

JUST A REMINDER

THE KENPO BLACK BELT COMBAT ZONE IS
AUG. 20, 2011
BE THERE OR MISS THE BIGGEST KENPO
EVENT IN HISTORY!

INTERNATIONAL KARATE CONNECTION ASSOCIATION NEWS



NEWSLETTER #67

2nd QUARTER 2011

THE IKCA HITS THE
500
MARK

We recently received the semi-annual statistics report of the Black Belt population for the IKCA from our official statistician, Mr. Bill Parsons, and were pleasantly surprised to discover that we had just passed a landmark number. There are, as of this printing of the Quarterly Newsletter, now a total of 504 Black Belt holders in the IKCA. Here is a breakdown of the IKCA Black Belts in our organization by Mr. Parsons.

As of 06/11/2011

There are 504 Black Belts on the IKCA Family Tree.

Of the 504 Black Belts, 73 are Certified Instructors. 48 of those have promoted only adults; 19 of those have promoted both adult and juniors; and 6 have promoted only juniors.

Here is the rank breakdown:

Certified Instructors:

5 First Degrees
11 Second Degrees
8 Third Degrees
11 Fourth Degrees
12 Fifth Degrees
12 Sixth Degrees
5 Seventh Degrees
3 Eighth Degrees
2 Ninth Degree
4 Tenth Degrees

Total 73

Remaining Black Belts

63 Junior Degrees
276 First Degrees
47 Second Degrees
22 Third Degrees
6 Fourth Degrees
6 Fifth Degrees
6 Sixth Degrees
2 Seventh Degrees
0 Eighth Degrees
3 Ninth Degrees

Total 431

Overall numbers in each rank

63 Junior Degrees
281 First Degrees
58 Second Degrees
30 Third Degrees
17 Fourth Degrees
18 Fifth Degrees
18 Sixth Degrees
7 Seventh Degrees
3 Eighth Degrees
5 Ninth Degrees
4 Tenth Degrees

Total 504 Black Belts

As an interesting aside, here's what Mr. Parsons wrote when he sent us this insightful information.

"I also wanted to let you know that a milestone has been reached. With the last few updates hitting the IKCA Family Tree, the Association has officially reached over FIVE HUNDRED BLACK BELTS.

I have attached a copy of the Family Tree breakdown that I have been sending to you twice a year. I was due to send it the first of July, but I figured sending it a couple of weeks early for this occasion was warranted.

Another side note: Black Belt Number 500 was Fredrick Croniser. What is interesting to note is that Fredrick Croniser is the student of Andrew Croniser, originally a VIDEO STUDENT and also a product of the Certified Instructor Program. Seems like all you gentlemen have put in place has come to fruition and is going strong. Congratulations to you both."

Mr. Parsons is correct when he says that what we originally put into place has come to fruition. It has indeed come full circle, from our having been taught by Mr. Parker to our teaching people by video, or in person, to having them in turn teaching people to carry on the teachings of Mr. Edmund K. Parker, the Father of American Karate.

Mr. Parker is the sole reason that any of us is practicing and teaching our Art and he will always be acknowledged as "The Eternal Senior Grand Master of Kenpo".

I myself find it extremely satisfying that there are seventy-three IKCA Certified Instructors out of 504 Black Belts. It's a rather modest percentage (less than 15%) of

the overall IKCA Black Belt population but considering the stringent requirements in place to achieve Certified Instructor status, it is also a testament to the fortitude of the individuals who have accomplished this terrific feat.

I personally don't know of any other system that sets criteria that future instructors must satisfy in order to be certified to teach and promote others. In the old days if you were around long enough and were available, you were pressed into service, regardless of whether you had any teaching ability or not, and if you didn't, it was the students who suffered the consequences. No one was ever required to prove themselves as a qualified teacher of the Art. There was no system for evaluating their performance or effectiveness as an Instructor.

I can remember people who were themselves terrific fighters but couldn't put one idea or concept across to another person or group of people. If anyone learned from one of these individuals, it was only because they were able to mimic their moves without having the faintest idea of why they were doing what they were doing. This might have been perfectly all right for them but if they, in turn, had to teach that material to another person, they would be hard pressed to break it down or answer any questions about what they were demonstrating unless they themselves were blessed with a talent for teaching. Teaching is an art but it is also a science which can be learned.

I believe the real value of the IKCA Certified Instructors Program is that the potential Instructor is being constantly evaluated along with his or her students. In the beginning we are in close communication with the novice Instructor because we are a part of the promotion process for the student he or she is certifying with. After that student is brought up to Black Belt, the Instructor is then certified to promote to the level of Brown Belt without any further contact with us. We are, however, still in contact with and evaluating that Instructor with each and every future Black Belt promotion he or she submits to the organization. No Instructor can promote to Black Belt without first having that promotion approved by the IKCA.

It just doesn't get any better than that. No one goes to Black Belt without being tested and sanctioned by the parent organization, therefore if someone tests that is not up to the required standards, the Instructor is reevaluated and if need be is then retrained in the elements that their student has failed on.

That's exactly the problem most organizations face with maintaining the quality of their Art. Once an instructor is allowed to promote all the way to Black Belt with no further oversight from the parent organization, it becomes a crap-shoot as to maintaining quality. Out of sight – out of mind, and standardization is completely lost. The quality of each future Martial Artist is dependent on each individual Instructor, and if there is no oversight where the Instructors are concerned, it becomes a crap-shoot.

Some instructors make it too easy because their instructors made it too easy for them and that's how they think it should be done. Some Instructors will make it so

difficult (even though they were not required to do all that they now require) that they make it almost impossible for anyone to achieve their Black Belt. What a fiasco and what's really a disaster is that, after that condition is allowed to continue for a few generations, it becomes irreversible and a disgrace to the nobility of the Art.

Having a structured system and a set of standards to which all Instructors are held accountable, and by which all Karate Connection personnel are promoted, that accountability insures that the IKCA will have a secure future no matter who is in the position of guardianship. When Mr. LeRoux and I are no longer at the helm, the IKCA will continue smoothly into the future because of the Bylaws and those who will see that they are adhered to, for the benefit of all.



CERTIFICATES of PROMOTION

To insure their safekeeping, I put my original Black Belt Promotion Certificate in a “safe place” a few years ago and evidentially I had chosen that safe place very well, because I haven’t been able to find it ever since. Until recently, that is.

When looking for something completely unrelated, I came across my framed First Degree Black Belt Promotion Certificate. I knew that it was in the house somewhere but I couldn’t for the life of me remember where, nor could I locate it until now. Finding it was a relief to say the least.

What’s even worse is the fact that I could not find my earlier promotion certificates either. I knew, darn-right-well, that they were something that I would certainly not have gotten rid of, either intentionally or unintentionally, but where they could be was just as much a mystery as my missing First Degree Black Belt Certificate.

Mystery solved! When I found my framed First Degree Certificate and took it out of its frame to copy it for this Newsletter, guess what? All the others were stacked in neatly behind it. I had forgotten that I simply kept them there for safekeeping. But there they were.

I thought you might get a kick out of seeing them and perhaps appreciate the haphazard manner in which the promotions themselves were made in those days and the changes in the certificates that took place over the years. I’ll start with the earliest Certificate that I have.

In the very beginning I don’t remember Mr. Parker issuing certificates, at all. My best recollection is that you got a card about the size of today’s credit cards, although at that time credit cards were still a couple of decades in the future. On the card were your name and the rank you had been promoted to. The graphic on the card was two men in Gi’s, one doing a club disarm upon the other. The card itself was simply a piece of heavyweight paper, not encased in plastic. That would have been too expensive in those days. After a few years, mine got pretty beat up living in my wallet but as I remember the last time I did see it, it was still fairly readable. That card, like my later

certificates, is around here somewhere and I'll find it one day, probably when I'm not even looking for it.

Below, is the first actual certificate I received (that I have a record of). It was for my 1st kyu, which was First Brown, with the next promotion being to Black Belt.

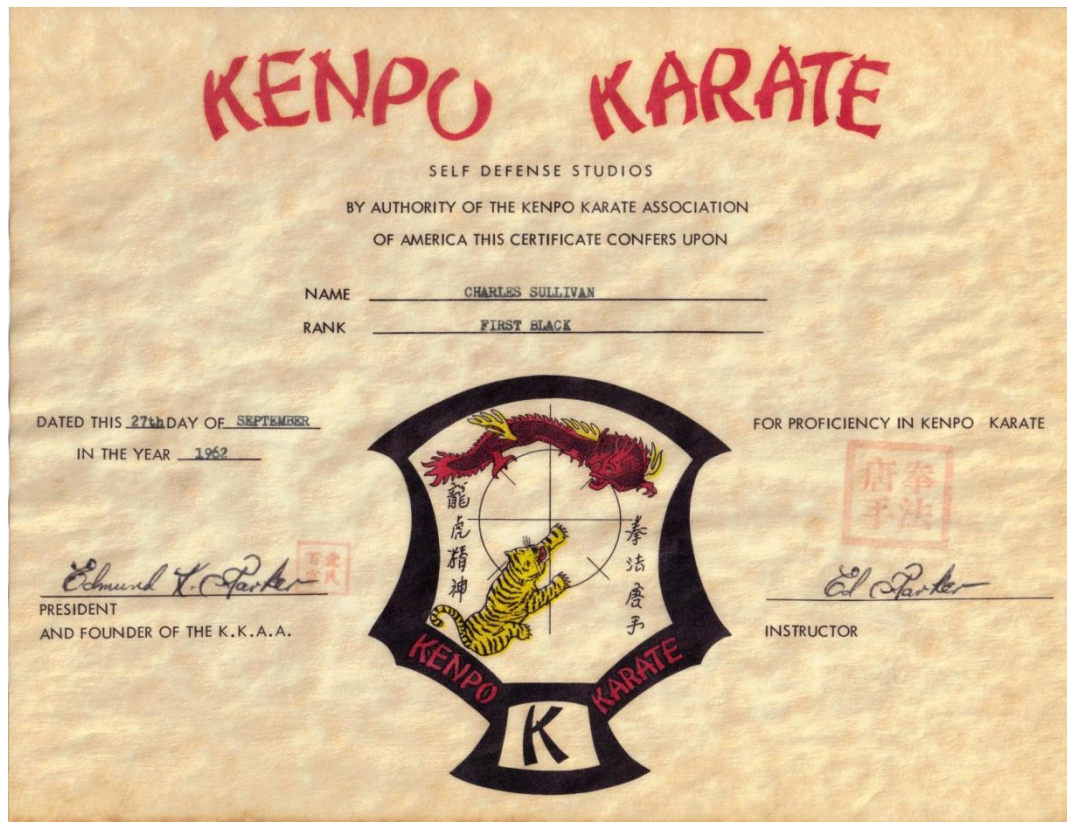


You'll notice that it's dated April 26th 1962. My starting date in Kenpo was in the month of February, 1959. I don't remember the exact date so I'll arbitrarily place it in the middle of the month, say on the 15th of February. So, from Feb. 15th 1959 to April 26th 1962 it was THREE YEARS, TWO MONTHS and ELEVEN DAYS, from Beginner to Top Brown Belt.

This certificate is printed on parchment paper and this is of a heavier grade than those following and is less transparent. The FIRST BLACK and SECOND BLACK Belt certificates seem to be of the same paper quality, which is more transparent than the first one but a little more yellowish in color.

The BROWN BELT Certificate and the FIRST BLACK are the only ones that have Mr. Parker's chop affixed to them. Why? Who knows? It's just something to be observed.

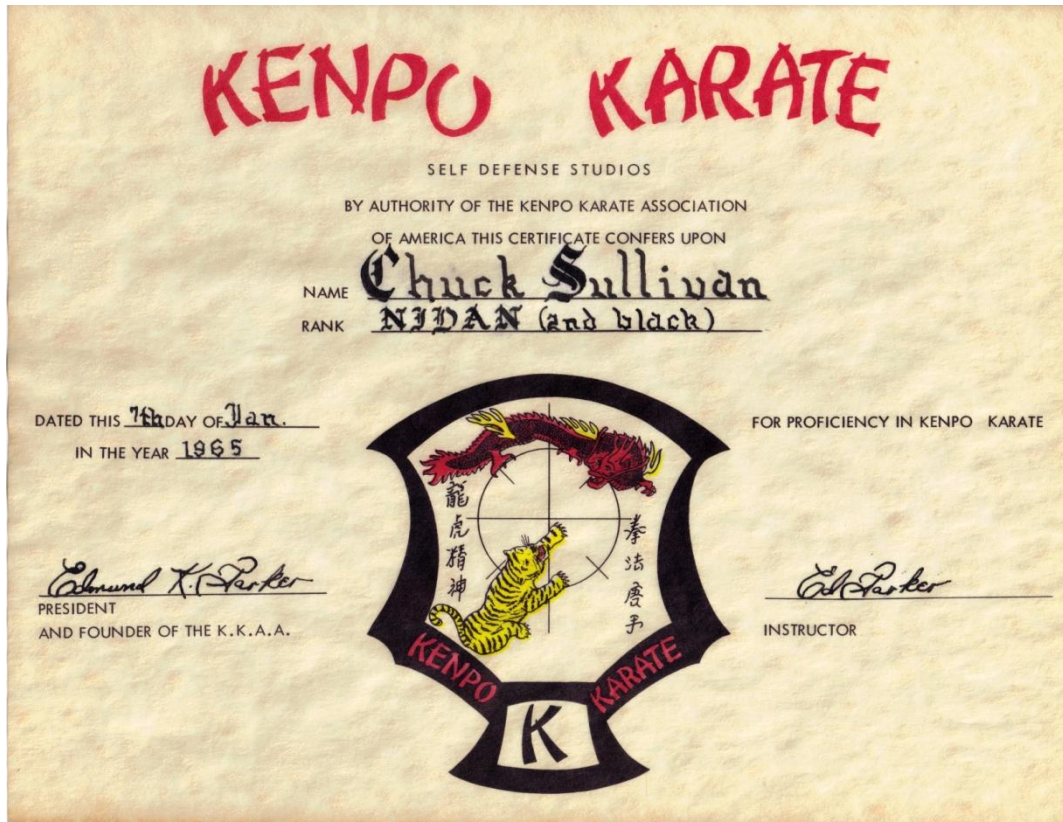
The BROWN BELT certificate was filled in by hand, and it's the hand of Ed Parker. You can see that he wrote my name and rank using the same style of handwriting as his signature; the similarities are readily apparent. It's his hand to be sure. Those were the days when he did everything himself.



Observe now that my promotion to FIRST BLACK is dated September 27th 1962. Wow, that's a short period of time from FIRST KYU to FIRST DAN isn't it, especially for those days. How does something like that happen?

Remember earlier when I said that if you had been around long enough you might be pressed into service as an Instructor? Well, that's just about how it happened to me. Through a series of events that are too long to go into in this article, let's just say that it was imperative that Mr. Parker had another BLACK BELT instructor at the time, and I was it. It was the most fortuitous thing that could ever have happened to me and like he told me at the time, and one I wasn't at all sure I was ready for, but like he told me, "You'll grow into the belt", which we all do. I don't know of anyone who feels totally comfortable donning that belt for the first time, and it was even more so in those days because there had been only three men before me who had that privilege. BLACKBELTS were rare birds in those days. Remember, little more than a year earlier, Mr. Parker was the only BLACKBELT in the system in the United States.

Now moving on, let us take a look at my Second Degree Black Belt Certificate.



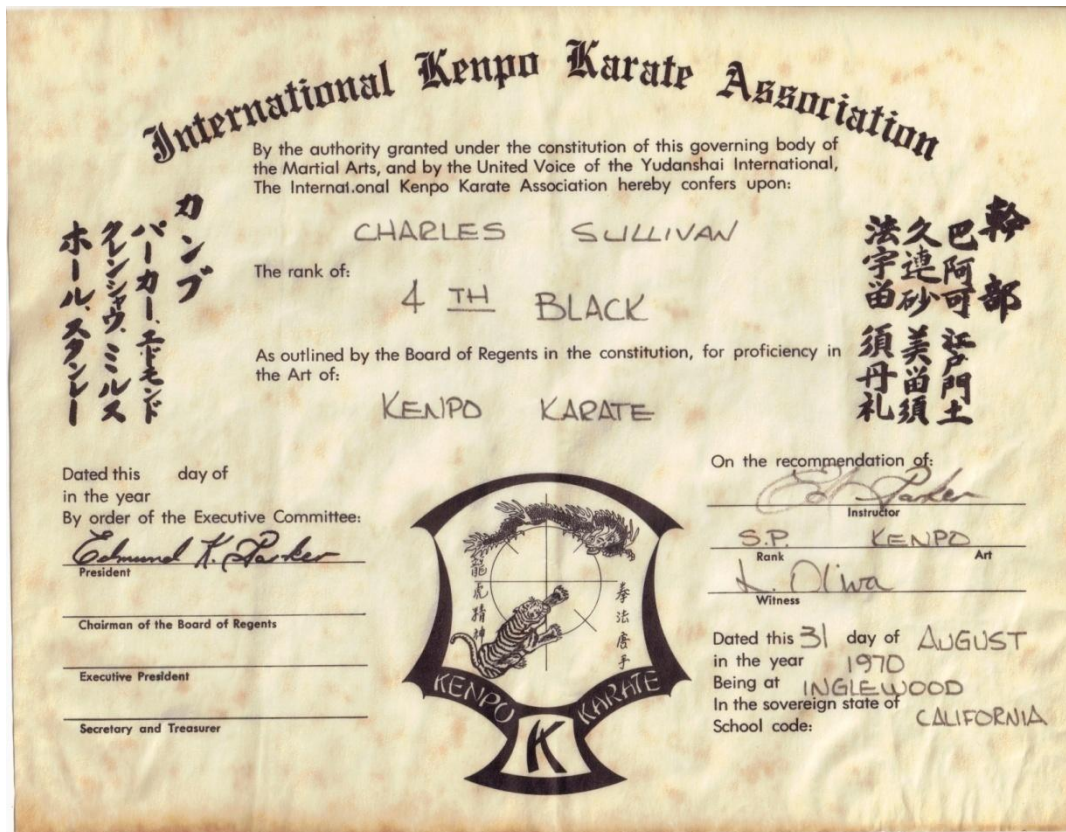
The first thing you see is that Mr. Parker's chop is missing. Why? I haven't the faintest idea, it's just gone and seems to be gone forever. It's still missing on my SEVENTH DEGREE Certificate. And another change is that the name and rank is now done in Old English Calligraphy. Another idea of the times and again the only time that I'm aware of. The parchment paper is also more transparent and a little lighter in color.

The Second degree is dated January 7th, 1965 which is TWO YEARS, THREE MONTHS and TEN DAYS between promotions, which is TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY SIX days short of when I would have been eligible under the time between promotions set forth in the IKCA Bylaws of every THREE YEARS for BLACK BELT.

That's what happens when there are no set rules, or even guidelines, for such things. It's left up to the discretion of an individual and it isn't always equitable for all. A lot has to do with your physical proximity to the head of the system. If you are at the Headquarters working closely with him, your chances of being promoted are reasonably good, if you are some distance they are diminished and if you are really far away, in

either remoteness or philosophy, they could put you out of the picture altogether. Because sometimes the old axiom, out of sight – out of mind is right-on.

That's why there were times when people were passed over so many times between promotions that The Old Man had to do the *Kenpo Shuffle* to catch up. I guess that's what happened with my next promotion because I went from SECOND DAN to FOURTH DAN in a single jump. Here's the FOURTH DAN Certificate.



There are some big changes now. First of all, the color has disappeared which was probably more a matter of economics than anything else and it isn't KENPO KARATE any more, now it's the International Kenpo Karate Association and the Chinese Characters have been added on either side of the crest, the meaning of which is a total unknown to me. The parchment is more crisp and the color lighter yet, which has no significance as such, it's just another observation. The certificate also now includes a Chairman of the Board of Regents, an Executive President as well as a Secretary and Treasurer. However none of those titles are filled in, so one can only conclude that the posts had not yet been filled. I do remember some time later signing several dozen certificates as Secretary and Treasurer, although I was never asked to perform any of those duties. Mr. Parker just handed me a stack and told me to sign on that line, which I did.

Let us now calculate the time between promotions and the number of degrees involved. SECOND DEGREE was awarded on January 7, 1965 and FOURTH DEGREE was awarded on August 31, 1970 which is still FOUR MONTHS and ONE WEEK short of the IKCA timetable for promotions.

Looks like I got away with murder where promotions in BLACK BELT is concerned, doesn't it? So, let's take a look at what happened between FOURTH and SEVENTH DEGREES. But first let's see how the Certificates had changed in the interim.



Most notably, they had grown significantly, and although this photo looks to be the same size as the others it, isn't. This Certificate is over twice as large. Whereas the early certificates were Eight and a Half by Eleven Inches the new certificates are a whopping Fourteen by Eighteen Inches and there are a lot more Chinese Characters on it, along with some great artwork. In examining the Chinese Characters I couldn't find even one that matched any on my Second Degree Certificate so I'm left to wonder how and why that story had changed. What did the first set of characters say? And what do the second set say?

As to the length of time between promotions, under the IKCA Bylaws I would have been eligible for promotion every THREE YEARS from FOURTH to SEVENTH DEGREE which would be NINE YEARS total. The actual time between these promotions was

ELEVEN YEARS, TWO MONTHS and TWENTY SEVEN DAYS, so it looks like I kind of stayed on track anyway, all things being equal.

The main difference between the IKCA method of promoting and other organization's methods falls within the Under Belt range, which is from the time a student starts to when he or she is eligible for their BLACK BELT. Under most systems, you test when your instructor says you test. With the IKCA you are tested when you request it. But that's not the only difference. The really huge difference is that when the IKCA tests, the test is exactly the same for every belt level and for every student, and each student is tested individually whereas in other schools of Kenpo, the tests vary according to the person conducting the test. The Instructor is free to test in whatever manner they see fit and even that isn't always the same. One group might get an easy test this time around and then the next group to test might get a killer of a test. It all depends up on the Instructor's whim at the time, or who's testing, or whatever. Who knows? The other major difference is that the people testing are done so in a group, not individually.

We could never understand how that could be a valid method of testing. It would be like conducting a math test in Grade School where the teacher would ask the question aloud. Then the class, as a whole, would shout the answer back to her all at once. The chances are that a number of the students would have the correct answers, but how could anyone ever determine who knew what? That's not a test. I don't know what it is, but it surely isn't a test of each individual's understanding of the subject or an evaluation of their ability to perform certain tasks or moves, as in Kenpo. And the really sad part is that I have personally sat on Boards where I observed students that were making serious errors of movement and understanding. And these students were promoted right along with the rest of the class, without ever being corrected or even informed that there were problems that had to be rectified before they should be allowed to proceed. I'm sorry but that's just goofy.

I don't understand that sort of thinking. If you are going to promote everyone anyway, then why even bother with a test at all?

When a student is tested by the IKCA, he or she hears the same words asking them to perform the same moves as a person taking that test in South Africa, South Dakota, South Central Los Angeles, South Bend, Indiana or the South of France. And they are judged by the same criteria as everyone who has taken that test before them and will take it after them. And when each person passes, they will have passed because they've proven that they know that material and can adequately perform it.

How would you prefer to be tested?



MR. JAMES PARSON HAS DONE IT AGAIN AND ALONG WITH HIM IS HIS STUDENT JAMES (MAD DOG) DYER

The IKCA is so proud and privileged to have such fighting luminaries as Mr. Parson and Mr. Dyer as members. This is just the latest photo of these two Champions, both of Mr. Parson, Lompoc California School.



Mr. Parson will be instructing the Art of Freestyle Fighting at the **KENPO BLACK BELT COMBAT ZONE** on August 20th in Long Beach. If you only pick up ONE MOVE from this man, it will be worth the price of admission! Here's a shot of Mr. Parson in action.

POINT!!





We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your promotion. We know what kind of dedication and perseverance it requires to earn rank in the Martial Arts and we wish to pay our sincerest respects to you for having shown what it takes to appear on this list.

John Oliveri	Goodyear, AZ, USA	ORANGE BELT
Josh Grant	Buellton, CA, USA	PURPLE BELT
C.J. Schalyo	Cypress, TX, USA	PURPLE BELT
Chet Nelson	California City, CA, USA	GREEN BELT
Robert E. Lee Hill	Ventura, CA, USA	BROWN BELT
Caleb Bachara	California City, CA, USA	BROWN BELT
Joe Jackson	Northport, AL, USA	PURPLE BELT
Courtney Grinder	San Angelo, TX, USA	ORANGE BELT
Travis Eden	Bellflower, CA, USA	PURPLE BELT
Jasmin Deloa	Bellflower, CA, USA	PURPLE BELT
Andrew Ponce	Bellflower, CA, USA	PURPLE BELT
Joe Good	Montrose, CO, USA	PURPLE BELT
Stephanie C. Foley	Garden Grove, CA, USA	PURPLE BELT
Mark Chapman	Casper, WY, USA	ORANGE BELT
Adam Overbury	Long Beach, CA, USA	GREEN BELT
Angel Gonzalez	San Juan, PR	YELLOW BELT
Mario Perez	San Juan, PR	YELLOW BELT
Waldemar Perez	San Juan, PR	YELLOW BELT
Maria Soto	San Juan, PR	YELLOW BELT
Ricardo Forestier	San Juan, PR	ORANGE BELT
Andres Santiago	San Juan, PR	ORANGE BELT
Efrain D. Rivera	San Juan, PR	GREEN BELT
Sebastian A. Rivera	San Juan, PR	GREEN BELT
Carlos Y. Ramos	San Juan, PR	GREEN BELT
Brandon Barbour	Raleigh, NC, USA	ORANGE BELT
Christopher C. Stone	Raleigh, NC, USA	ORANGE BELT
Reid Brown	Hudson, FL, USA	1st Degree Black Belt
Neils Eriksen	Copenhagen, DEN	1st Degree Black Belt
Claus Hansen	Copenhagen, DEN	5th Degree Black Belt
Dylan Goodwin	Australia	1st Degree Black Belt
Mathew Bachara	California City, CA, USA	1st Degree Black Belt
Jeffrey A. Howard	Chapel Hill, NC, USA	1st Degree Black Belt
Lynn Lane	Vass, NC, USA	4th Degree Black Belt
Jim Buhisan	San Jose, CA, USA	8th Degree Black Belt
Leanna Cuevas	Lompoc, CA, USA	1st Degree Black Belt

