

## Weapons Instructor of the Year bram frank

Like many martial artists, Bram Frank began his training with traditional styles like karate—way back when Lyndon B. Johnson was president. As time went on, Frank gravitated to more diverse arts such as *hung gar* kung fu and finally *wing chun*, a system that later paved his way to *jeet kune do*. Over the years, his ancillary studies have included *hapkido*, *jujutsu*, *shuri goju-ryu* and *aikido*.

His propensity for experimenting with a variety of styles ended in 1980 when he met the late Remy Presas. It proved to be the most momentous meeting of Frank's career, and he eventually became a modern-*arnis* instructor under Presas. He also earned rank in a number of complementary Philippine fighting systems.

It was from all those arts that Frank drew when he began to develop his theories on edged weapons and impact weapons—two fields that have featured prominently in his teaching career. He set about designing knives with the features martial artists need. One of his best-known is the Spyderco Gunting, which sports a prominent horn that protrudes from the back of the blade and can be

used for striking, trapping and pain compliance even when the folder is closed. To complement the weapon, he created a self-defense system for it based on modern *arnis'* *sinawali* application and *dulo y dulo* method.

Being a practical martial artist at heart, Frank recognized the need for variations

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on his theme, so he designed a training version for safe practice, as well as what he calls the Close Range Medium ImPact Tool, or CRIMPT. The latter is basically a nonlethal Gunting with a dull blade. And his newest brainchild, the Lapu Lapu Corto, is a folder that's similar to the Gunting, he says, but improved in many ways.

Frank didn't stop with folding knives. Among the other models he's hatched is the Abaniko, a larger fixed-blade version of the Gunting produced by Ontario Knife-works. It meshed perfectly with his *arnis* background, which entailed plenty of drills with fixed blades, especially machetes. While *arnis* is normally associated with sticks, the true art that he learned from Presas has a strong blade orientation, Frank says.

Even though he's perhaps best-known for his connection to modern *arnis*, his teaching extends far beyond one system. He serves as head instructor for Common Sense Self-Defense Street Combat and chief edged-weapons instructor for the S2 Institute. And he proudly works for the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association.

In his capacity as a tactical instructor for the government, he's taught his weapon skills to everyone from federal agents to Special Forces personnel. When he's not busy with those assignments, he's on the road conducting seminars in Europe and Southeast Asia, as well as in Israel.

Given these lofty accomplishments and pedigreed background, it's no surprise that Frank has won awards and accolades from numerous organizations, including the World Head of Family Soke-ship Council. And it's no surprise that he's been selected as *Black Belt's* 2007 Weapons Instructor of the Year. ✂

*About the author:*  
E. Lawrence is a freelance writer and martial artist.