

# FMA Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

Informative Issue No. 254  
2017

*The Other Side of*

## Ron Kosakowski

*Most know Ron Kosakowski as the Founder of TFW.  
However there is another side that demonstrates and shares the knowledge  
of the Geometric Science within his Unique Blend of Kali.*

*Dean Franco a student and friend interviews and tells  
about the other side of Ron Kosakowski*



**Who is Ron Kosakowski?**  
**Interview with Ron Kosakowski**  
**Dean Franco a Last Word About Guro Ron**  
**The Other Side of Ron Kosakowski**

The FMA Informative thanks Mr. Dean Franco for sharing the other side of Guro Ron Kosakowski. Why does the FMA Informative say other side? Guro Ron Kosakowski is known throughout the world as the founder and owner of TFW.

Mr. Kosakowski is an accomplished, highly skilled, professional teacher that is thought of in the highest regards by all in his abilities and attitude of that can-do spirit of the martial arts. Mr. Kosakowski is also the owner of the Practical Self Defense Training Center ([www.psdtc.com](http://www.psdtc.com)), which was established in 1988.

Mr. Franco brings the application of the Geometric Science within Ron Kosakowski's unique blend of Kali to light. The interview with Mr. Kosakowski is his thoughts and feelings on Kali.

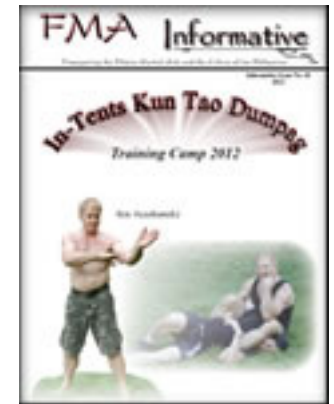
The FMA Informative has known Mr. Kosakowski for many years, and has done a few issues on his intent events. Which is an excellent event and should not be attended if at all possible for the skills and knowledge that is taught is excellent and would improve anyone's skill whether a beginner or a seasoned practitioner.



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However as said before Mr. Kosakowski his widely or should the FMA Informative says known throughout the world as TFW, with the extravagant and intricate looking artwork done to the blades, the handles and the sheaths.

**PRACTICAL SELF DEFENSE TRAINING CENTER**  
 The PSDTC Was Established in 1988  
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**A literal university of many martial art styles right here in Waterbury!**



Inosanto Kali



Pekiti Tirsia Kali



Kuntao



Jun Fan Gung Fu /  
Jeet Kune Do



Integrated Grappling  
Systems

[www.psdtc.com](http://www.psdtc.com)

Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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## Who is Ron Kosakowski?



Ron Kosakowski unlike most beginning students introduced to Filipino martial arts didn't start with Escrima. His introduction to Filipino martial arts was Kuntao the rare indigenous art of the southern Philippines. This journey started in the mid 70's when he met Joe Rossi, a Grandmaster of Kuntao. Grandmaster Rossi owned and operated the Rossi Academy of Self Defense.

Ron since joining never looked back and remained with Master Rossi till his unfortunate passing in late 1998. During his tenure under Grandmaster Rossi Ron earned up to 6th degree black belt. Due to the longevity of time and the dedication under Grandmaster Rossi's tutelage, Ron is widely recognized to be the most knowledgeable and versed in this system. Ron to this day still teaches Kuntao and is his most popular class out of all the styles he offers.

Ron since Grandmaster Rossi's passing has traveled to the Philippines on several occasions to research more on Kuntao. One particular trip found him among a Mindanao tribe that still actively practices Kuntao. A following trip show cased him teaching the Philippine Marines.

As mentioned Ron's initial introduction to Filipino martial arts was not like most. However his love for Kuntao started a growing curiosity into other Filipino martial arts. His first experience outside of Kuntao was a seminar in the late 70's taught by Remy Presas. Grandmaster Rossi knew Remy Presas and encouraged Ron to go with him to meet the Grandmaster. Here Ron got to experience stick work and stick fighting. This began his quest to seek out other systems as well as instructors within the Filipino martial arts community. It also should be noted that Grandmaster Rossi was very supportive during this time.

From his Modern Arnis experience Ron began traveling to seminars taught by Guro Dan Inosanto, Sifu Larry Hartsell and Paul Vunak. The seminar attendance turned into personal training among the fore mentioned. Ron received Apprentice Instructorship 1987 from Paul Vunak to then becoming Ct Branch of Progressive Fighting Systems and eventual Senior Instructor. Ron during this time circa 1990 he formed a close bond with Larry Hartsell. Due to the amount of years spent with Sifu Larry, Ron earned Senior Instructorship. Instructorship in Kali from Guro Dan Inosanto was also achieved.

Next stop for Ron's thirst for Filipino martial arts knowledge was Tuhon Leo Gaje. This was a pivotal point for Ron which will be covered more in depth later. More importantly for biography purposes Ron hosted Tuhon Gaje here in the states as well as seeing him in the

Philippines. As a result of commitment and previous experience Tuhon Leo Gaje granted Ron Instructorship. Lastly I would like to note Ron is the first to expose many arts here in Ct. As a result he is the most knowledgeable and the best in our state of Connecticut with regards to Filipino martial arts. Here is a list of Ron's teachers in Filipino martial arts some of which he spent significant time with.



Dan Inosanto



Larry Hartsell

## Geometric Science within Ron Kosakowski's Unique Blend of Kali

- Grandmaster Joe Rossi - Filipino Kuntao
- Tony Margiotta - Filipino Kuntao
- Bob Texiera - Filipino Kuntao
- Ali Sharief - Marinaw Kuntao
- Guru Dan Inosanto - Jun Fan Gung Fu, Maphilindo Silat, Kali, Arnis, Eskrima/Escrima, Jeet Kune Do, Shoot Wrestling, etc.
- Sifu Larry Hartsell - Jun Fan Gung Fu, Jeet Kune Do, Integrated Grappling systems, Kali, Eskrima/Escrima
- Grand Tuhon Leo T. Gaje Jr. - Pekiti Tirsia Kali and Dumog
- Guro Tim Wade - Pekiti Tirsia Kali
- Paul Vunak - Jeet Kune Do concepts, Kali, Grappling
- Richard Bustillo - Jeet Kune Do, Grappling, Kali, Thai Boxing
- Punong Guru Edgar Sulite - Lameco Escrima
- Remy Presas - Modern Arnis
- Yuli Romo - Bahad Zubu



Richard Bustillo

## Interview with Ron Kosakowski

**FMA Informative Note:** Most will know Mr. Kosakowski as the owner of the Practical Self Defense Training Center ([www.psdtc.com](http://www.psdtc.com)), which was established in 1988. Mr. Kosakowski is an accomplished, highly skilled, professional teacher that is thought of in the highest regards by all in his abilities and attitude of that can-do spirit of the martial arts.

Dean Franco sat down with Ron Kosakowski to ask a few questions on his teaching the Filipino martial arts.

**Dean Franco:** What makes your expression of Kali different?

**Ron Kosakowski:** My personal expression has been mainly determined by my personal experience over the years. In addition everyone has their own individual expression based on their own fight game and other experiences such as learning tactics and drilling them, etc. This in itself has influenced the way I teach. In addition my Kali is Kuntao influenced not by technique but by the way I train Kali do the years I have invested in Kuntao training methods. Lastly, my personal expression is also due to my exposure to all the different teachers I have had in the past and present. I noticed many teachers show all the appropriate drilling methods for reflex development yet very few actually pull off and look like "their art."

**Franco:** Who were the major influences in your personal expression of Kali?

**Kosakowski:** I have trained with a lot of different teachers. My most influential teachers were Larry Hartsell, Leo Gaje, Dan Inosanto, Edgar Sulite and Yuli Romo. They instilled in me what to do and furthermore what not to do. There were other teachers who I have experienced but not like the aforementioned in what is my current expression. Though some of the way I teach Kali has influence from the way I teach Kuntao.

**Franco:** What is your view of the current status of the Filipino martial arts as a whole?

**Kosakowski:** I feel there is a lot of offense shown in the vids that I am exposed to but no real defense. In other words I see evidence of Kali getting watered down much like what happened to early Karate. It's not just Kali either I see it with many other martial art styles as well as a whole. For example in stick fighting I just see people just swinging away no respect for the weapon which is ridiculous to even fathom having no respect for a weapon that can potentially kill you. Now put no gear on these individuals that fight like this and see if they do the same thing. Give them an iron wood stick or better yet a Pinute and see if that occurs. I highly doubt they would fight like that! I feel from an observing point of view I see people do all the practice methodology and "look like" the martial art style. Then when it comes to sparring it looks nothing like what they practiced. To me

*Demonstration of the Pekiti Tirsia tri v formula utilized in the the star pattern*



that is not preserving the art and more specifically the geometric science. It should be preserved for generations to come; this is what I try to do with my students. Shame on the various teachers that are making their students think they are learning the correct style.

**Franco:** *What would you like to see in the future far as the Filipino martial arts?*

**Kosakowski:** I like to see the preservation of the history as well as the geometric science upheld. I feel it should be practiced and preserved like for future generations to play with these ancient deadly beautiful martial art styles. This way the future practitioners can enjoy and partake in its purity the way it should be. The essence of this should be preserved and the practice of and the reflex development of proper body angulation, footwork and hitting with power at the appropriate times to hit. I would to see other like-minded teachers to stress and preserve this as well. This would also stop the potential of Kali being watered down.

**Franco:** *Why do you feel the Filipino martial arts is not as popular as MMA?*

**Kosakowski:** Well it starts with trends; for instance in the 70's it was Karate then in the 80's Ninja's lol. However I do believe MMA is here to stay due to decline of boxing in America. Basically people follow trends and unfortunately the Filipino martial arts is not a popular trend lately so those classes are not quite as full as the MMA classes are. Also people don't seem to have that want and need for realistic self-defense as much as it was in demand in the past. Even the name of my school has a very old fashioned name to it - The Practical Self



### **Slash -n- Thrust Drill**

*Ron initiates a low thrust, Dean parries to the outside while simultaneously thrusting at his neck  
Ron blocks the on coming thrust  
Then initiates a slash to Dean where he checks and cuts*

Defense Training Center. Too late to change that name now after having a school for 30 years.

They like the sport of MMA better where weapon fighting is not going to be quite as popular. It is usually a certain mentality to do that kind of fighting. Though in MMA, fighters can and do get injured during sparring or practice or the event itself. Furthermore people don't really understand the Filipino martial arts and how complete of a system it really is. We don't get the media coverage due to the fact weapons like knives, swords, and impact weapons seem to scare people even though those weapons were once the reason they exist today.

Go in any household today and everyone knows who Conner McGregor is. This is due to the media and attention MMA gets. There is no current TV media that showcases the Filipino martial arts except social media sites and Youtube.



### **Dean Franco a Last Word About Guro Ron**



Having trained with several teachers over the last two decades has given quite the insight on compare and contrast of different Filipino martial arts systems. Each teacher past or present has left me their signature move, their ideology and methodology of teaching. With this being said Guro Ron has done same.

Guro Ron far as ideology has taught me "draw your own conclusions". In essence take the history of the system, the curriculum and the methodology and draw your conclusions via your experience. This has been instrumental far what I trained in the past and what I currently utilize from those past systems. It guides my current status as a practitioner



to hone those chosen skills and methods of approach. Lastly, I use the fore mentioned to choose my future goals in Filipino martial arts based on my previous experiences.

Far as methodology, Ron's major emphasis is on the acute understanding of the geometry of the Filipino martial arts. This in my opinion what makes Ron unique in his Kali blend. It is the continuous application of the geometric science that goes well beyond the footwork. Body positioning in relation to striking must be in uniform with the angular movement. Thus it's not just your feet at a 45 degree angle.

His method of instruction is a progression of striking form to sword Sumbrada. Once the understanding of uniformity (body, weapon and feet) can be demonstrated then the progression can continue various count Sumbradas to sparring with no gear - hand hunting and shoulder hits to assimilate the head. This form of sparring although not popular is an old training method. If done in a controlled manner it is invaluable to the student. This type of sparring instills respect for the weapon, assures proper mobility and body positioning. In conclusion I want to stress this sparring is not done until the progression has been met.

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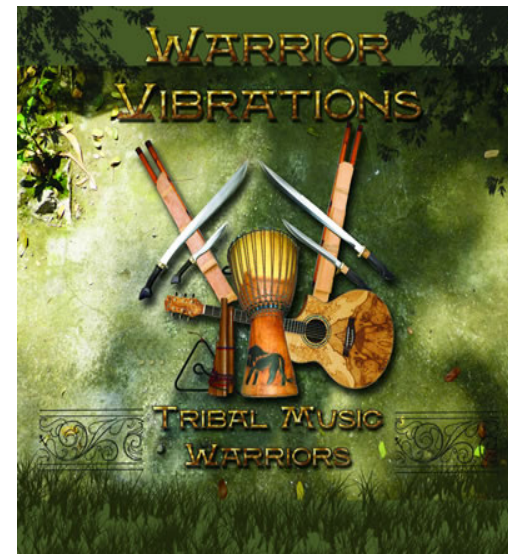
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**Motivation Training Muisic**

By the Tribal Music Warriors called, "Warrior Vibrations"

By popular demand we have created a motivational tribal sound in a modern format that is very audibly appealing. For many years I have been hearing how people are looking for music to play in their Filipino martial art classes, and other martial art styles as well. It is well noticed that students playing Kali/Arnis/Eskrima or Kuntao listening to this music during class have better rhythm and improve their skills levels by getting better timing following the beats in the Warrior Vibrations album. This was all put together by Paul Kramarz, with Bongo Dude Mark Capsalors, Woody Floyd on various percussion instruments along with Ron Kosakowski with the idea and editing. There were also some students of the Practical Self Defense Training Center in Waterbury, Connecticut playing the various weapon in a drill format fitting the rhythm of the music, as you will hear on the album.



Sword and impact weapon play has such a rhythm to it once people have it down well. We basically took the rhythm of the sword and impact weapons and added a tribal beat with many different primitive instruments and added some guitar and a few other modern sounds and put together this unbelievable sound. Its so good, I can see people listening to it anywhere they go not just training their martial art style.

The video is just samples of the music on the actual CD.: To see it [Click Here](#)

The Tribal Music Warrior CD is sold on – [TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com](http://TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com) - To Purchase: [Click Here](#)

**TFW** | Preserving Ancient Cultural Weapons

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Many will only know the other side of Ron Kosakowski which is the company he founded called TFW

Traditional Filipino Weapons now called TFW as we call it, found on [TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com](http://TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com) as you will see, has many unique features.

Besides the extravagant and intricate looking artwork done to the blades, the handles and the sheaths, the steel used is a big unique outstanding feature. TFW has evolved a lot in the various blends in the steels now used in the weapons. We use a rare blend of 5160 and D2 steel and then hardened with a sodium nitrate heat treatment. The sodium nitrate heat treatment actually makes the steel a little lighter for handling without making the arms of the sword wielder tired. The sodium nitrate heat treatment changes the molecular structure of the steel yet makes it harder. No one else anywhere has this exact process done to their blades. Hence the reason so many lose their sharp edge easily or worse yet, their weapon either will chip at the edge or the blade breaks. Every bladed weapon on the TFW website is pliable where it counts yet maintaining a hard razor sharp edge. As mentioned before, the people who make these blades are no strangers to this craft. Each one is perfectly engineered where they want to do the job for you so handling these swords and knives just so happens to feel real good when slashing and thrusting with them. They have to be held and played with to understand this claim and everyone who does, says the something. You can also look up Traditional Filipino Weapons on Youtube and you will see many cut videos there. The can cut trees down with swords to cutting objects just to show how sharp they are. These swords and knives are extraordinarily durable.



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Something Ron Kosakowski did not expect to happen when he got into this business, it has grown beyond having Filipino Weapons only. [TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com](http://TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com) is now the one stop area for weapon collectors all over the world. Check then out; It is sure you will like what you see there.

**Also on Face Book:**

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[TFW Edged Weapon Fanatics - Click Here](#)



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### ***School Submission***

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



### ***Advertisement Submission***

Advertising in the FMA Informative Website is FREE.

An Ad in the FMA Informative can create Business. Your Advertisement for Filipino martial arts forums, blogs etc, can be included in the FMA Informative. Advertisement is for the Filipino Martial Arts and the Philippines.

To submit Forums **Click Here**. To submit advertisement for products and/or Services **Click Here**



### ***Article Submission***

Finished manuscripts should be accompanied by color or black and white photographs. Though we take care of materials, we can not be responsible for manuscripts/photographs and accept no liability for same. Every photograph or graphic must be accompanied by a caption Carefully key photos to caption information with a letter or number.

We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff - to submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue **Click Here**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.