct defense and strike to left temple.

**Guard 4**



Back on guard.

**Chain Direct Method 4**



Direct parry and strike to head.

### **Step 1**

The following photos shows Step 1 - the foundation of Grandmaster Atillo's advanced techniques and sparring. We'll just show step 1 to keep it simple.

In Step 1, the defender is learning to control the stick in every attack and defense of the opponent.



Defender blocks and strikes while checking attacker's stick.



Grandmaster Atillo defend's the strike.



Defender counters with a parry to the right and strikes.



Defender blocks angle 2 strike and checks stick of Grandmaster Atillo.



Simultaneously, defender presses stick down and delivers strike. Normally, for this drill you just place your hand on the stick and strike but for actual application and sparring and when the block is high you can press/clear the stick down.



Grandmaster Atillo blocks strike. Almost immediately, defender moves to clear the stick.



Defender clears stick to left and strikes.

These "Steps" in Grandmaster Atillo's system of Balintawak are modular or builds on the previous step and leads to Cuentada, a very advanced method of immediate countering and controlling of your opponent's stick, hand and body.

### **Disarming**

This is last series of photos on simple disarms with a-disarm out of flow during sparring. They're in order and pretty much self-explanatory.







## **Professor Max Pallen Senkotiros**

Senkotiros originated in the Bicol Region of the island of Luzon in the Philippines. Professor Pallen was born there and learned the basic techniques of the style from his grandfather. His grandfather, Luis Moratillo, a Barangay chief and police officer, was one of the practitioners of this style of arnis. These teachings, from many years ago, sparked Professor Pallen's life long interest in the heritage that is the Philippine martial arts.

Professor Pallen continues to develop Senkotiros, his system of Philippine martial arts; he has worked tirelessly to perpetuate the martial heritage of the Philippines; and he has established himself as a consummate instructor, competitor, coach, promoter, and official. He is also a proud instructor, coach, and trainer of several World stickfighting champions.

Professor Pallen today as in the past furthers his quest for the Philippine martial arts skills by continuously returning to the Philippines visiting Luzon, Visayan and Mindanao Islands.



Vicente Atillo ( father of "Ising")  
and Max Pallen

In one of his early travels in search of knowledge in obtaining the mastery of the Filipino martial arts he met Grandmaster Crispulo "Ising" Atillo. It was sometime after the challenge match between "Cacoy" Canete and "Ising" Atillo in 1983. Upon hearing the stick fighting challenge match between "Cacoy" Canete and "Ising" Atillo Max Pallen went to Cebu to seek their expertise in stick fighting. Max was already training with the Canetes at the Doce Pares Headquarter at that time at the school located at Padilla Street in Cebu City, Philippines when he met Atillo, to which according to the opinion of the most

people that he had met was a better stick fighter than "Cacoy" Canete. Max was staying at the Mactan Hotel, which is considered a five star hotel and a very expensive especially for Max for considering his financial condition at that time. Atillo had offered Max Pallen a place to stay at their home in Mambaling, to which Max did not refuse since it was a better situation for training.

It was hard and serious training everyday, starting early in the morning, a break at noon and continuing in the afternoon until late at night. At times when "Ising" Atillo was not around, his father Vicente would take his place for training.

Max Pallen was awarded an Instructors certificate, which he thought was unlike any other certificates (just be there) that he had deserved.



Vincente Atillo, Max Pallen  
and Ising Atillo



Especially since he put some serious real time training, hard work and sweat in everyday. Max Pallen became considered as part of the Atillo family and when leaving, promised, Vicente Atillo that he would do his very best to help “Ising” come to America.

Since 1983 Max made several trips to Cebu for more training in the Filipino martial arts. It was finally in the year 2000 Crispulo “Ising” Atillo was able to come to America. It seems sometimes history repeats its self in people’s lives, because Max recalls that in 1973 he had met Remy Presas in Manila and trained with him and helped Remy come to America in 1975.

Grandmaster Ising Atillo and Professor Max Pallen Training - 1983

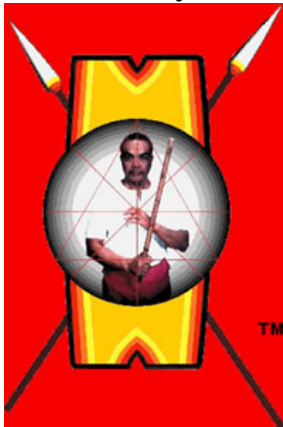


Early 1990's



Professor Pallen is the producer of several instructional videos such as ‘Arnis Master I, Arnis Master II, and Balintawak/Senkotiros’, featuring Grandmaster Crispulo “Ising” Atillo.

### Senkotiros System



Between many other Filipino martial art styles that Professor Pallen has learned, he has revived and founded Senkotiros International in the year 2000. Professor Pallen was born and raised in the Bicol Region, which is in the most southern part of Luzon Island in the Philippines. In growing up and troubled with many fights and “barkadas” (street gangs) in the City, Max Pallen's father sent him to America for better future when he was 19 years old. In 1963 Max started training in a Hawaiian (street fighting) style of Kenpo and became an instructor in 1968, but did not stop there because of his quest for the Filipino martial arts skills which are continuously being added to through his travels to the Philippines until today.

His many accomplishments towards the advancement of the Philippine martial arts include being the Executive Producer of the 1974 Asian Martial Arts Exposition at the Kaiser Center in Oakland, California. He also founded the Affiliated Martial Arts Promoters Association (AMAPA) and is the founder of the Northern California Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation, which promotes Philippine stickfighting tournaments in Northern California. He has served as the Western Region Director of the World Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation (WEKAF) in 1997. And also served as the U.S. Director of the World Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation in 1998-2000.

### **Senkotiros International Group**



#### **Senkotiros International Headquarters Philippines**

Panagsama, Basdiot, Moal Boal  
Cebu, Philippines

#### **Senkotiros International Headquarters U.S.A.**

13752 Doolittle Dr.  
San Leandro, CA. 94578

**Email**  
**[www.maxpallen.com](http://www.maxpallen.com)**

## To Know Him is to Love Him

By Punong Guro Mark Mikita



Anyone who knows and trains with Grandmaster Ising Atillo knows that he has a tendency to be brutally honest when it comes to his beloved Eskrima. One often-heard admonition can be particularly discouraging for newer students... “As of now, you are blind to Eskrima.” Such sweeping declarations of ineptitude hardly fit the Mr. Miyagi positive reinforcement model, but then, Ising isn’t the least bit interested in turning out pajama-clad robots who can mindlessly repeat impressive flips and twirls that will get them killed.

His personal brand of Balintawak Eskrima is about one thing and one thing only: the swift elimination of a skilled and determined enemy. His approach to teaching is surprisingly simple and extremely well organized. Yet, I have watched several supposedly knowledgeable Filipino martial art practitioners dabble in Ising’s method for a week or so and then offhandedly dismiss it as being unsophisticated. Of course, what they foolishly deem as unsophisticated is, in fact, far more sophisticated than anything they’ve ever experienced. Looking to be entertained rather than educated, those dilettantes miss the point altogether and are rightly labeled as blind.

Another wonderfully vexing rebuke in Ising’s ready arsenal is the assessment that “You have no art.” In my school, I give great emphasis to the idea of being in a constant multi-layered relationship with your opponent. To me, this is where the art in martial art really lives.

Years ago, I trained with another Eskrimador who, in his late eighties, could easily mop the floor with me, laughing all the while. Being that I was stronger, faster and more flexible than he was, and that I had been teaching Eskrima professionally for many years, I was a bit curious as to how he could so thoroughly trounce me with seemingly no effort. His answer was enlightening. “Martial arts are not about physical attributes you will gain and lose,” he said. Explaining further, he reiterated his insistence on mastering distance, timing and position within the context of one’s strengths and limitations, which are in constant flux.

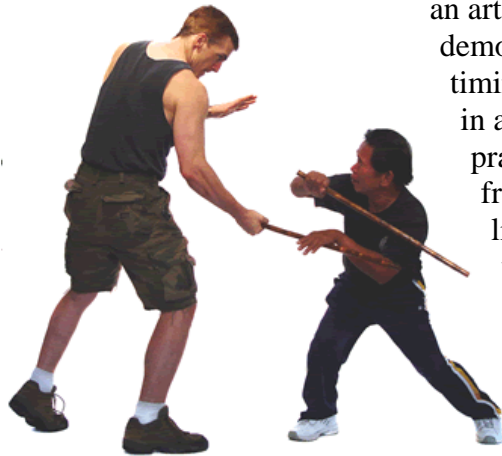
To illustrate, I’ll use Grandmaster Atillo’s ingeniously simple approach to pre-emptive checking. If you’ve touched hands with him, you know that, if he’s rocking, any attempt



Grandmaster Atillo disarming  
Punong Guro Mikita



on your part to check his hand or his weapon will be instantly countered and you'll soon feel the wind of his stick ripping past your head to pound the point home. By virtue of Ising's tight defensive structure and highly efficient footwork, his frighteningly skilled checking hand is inevitably closer to the front lines than the hand of his opponent.



In other words, he doesn't need to be faster because he'll be earlier. Thus, having an art in his view is simply being able to consistently demonstrate the successful application of distance, timing and position when the sticks are flying... Once in a blue moon, Ising will toss out a word or two of praise to acknowledge a student's advancement from novice to fledgling Eskrimador. You have to listen closely, though, because his English is unique in its construct. On one such occasion, I was listening in while he was giving one of my longtime students a private lesson when he paused to lay this gem on him: "Better. If you fight, and your opponent is not me, you will be victorious." What can I say, to know him is to love him.

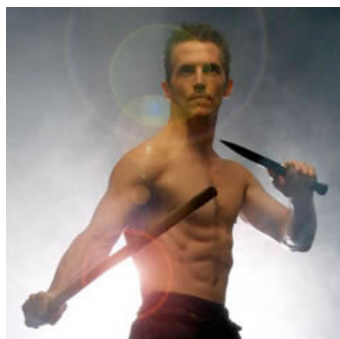
Few teachers have influenced my art so profoundly. I'm proud to be his student and I was tremendously honored to serve as President of his association, but most of all, I am privileged to be his friend.



Punong Guro Mikita and Student Burt Richardson



Punong Guro Mikita and Joe Hyams



**The Mikita School of Martial Art**  
a.k.a. The Venice Eskrima Club  
804 Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291  
(310) 391-6033  
[www.fightology.com](http://www.fightology.com)

## Guro Paolo David



Before meeting Grandmaster Crispulo Ising Atillo in 2002 and becoming his private student, Guro David was exposed to several martial arts including Yoshinkan Aikido, JKD, Wing Chun, Yang Tai Chi, Liang Zhen Pu Ba Gua, Joe Go's Banate (Balintawak), and other Filipino fighting arts.

When Guro David met Grandmaster Atillo it was by coincidence. He just happened to be visiting relatives in California for a month and Grandmaster Atillo happened to be in the same town. For Guro David, Grandmaster Atillo's method of teaching has opened his mind to the possibilities of change in combat not just at close range but in all ranges. On his first day Grandmaster Atillo had Guro David sparring with him and although he was terrified and received a few bruises, he fared well not only because of the techniques but

because of the principles - simple principles that can be applied to any art you study. There are no secrets to Grandmaster Atillo's art. Just simple, yet profound principles only experienced through flowing with Grandmaster Atillo and by practice, practice, and more practice.

The system starts out with the basics - how to strike, stances, footwork, positioning of body and stick. The art trains you to fight other skilled eskrimadors and these basics, even before learning the numberings, are ingrained. Then comes the numberings, defending against them and defending and countering. After these you learn methods of defense that Atillo has created to build up your speed, accuracy and timing. In the advanced fundamentals you spar and learn what Atillo calls "steps". These steps eventually lead you up to the highest "floor" - the Cuentada. The Cuentada is an account of your opponents' moves, and sometimes planning three steps ahead of your opponent, where you are in complete control of stick and body and effectively answering all questions quickly, smoothly and efficiently.



Guro David states, "The longer I train with Grandmaster Atillo the more I'm in awe of his endless answers to all my questions in combat. His experience in real fights, and witnessing of real fights, has enabled him to mold his system of fighting to a base, practical method that makes it easy for the student to follow but also challenges the student continuously. He is always generous in his teachings to those who come with their cups empty."

Guro Paolo David has helped spread Grandmaster Atillo's art in Toronto, Canada to a select few students from all walks of life - from law enforcement, college students, and business owners, to pharmacists, accountants, and actors. He's had the pleasure of

being a guest instructor at the Rapier Wit stage combat school in Toronto, Canada in October 2004.

Guro Paolo David is currently training under Grandmaster Atillo and teaching in Fontana, CA. for the long term. Guro David can be contacted at: **Email**



**Website**



## **Atillo Balintawak in Beaumont-Cherry Valley, California**

By Jesse R. DeVera M.D.

I have been an avid observer and learner of the martial arts. I had my first lesson in the art of boxing since I was a little boy in the Philippines. My first teachers were my uncles who were noted for their skills in boxing, judo, hand to hand fighting, and the rough and tumble street fighting. I vividly remember my uncle Servillano Raymundo carrying his whip made from the tail of a manta and how people in town were cautious when he approached them for fear that they may offend him in any manner. I used to practice the art of boxing after school with my friends and former classmates. I started the art of karate while in high school and early college years. It was rough and challenging then because in order to be promoted to the next belt level, we have to defeat three individuals of such belt level in a interschool tournament in one tournament or we have to start all over again. I learned the art of combat judo while serving in the military and was assigned in Southern Command in Zamboanga City in Mindanao.

Before I met Grandmaster Ising Atillo, I enrolled my son Jordan DeVera to the Filipino martial art Pangamut under the instruction of Master Felix Pascua in Loma Linda, California. I was very fascinated by the art however he was teaching the double stick style. Years later, I was introduced by a mutual friend to Grandmaster Ising Atillo while he was living with his relatives in Loma Linda, California. He was teaching the much revered grandmaster Dan Inosanto at that time. He showed me the videotape of his seminar at Inosanto Academy and I was hooked on his Balintawak style since.

I started to learn his style in 2001 and sponsored a grand seminar in December 2001 at Dreyesen Center in Loma Linda, California, which was well attended by the masters and instructors of Martial arts in the Inland Empire and surrounding cities. I built a training center at my ranch in Beaumont, California for Atillo Balintawak Style stick fighting and met Grandmaster Atillo's students including the well known Professor Max Pullen, Guro Paolo David and his students from different walks of life.

Like all of his students, I started learning the basic, then advance and now some cuentada techniques. I can attest that his art is the cutting edge in stick fighting as I have



observed and seen from the other styles. I personally do not like the bickering that goes on with the different styles of stick fighting for I believed that each style has merits of its own and there is room for improvements and revisions as time goes by. As I have discussed with Grandmaster Atillo, the components that a student of the art of stick fighting must learn and this can be summed-up with the mnemonic TAPS. T is for technique, A is for accuracy, P is for power and S is for speed. No matter how far we have gone in any martial art, there will come a time in our lives that we decline in our power, speed and accuracy but the techniques that we learned stays with us and can be passed on to the next generations of students. I am still amazed to this day by the technique, accuracy, power, and speed that Grandmaster Atillo manifests in spite of his advancing age. I only can wish and pray that I can do the same when I attained his age now.

**Majestic Ranch Promotion Presents:  
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Supreme Grandmaster  
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**Directions:**

- From Freeway 10 East, EXIT Tippecanoe-Anderson, Turn RIGHT on Anderson St., Turn LEFT on Stewart.
- From Freeway 10 West, EXIT Tippecanoe-Anderson, Turn LEFT on Tippecanoe Ave, Stay straight onto Anderson St., Turn LEFT on Stewart.

Stay on Stewart until you see Drayson Center on your Left

For additional information, contact Dan Inosanto (310) 348-9944, Ising Atillo (909) 799-9316 or, Paul Nebres (909) 824-3783

As for my background, I am Jesse R. DeVera, M.D. a physician and psychiatrist by training. I practice that art of medicine in the State of California. I am an Alumni of Loma Linda University and did my rotations at Loma Linda University Medical Center and Jerry L. Pettis

Veterans Hospital in Loma Linda, California. I was in private practice for years and have been a faculty at Loma Linda University medical school and Western Pacific Medical School in Pomona, California. I was the first international graduate to be the chief of the Psychiatric Consultation and Liaison service at Loma Linda University Medical Center. I am currently the Regional Medical Director of the San Bernardino County Department of Mental Health in San Bernardino, California. I can be contacted at my Email address, **Dralpaca@aol.com**

## **Atillo Balintawak in Europe**

By Dieter Roser

As the very first European student of Grandmaster Crispulo “Ising” Atillo I would like to thank him for his unselfish guidance through his unique style of the famous Balintawak arnis-eskrima system.

In the winter of 1980, it was my very first 8-week journey to the Philippines. Accompanied by a close friend and police colleague I was looking for some practical baton and stickfighting techniques, the legendary Filipino martial arts. At this time, 25 years of age, I was an active member of the German SEK-SWAT team. With some 10 years of martial arts training in Karate, western boxing and Wing Chun Kung Fu, I believed I knew something about fighting.

I remember the first meeting in downtown Cebu, Mambaling, as if it was yesterday. We made contact through a Cebuano police lieutenant, who guided us to the training place of the Philippine Arnis Confederation.

We introduced ourselves and showed Ising and his father Vicente some of our police techniques mixed with some Wing Tsun Kung fu stylistics. Ising was quite impressed and instantly started to demonstrate his stickfighting system with his father Vincente, who at this time was in his 60's.



Disarm and Counter Disarm



Vicente “Ising” Atillo and a student  
Working on Cuentada

This first contact left such an intense impression on me, because never before had I seen such a blistering speed with absolute control of movements delivered in full speed. There were no half speed hitting and stopping halfway, shadowboxing or kata forms. Every move was accelerated and only slightly stopped on the muscle regions of the

shoulder, rib cage and thigh. That was the kind of controlled, “Cuentada” sparring, which, as I found out later, was the core of Ising's Balintawak.

What makes Balintawak perfectly suitable for police tactics is that the single stick or garrote is only used to enhance and train the individual for bare hands fighting, and to gain perfection in the art of coordination, speed, timing and defensive reflexes.

Throughout the following decades Ising's Balintawak has constantly been trained at the Stuttgart Police Department, for officers only, and remains to be taught and trained there up to the present time. I wish I could have studied longer under this exceptional Balintawak grandmaster.

Over the years I have regularly compared and sparred with a lot of different Filipino martial arts systems, which all shine through their own unique preferences. However, at no point in time did I regret my early decision to pick Balintawak out of a wide range of Filipino fighting systems.

I wish Grandmaster Ising Atillo the very best in the United States, and hopefully he will spread his style with pride. All German Balintawak enthusiasts wish him the best of luck and a long-lasting good health.



Dieter Roser demonstrating trapping



German summer camp - 2005

Dieter Roser  
Capt. Stuttgart Police Department/Germany



## Testimonials from the Philippines

Students of Atillo Balintawak residing in the Philippines wished to add to this Special Edition on Grandmaster Crispulo Ising Atillo. They sent the following testimonials to the FMA Digest.

**Judge Wilfredo A. Dagatan**  
Danao City, Cebu, Philippines



I am Judge Wilfredo Almendras Dagatan of Municipal Trail Court in cities, Branch 3, Mandaue City, Cebu, Philippines I am now 53 years old and still very healthy; this is because my hobby throughout the years has been the martial arts. From Karate, Judo Jujitsu, Boxing, Aikido, Stick Fighting etc. The best martial art in my opinion that I know in terms of mental exercise (neurobics) and physical exercise (aerobics) and the most effective self-defense in stick fighting, in the Philippines we call it “arnis” or “arnis de mano”.

I say the best exercise because learning new techniques in stick fighting is endless and the most effective self-defense in the sense that once you learn the techniques, there is no need to use an actual stick, wand, club, or baton, as one may call it, in case of actual combat for your bare hands will do the same trick.

Remember that the stick etc is just an extension of the hand, how much more if you have one during the fight. I tell you that even a kitchen/hunting knife or long bladed weapon can be easily

overpowered by the stick because the latter can be maneuvered by strikes in any and various different directions without hurting yourself, whereas, a bladed weapon has only one direction, that is, where the edge of the blade is.

I learned the fundamentals of stick fighting when I was twelve years old from my elder relatives, but I did not take it seriously. In 1965 when I took up pre-law from the University of Visayas, Cebu City, I enrolled as my subject in Physical Education stick fighting for two semesters. That was also the year that the Judo and Karate clubs proliferated in Cebu and throughout the country because the theaters at that time were also showing the films of Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Ming Fei and other prominent movie personalities in the martial arts.

While I was studying in college, I met several friends and classmates who were also skillful in stick fighting and because I love the art I disassociated myself from other sports like basketball. I gave my full concentration on self-defense particularly stick fighting, considering that I am a small fellow in stature. I learned different forms of arnis like the umbrella style from a friend in Manila, Doce Pares, the traditional Balintawak in Cebu and the Ilongo style, which came from Iloilo and Negros Provinces.

In 1993, I met a Grandmaster of arnis or escrima in Pilipino Parlance, Crispulo (Ising) Atillo of Cebu City thru Spo4 Freddie (Toto) Magsalin (Senior Police Officer 4) who is also an expert in his own style of arnis. I was so impressed with the style of

Grandmaster Atillo for it is systematic, simple and yet very effective compared to other styles that I learned for a number of years.

Grandmaster Atillo taught me his style and techniques together with Spo4 Freddie (Toto) Magsalin and SPO4 Alfred Hermosilla. We adopted Grandmaster Atillo's style because in our opinion it is the best in the world for the students can spar or fight even without using the head or body protectors.

Grandmaster Atillo has had many death matches (called death matches due to no body or head protector being used), and I have heard that he has had matches with Anciong Bacon, Lawrence Sanchez, and various others.

But the match that most impressed me was with Grandmaster Ciriaco (Cacoy) Canete of Doce Pares, which was held at the P.C. Club House in Camp Sergio Osmena, Cebu City, Philippines. Grandmaster Cacoy Canete was declared the winner. I do not understand the final decision for onlookers saw that Grandmaster Atillo struck Grandmaster Canete while Grandmaster Atillo remained unscathed. Perhaps it was political influence, and until this day no one can really say.

Now Grandmaster Crispulo (Ising) Atillo is in the United States of America and has established a stick-fighting club of his own called the "World Balintawak Arnis Escrima Association Atillo System."

I truly miss Grandmaster Atillo, however am thankful for the style of stick fighting that he left behind for us and the remembrances of our training which will be with me the rest of my life.

### **Alfredo C. Hermosilla**

Davao City, Cebu, Philippines



I am Alfredo C. Hermosilla, a retired member of the Philippine National Police, 59 years old.

As I look back through the years martial arts in the Philippines is very common and popular to our early ancestors. It was in this province that Lapu Lapu, the famous Filipino fighter fought for freedom leading his men against the Colonial of Spain long before our independence. Filipinos claimed victory against the Spaniards because of their knowledge in mixed combat and Arnis, an art of Cebuano roots and origin. So it is the art of stick fighting or arnis that has been handed down from generation to generation up to present time, in this country.

In the later part of 1990, I met Grandmaster Crispulo (Ising) Atillo. I was impressed with his style and began my training. Its techniques are so simple, easy to learn and very effective. When sparring we do not use body or head protection, you are trained to defend yourself by cover and hiding yourself with your stick.

Grandmaster Atillo has conducted many lectures, training seminars to different law enforcement agencies of the Philippine government including at the Police National Training Institute.

## **SPO4 Freddie G. Magsalin**

Philippine National Police Camp Sergio Osmeña Sr., Cebu City, Philippines.



I am SPO4 (Senior Police Officer 4) Freddie G. Magsalin presently assigned at the Philippine National Police Camp Sergio Osmeña Sr., Cebu City, Philippines.

I have studied different kinds of martial arts when I was still a kid from my father and elder brother who often engaged in actual sparring from wrestling, boxing, stick fighting and other varieties of self-defense. Because of their constant practice I also learned their techniques. In fact, because of that, learning and being young I often was involved in street fights, especially with people who are troublemakers. That is why I have faced several charges of assault in court, but because of my father's interventions, the cases were settled.

During my college days, I enrolled in karate at the TangSo Doo Club and participated in several tournaments usually held in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Because of my ardent interest in the martial arts, I developed my own techniques and style in self-defense. I have tested my techniques and improved on them when I met a lot of friends who were also experts in judo, wrestling, jujitsu, aikido, boxing and stick fighting.

In 1992, the Police regional office located at Camp Sergio Osmeña Sr. Cebu City hired a Grandmaster of arnis who was Crispulo (Ising) Atillo to teach the Regional Police his techniques in arnis, which he called "Modified Balintawak Arnis Atillo Style". It was Grandmaster Atillo who was hired because he was known to have fought several arnis instructors including Grandmaster Cacoy Canete of Doce Pares. During the time that Grandmaster Atillo taught arnis to the police, I only observed him for three sessions, then later I saw Grandmaster Atillo sparring with one of his students. I was surprised and impressed with their skills considering that they never hit each other despite the variety of strikes and without any body or head protection, so much so that after the sparring session I approached Grandmaster Atillo and for eight straight years I was his student before he left for the United States. He taught me his techniques of which I have come to the conclusion that they are the best techniques of any that I had learned before studying with him.

Grandmaster Atillo promoted me to Master and shortly afterwards left for California, in the United States. Together with Judge Wilfredo A. Dagatan and Arnis Master Alfredo C. Hermosilla, I have proliferated the techniques of Grandmaster Atillo, which we called Modified Balintawak Arnis Atillo's Style to the Barangay Tanods in Metro Cebu, Anti-crime Organization, the Police in the Municipalities, Police Regional Training School, Philippine National Training Institute and to others which we were issued Certificates of Appreciation for our instruction.

In 1997 I participated in an Arnis Tournament, conducted by the Philippine National Police, a mini Olympic at Camp Crame, Quezon City. During the stick fighting I used Atillo's Balintawak techniques and was awarded a silver medal.



At the present time I am a 2nd Dan Black Belt in Karate and a 4th Dan in Aikido, but the martial arts I love the most and am proud of is being a Master in Modified Balintawak Arnis Atillo's Style.

*"To hit, but not allow yourself to be hit. To touch the stick and body of your opponent, but not allow your opponent to touch you. If you know this, you will win the fight."*

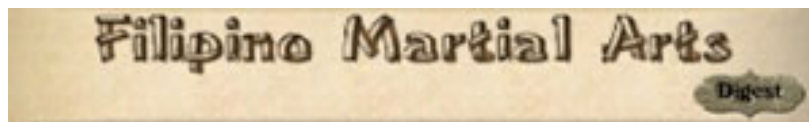
**Grandmaster Crispulo "Ising" Atillo**



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