

Arnis

Arnis, also known as **Kali** or **Eskrima**, is the national sport and martial art of the Philippines. The three are roughly interchangeable umbrella terms for the traditional martial arts of the Philippines ("Filipino Martial Arts", or FMA) that emphasize weapon-based fighting with sticks, knives, bladed weapons and various improvised weapons as well as "open hand" or techniques without

weapons. It is also known as *Estoque* (Spanish for rapier), *Estocada* (Spanish for thrust or stab) and *Garrote* (Spanish for club). In Luzon they may go by the name of *Arnis de Mano*.

Arnis



Also known as *Kali*
Arnis
Escrima

Focus Stick fighting
Knife fighting
Sword fighting
Unarmed combat

Hardness Handheld Weapons

Country of origin Philippines

Famous practitioners Remy Presas
Dan Inosanto

Bruce Lee^[1]

Jeff Imada

Cacoy Canete

Ron Balicki

Forest Whitaker

Erik Paulson

Riaz Amin

Daniel "Danny" Guba

Jeremy Renner

Coco Martin

**Olympic
sport**

No

The indigenous martial art that the Spanish encountered in 1610 was not yet called "Eskrima" at that time. During those times, this martial art was known as

Paccalicali-t to the Ibanags,^[2] *Didya* (later changed to *Kabaroan*) to the Ilokanos, *Sitbatan* or *Kalirongan* to Pangasinenses, *Sinawali* ("to weave") to the Kapampangans, *Calis* or *Pananandata* (use of weapons) to the Tagalogs, *Pagaradman* to the Ilonggos and *Kaliradman* to the Cebuanos. Kuntaw and Silat are separate martial arts that are also practiced in the Philippine Archipelago.

General

Notable Arnisadores from Balintawak lineage: (from left to right) "Chito" Velez, "Meo" de la Rosa, "Nene" Gaabucayan, "Anciong" Bacon, Ray la Victoria, "Bobby"

Taboada, Teofilo Velez at Fort San Pedro, Cebu City (c. 1976). The photos were taken by "Johnny" Chiuten

Arnis also includes hand-to-hand combat, joint locks, grappling and weapon disarming techniques. Although in general, emphasis is put on weapons for these arts, some systems put empty hands as the primary focus and some old school systems do not teach weapons at all.^[3]

For all intents and purposes, arnis, eskrima and kali all refer to the same family of Filipino weapon-based martial arts and

fighting systems. Both *Arnis* and *Eskrima* are loans from Spanish:

- **Arnis** comes from *arnés*,^[4] Old Spanish for "armor" (*harness* is an archaic English term for armor, which comes from the same roots as the Spanish term). It is said to derive from the armor costumes used in *Moro-moro* stage plays where actors fought mock battles using wooden swords.^[5] *Arnes* is also an archaic Spanish term for weapon, like in the following sentence from "*Ilustracion de la Deztreza Indiana*" by Francisco Santos de la Paz in 1712:^[6]

Siendo tan infalible la execucion desta doctrina, que no solo consigue ésta superioridad en concurso de armas iguales, sino tambien hallandose el contrario con la aparente ventaja de venir armado de los dos 'arneses', Espada, y Daga; pues aun con ellos experimenta la dificultad de resistir á esta Espada sola...

The execution of this doctrine is so infallible, that not only does it prove its superiority in contests with equal arms, but also when finding the opponent with the apparent advantage of showing up armed with two weapons, sword and dagger. For, even armed with those, experience shows the difficulty of resisting the single sword used in this way...

Eskrima training weapons

- **Eskrima** (also spelled **Escrima**) is a Filipinization of the Spanish word for fencing, *esgrima*.^{[7][8]} Their cognate in French is *escrime* and is related to the English term 'skirmish'.
- **Kali** has multiple theories on its origin:
 - One theory is that the word comes from *tjakalele*,^[9] a tribal style of stick-

fencing from Indonesia. This is supported by the similarities between tjakalele and eskrima techniques, as well as Mindanao's proximity to Indonesia.

- According to Guro Dan Inosanto, Kali is a portmanteau of the Cebuano words "kamot", meaning hand, and "lihok", meaning motion.^{[10][11]}
- In the Ilocano language, *kali* means to dig and to stab.^[12]
- There exist numerous similar terms of reference for martial arts such as *kalirongan*, *kaliradman* and *pagkalikali*.^[13] These may be the

origin of the term *kali* or they may have evolved from it.^[9]

- According to Grandmaster Vic Sanchez, the Pangasinense term *Kalirongan* means "Karunungan ng Lihim" or Wisdom of (the) Secret (fighting arts) or "Wisdom of Kali".
- In his book *KALI – History of a Forbidden Filipino Fighting Arts*, Fred Lazo put forward that *Kali* was an ancient root word for blade, and that the Filipino words for right hand (*kanan*) and left hand (*kaliwa*) are contractions of the terms "way of the blade" (*kali daanan*) and "without

blade" (*kali wala*) as weapons are usually held with the right hand and the left hand is typically empty.^[14]

- In their book *Cebuano Eskrima: Beyond the Myth* however, Dr. Ned Nepangue and Celestino Macachor contend that the term *Kali* in reference to Filipino martial arts did not exist until the Buenaventura Mirafuente wrote in the preface of the first known published book on Arnis, "Mga Karunungan sa Larong Arnis" by Placido Yambao, the term *Kali* as the native mother fighting art of the Philippine islands.^[15]

- Most likely, *Kali* derives from the pre-Hispanic Filipino term for blades and fencing, **Calis**,^[16] documented by Ferdinand Magellan's expedition chronicler Antonio Pigafetta during their journey through the Visayas and in old Spanish to Filipino Mother Tongue dictionary and vocabulary books dating from 1612 to the late 1800s, such as in *Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala* by Fr. Pedro de San Buenaventura.^[17] The term *calis* in various forms was present in these old Spanish documents in Ilocano,^[18] Ibanag (*calit*),^[19] Kapampangan,^[20] Tagalog,^[21] Bicolano (*caris*),^[22] Waray

(*caris*),^[23] Hiligaynon^[24] and Cebuano (*calix, baladao*^[25] - "kalis balaraw/dagger" and *cales*^[26]). In some of these dictionaries, the term *calis* refers to a sword or knife kris or keris, while in others it refers to both swords and knives and their usage as well as a form of *esgrima* stick fighting.^{[20][21]} While Mirafuente posits that the original term was "Kali" and that the letter "S" was added later, the late Grandmaster Remy Presas suggests that the "S" was dropped in modern times and became presently more known as "Kali" in FMA circles.

Practitioners of the arts are called *arnisador* (male, plural *arnisadores*) and *arnisadora* (female, plural *arnisadoras*) for those who call theirs *arnis*, *eskrimador* (male, plural *eskrimadores*) or *eskrimadora* (female, plural *eskrimadoras*) for those who call their art *eskrima*, and *kalista* or *mangangali* for those who practice *kali*.

Origins

As *Arnis* was an art usually practiced by the peasant or commoner class (as opposed to nobility or warrior classes), most practitioners lacked the scholarly education to create any kind of written

record. While the same can be said of many martial arts, this is especially true for Arnis because almost all of its history is anecdotal, oral or promotional. The origin of Arnis can be traced back to native fighting techniques during conflicts among the various Prehispanic Filipino tribes or kingdoms, though the current form has Spanish influence from old fencing which originated in Spain in the 15th century. It has other influences as well, as settlers and traders travelling through the Malay Archipelago brought the influence of silat as well as Chinese, Arab and Indian martial arts.^{[27][28]} Some of the population still

practice localized Chinese fighting methods known as kuntaw.

It has also been theorized that the Filipino art of Arnis may have roots in India, and came to the Philippines via people who traveled through Indonesia and Malaysia to the Philippine islands. Silambam, a stick/staff based ancient martial art of India influenced many martial arts in Asia like Silat. As such, Arnis may share ancestry with these systems – some Arnis moves are similar to the short stick (kali or kaji) and other weapon based fighting styles of Silambam.

When the Spaniards first arrived in the Philippines, they already observed weapons-based martial arts practiced by the natives, which may or may not be related to present-day Arnis. The earliest written records of Filipino culture and life, including martial arts, comes from the first Spanish explorers. Some early expeditions fought native tribesmen armed with sticks and knives.^[29] In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan was killed in Cebu at the Battle of Mactan by the forces of Datu Lapu-Lapu, the chief of Mactan. Some Arnisadors hold that Lapu-Lapu's men killed Magellan in a sword-fight, though historical evidence proves otherwise. The only eyewitness

account of the battle by chronicler Antonio Pigafetta tells that he was stabbed in the face and the arm with spears and overwhelmed with multiple warriors who hacked and stabbed at him:

The natives continued to pursue us, and picking up the same spear four or six times, hurled it at us again and again. Recognizing the captain, so many turned upon him that they knocked his helmet off his head twice, but he always stood firmly like a good knight,

together with some others. Thus did we fight for more than one hour, refusing to retire farther.

An Indian hurled a bamboo spear into the captain's face, but the latter immediately killed him with his lance, which he left in the Indian's body. Then, trying to lay hand on sword, he could draw it out but halfway, because he had been wounded in the arm with a bamboo spear. When the natives saw that, they all hurled themselves upon him. One of

them wounded him on the left leg with a large cutlass, which resembles a scimitar, only being larger. That caused the captain to fall face downward, when immediately they rushed upon him with iron and bamboo spears and with their cutlasses, until they killed our mirror, our light, our comfort, and our true guide. When they wounded him, he turned back many times to see whether we were all in the boats. Thereupon, beholding him dead,

we, wounded, retreated, as best we could, to the boats, which were already pulling off.^[30]

Katipunan

Opinions differ on the degree to which Spanish rule in the Philippines affected Arnis. The fact that a large number of techniques and the names of the arts

themselves (*arnis/arnes, eskrima/esgrima, garrote, estoque, etcg*) have Spanish names suggest an influence. Some argue though that Spanish names in the martial art simply reflect the fact that Spanish was the lingua franca of the Philippines until the early 20th century, and that actual Spanish martial influence was limited.

What is certain is that the Spaniards brought with them and used their bladed weapon arts (including the system of Destreza developed by Carranza) when they started colonizing the archipelago in the 16th century. What is also known is that the Spaniards recruited and trained

mercenaries and soldiers from local people like the Pangasinenses, Kapampangans, Tagalogs, Ilonggos, Cebuanos and Warays to pacify regions and put down revolts. Of the Kapampangans, Fray Casimiro Díaz relates in 1718:

Los primeros que se decidieron á experimentar fortuna fueron los pampangos, nación la más belicosa y noble de estas Islas, y cercana á Manila. Y era lo peor hallarse ejercitada en el arte

militar en nuestras escuelas en los presidios de Ternate, Zamboanga, Joló, Caraga y otras partes, donde se conoció bien su valor; pero este necesita del abrigo del nuestro, y así decían que un español y tres pampangos, valían por cuatro españoles.^[31]

The first who decided to experiment with their fortune (revolt) were the Pampangos, the most warlike and prominent

people of these islands, and close to Manila. And it was all the worse because these people had been trained in the military art in our own schools in the presidios (fortified outposts) of Ternate, Zamboanga, Jolo, Caraga and other places where their valor was well known; but this is necessary for our protection, and so they say that a Spaniard plus three Pampangos equal four Spaniards. ^[32]

Logic dictates that these native soldiers and mercenaries would have passed on to very close friends and family members these newly learned skills to augment already existing and effective native ones. They would have also shared tactics and techniques with each other when placed in the same military group and fighting on the same side in foreign regions such as Formosa, Mindanao, the Moluccas^[31] and the Marianas.^[33]

One of the more prominent features of Arnis that point to possible Spanish influence is the *Espada y Daga* (Spanish for sword and dagger) method, a term also

used in Spanish fencing. Filipino *espada y daga* differs somewhat from European rapier and dagger techniques; the stances are different as weapons used in Arnis are typically shorter than European swords.^[34] According to Grandmaster Federico Lazot (1938–2010), unlike in European historical fencing, there is no lunging in the Northern Ilocano *Kabaroan* style of Arnis – it is more of an evasive art. On the other hand, it is present in some Visayan styles documented by FMA researchers Celestino Macachor and Ned Nepangue such as *Yasay Sable Estocada* from Bago City.^[35] Having done comparative studies, Kalis Ilustrisimo archivist Romeo

Macapagal also estimates that 40% of the blade-oriented style of Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo† (1904–1997) descend from European styles, brought by the Spanish.^[36]

After the Spanish colonized the Philippines, a decree was set that prohibited civilians from carrying full-sized swords (such as the Kris and the Kampilan). Despite this, the practitioners found ways to maintain and keep the arts alive, using sticks made out of rattan rather than swords, as well as small knives wielded like swords. Some of the arts were passed down from one generation to the

other. Sometimes the art took the form choreographed dances such as the *Sakuting* stick dance^[37] or during mock battles at *Moro-moro* (*Moros y Cristianos*) stage plays. Also as a result, a unique and complex stick-based technique evolved in the Visayas and Luzon regions. The southern Mindanao retains almost exclusively blade-oriented techniques, as the Spaniards and Americans never fully conquered the southern parts of this island.^[38]

Although Arnis combines native fighting techniques with old Spanish fencing and other influences, a degree of

systematization was achieved over time, resulting in a distinguishable Philippine martial art. With time, a system for the teaching of the basics also evolved.

However, with the exception of a few older and more established systems, it was previously common to pass the art from generation to generation in an informal approach. This has made attempts to trace the lineage of a practitioner difficult. For example, aside from learning from their family members like uncle Regino Ilustrisimo, Antonio Ilustrisimo seemed to have learned to fight while sailing around the Philippines, while his cousin and student Floro Villabrille claimed to have

been also taught by a blind Moro princess in the mountains; a claim later refuted by the older Ilustrisimo. Both have since died.

Modern history

Various Filipino knives.

The Philippines has what is known as a *blade culture*.^{[39][40]} Unlike in the West where Medieval and Renaissance combative and self-defense blade arts

have gone almost extinct (having devolved into sport fencing with the advent of firearms),^[41] blade fighting in the Philippines is a living art. Local folk in the Philippines are much more likely to carry knives than guns. They are commonly carried as tools by farmers, used by street vendors to prepare coconuts, pineapples, watermelons, other fruits and meats, and balisongs are cheap to procure in the streets as well as being easily concealed. In fact, in some areas in the countryside, carrying a farming knife like the *itak* or bolo was a sign that one was making a living because of the nature of work in those areas.^[42] In the country of Palau, the

local term for Filipino is *chad ra oles*, which literally means "people of the knife" because of Filipinos' reputation for carrying knives and using them in fights.^[43]

Philippine Revolution

Contrary to the view of some modern historians that it was only guns that won the Philippine revolutionaries against the Spaniards, blades also played a large part.

During the 1898 Battle of Manila, a report from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* went:^[44]

...The Philippine native, like all the kindred Malay races, cannot do any fighting as a rule except at close quarters, slashing with his heavy knife. The weapon is called machete, or bolo, or kampilan, or parang, or kris. The plan of action is the same – to rush in unexpectedly and hack about swiftly, without the slightest attempt at self-preservation.

The Mauser rifle, too, in hard work is found to be a mistake. It has a case of five cartridges, which have to be all used before any others can be inserted. That is, to say, if a soldier has occasion to fire three cartridges he must go on and waste the other two, or else leave himself to meet a possible sudden rush with only two rounds in his rifle. Perhaps it may be the fault of the men, or their misfortune in being

*undrilled, but they are often knifed while in the act of reloading their rifles. Whatever be the explanation there is something wrong in troops with rifles and bayonets being driven steadily back by natives armed with knives. **The insurgents have some guns, but most of the wounded Spanish soldiers seen in the streets have knife wounds.***

Philippine–American War

Americans were first exposed to Arnis during the Philippine–American War in events such as the Balangiga massacre where most of an American company was hacked to death or seriously injured by bolo-wielding guerillas in Balangiga, Eastern Samar – and in battles in Mindanao, where an American serviceman was decapitated by a Moro warrior even after he emptied his .38 Long Colt caliber revolver into his opponent. That and similar events led to the request and the development of the Colt M1911 pistol and the .45 ACP cartridge by Col. John T. Thompson, Louis La Garde and John

Browning which had more stopping power.^{[45][46]}

World War II

During World War II, many Filipinos fought the Japanese hand to hand with their blades as guerilla fighters or as military units under the USAFFE like the Bolo Battalion (now known as the Tabak Division).

Some of the grandmasters who are known to have used their skills in World War II are Antonio Ilustrisimo, Leo Giron,^{[47][48]} Teodoro "Doring" Saavedra,^[49] brothers

Eulogio and Cacoy Cañete,^[50] Timoteo
"Timor" Maranga, Sr,^[51] Jesus Bayas^[52]
and Balbino Tortal Bonganciso.^[53]

Spread

Kali stick seminar group at Ben Poon's Riseup Crossfit center by Terry Lim and Maurice Novoa Ruiz in Melbourne (Australia)

The arts had no traditional belting or grading systems as they were taught informally. It was said that to proclaim a

student a "master" was considered ridiculous and a virtual death warrant as the individual would become challenged left and right to potentially lethal duels by other Arnisadores looking to make names for themselves. Belt ranking was a recent addition adopted from Japanese arts such as Karate and Judo, which had become more popular with Filipinos. They were added to give structure to the systems, and to be able to compete for the attention of students.

With regards to its spread outside the Philippines, Arnis was brought to Hawaii and California as far back as the 1920s by

Filipino migrant workers.^[54] Its teaching was kept strictly within Filipino communities until the late 1960s when masters such as Angel Cabales began teaching it to others. Even then, instructors teaching Arnis in the 1960s and 70s were often reprimanded by their elders for publicly teaching a part of their culture that had been preserved through secrecy. The spread of Arnis was helped in Australia through Terry Lim (founder of Loong Fu Pai martial arts academy) who also holds a 4th Dan in International Philippine Martial Arts Federation. He ran seminars with the help of other masters

such as Maurice Novoa Ruiz (a Wing Chun instructor).^[55]

In recent years, there has been increased interest in Arnis for its usefulness when defending against knives in street encounters. As a result, many systems of Arnis have been modified in varying degrees to make them more marketable to a worldwide audience. Usually this involves increased emphasis on locking, controls, and disarms, focusing mainly on aspects of self-defense. However, most styles follow the philosophy that the best defense is a good offense. Modern training methods tend to de-emphasize

careful footwork and low stances, stressing the learning of techniques in favor of more direct (and often lethal) tactics designed to instantly end an encounter.

In the Philippines, the spread is more significant due to the efforts of Richardson "Richard" Gialogo and Aniano "Jon" Lota, Jr. through the Department of Education (DepEd) Task Force on School Sports (TFSS). Arnis was first introduced in 1969 to some public and private school teachers when Mr. Remy A. Presas taught his personal style of Arnis which he called "Modern Arnis". He taught his own style to

the students of the National College of Physical Education (NCPE) when he was given the chance to teach there. The style "Modern Arnis" is not synonymous with the concept of modern or contemporary Arnis, where it has become a full blown sport embraced by the Department of Education, although there are some similarities. There was no formal program for Arnis from 1970s to 1980s. Although some schools taught Arnis, these were not official nor prescribed.

The earliest historical record was the DECS Memorandum No. 294 Series of 1995 which entailed the Arnis

Development Program Phase I. This was a joint effort of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports or DECS and the Office of then Senator Orlando "Orly" Mercado who awarded a budget from his pork barrel for the implementation of a national Arnis program. The Office of Senator Mercado was given the authority to designate the Arnis instructors for the said program.

The next stage was the Arnis Development Program Phase II. It was just a continuation of Phase I through DECS Memorandum No. 302 series of 1997. The same group conducted the seminars;

known as the Arnis Association International (AAI). The Arnis instructors designated by Senator Mercado were informally called the "Mercado boys". They were Mr. Jeremias V. Dela Cruz, Rodel Dagooc and others who were direct students of Mr. Remy Presas of the Modern Arnis style. In this memorandum, there were two seminars conducted: October 6–11, 1997 in Baguio City and November 10–15, 1997 in General Santos City. The Arnis Module Development however did not push through. It was also during this time when the first Arnis instructional video was developed by the Bureau of Physical Education and School

Sports (BPSS) entitled "Dynamic Arnis". This video featured the Gialogo Brothers: Richardson and Ryan Gialogo, direct students of Jeremias V. Dela Cruz.

However, the national Arnis program of Senator Orly Mercado and DECS died a natural death. It was only after nine years that Arnis found its way back into the Department of Education (formerly known as Department of Education, Culture and Sports or DECS). On February 5, 2004, the Task Force on School Sports (TFSS) of the Department of Education (DepEd), the new agency after the defunct BPSS, met with the National Sports Association (NSA) for

Arnis in a Senate hearing. The Head of the TFSS was National Coordinator Mr. Feliciano N. Toledo II, considered the "Father of Arnis" in the Department of Education. He met with the top NSA officials at that time; however, nothing happened.

It was only in 2006 when the Task Force on School Sports had a new program for Arnis. The "National Training of Trainers in Arnis and Dance Sports", sponsored by the Task Force on School Sports, Department of Education (DepEd), was held at Teacher's Camp, Baguio City on March 13–17, 2006 and was conducted by two

top-caliber figures in the Arnis community: Mr. Aniano Lota, Jr. and Mr. Richardson Gialogo, then Secretary-General and Vice-President respectively of the National Sports Association for Arnis. And this was the start of the modern, contemporary and prevailing Arnis in the Department of Education.

In just two months, Arnis became part of the Palarong Pambansa (National Games) as a demonstration sport. The 2006 Palarong Pambansa was held in Naga City, Bicol Region with nine out of the seventeen regions of the Philippines participating. National, regional and

provincial Arnis Seminars were conducted by the tandem of Mr. Aniano Lota, Jr. and Mr. Richardson Gialogo from 2006 to 2007 in coordination with the TFSS National Coordinator, Mr. Feliciano "Len" Toledo, and with the financial and logistical backing of the Department of Education. In 2007, Arnis was already a regular event in the Palarong Pambansa with all seventeen regions participating. Five weight divisions in the Full-contact Event and four categories in the Anyo (Forms) Event were played and became part of the official medal tally of the participants. This was held in Coronadal in Mindanao.

Arnis Seminars were continued in national, regional and provincial levels. These were all conducted by the tandem of Mr. Aniano Lota, Jr. and Mr. Richardson Gialogo, now both Arnis Consultants and official Lecturers of the Task Force on School Sports of the Department of Education. In 2008, Arnis was played in the Palarong Pambansa and again, with all seventeen regions participating. All nine events were played. This was held in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

Aside from Sports Officiating and Accreditation seminars, Coaching and skill training seminars continued in national,

regional and provincial levels. Requests from cities and even districts were also welcomed. The "evangelization" of Arnis was continued and both Gialogo and Lota were careful not to teach their personal styles. Both taught in "generic" form and focused on the rules of sports as promulgated by the Department of Education.

In 2009, Secondary Girls (High School Girls) were finally included in Palarong Pambansa and again, all seventeen regions participated. From the original five member teams, the number doubled with the inclusion of the girls. The medal tally

also doubled from nine to eighteen. The 2009 Palarong Pambansa was held in Tacloban, Leyte in the Visayas.

In 2009, the "Writershop of the Revision of the Physical Fitness Test and the Development of Learning Competencies in Arnis and Archery" was held in Teacher's Camp, Baguio City in October 5–8, 2009. Phase I of the National Curriculum for Arnis was finished and the curriculum writers were Mr. Richardson Gialogo and Mr. Aniano Lota, Jr.

The 2010 Palarong Pambansa was held in Tarlac, In Luzon. Again, both secondary

boys and girls competed in the eighteen categories. It was here that the Department of Education Arnis Association Philippines or DEAAP had its first national elections.

In the 2011 Palarong Pambansa, Elementary students joined.

Duels

One of the most important practices in classical Arnis was dueling, without any form of protection. The matches were preceded by cock-fighting and could be held in any open space, sometimes in a

specially constructed enclosure.

Arnisadores believe this tradition pre-dates the colonial period, pointing to similar practices of kickboxing matches in mainland Indochina as evidence. Spanish records tell of such duelling areas where cock-fights took place. The founders of most of the popular Arnis systems were famous duelists and legends circulate about how many opponents they killed. In rural areas throughout the Philippines today, modern Arnis matches are still held in dueling arenas. In bigger cities, recreations of duels are sometimes held at parks by local Arnis training-halls. These demonstrations are not choreographed

beforehand but neither are they full-contact competitions.

In modern times, public dueling with blades has been deemed illegal in the Philippines due to potential injury or death. Duelling with live sticks and minimal protection still occurs during barrio fiestas in some towns such as in Paete in Laguna.

Organization

After decades of lobbying and overdue recognition, Arnis/Eskrima/Kali was proclaimed as the official National Martial Art and Sport of the Philippines in January 2010.

There are two main types of Arnis practiced as a sport. The most common system used internationally is that of the WEKAF (World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation), established 1989. The earlier Arnis Philippines^[56] (ARPI) system, established in 1986, was most prominently used during the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

WEKAF

The WEKAF system works on a 10-point must system similar to boxing where participants spar with live sticks while wearing a long padded vest with skirt and

sleeves and a helmet similar to Kendo headgear. Hitting below the thigh is prohibited. This format has sometimes been criticized because it emphasizes a heavy offense at the expense of defensive techniques sometimes with players raining blows on each other without defending, giving rise to the impression that combatants are merely hitting each other in a disorganized way. This has been tackled by introducing a "four second rule", to prevent constant and unrealistic attacks, and judges do not score the same strike if the fighter uses it more than twice in succession. Judges warn fighters and remove points if they continue after

two warnings. However, fights can easily come down to an unrealistic attack from an unskilled fighter who impresses judges with many body hits after taking two or three clear, strong hits to the hands and head.

This is, to some, an antithesis to traditional training methods, where training in footwork and arm/weapon movements are intricate and precise and any part of an opponent's body is fair game. As a consequence, WEKAF tournaments may be seen as not promoting the original art. Moreover, participants have been known to suffer broken bones and injured tendons

due to the fact that live sticks are used, so the older system is considered more 'hardcore' and less safe. Another complaint about the WEKAF system is that it uses the 10-point must system, which is more subjective depending on who is judging.

Since the WEKAF system is more risky, it is preferred by many practitioners who want to test themselves. The WEKAF system is the most widely used format internationally.

ARPI

Safety equipment used in Modern Arnis tournaments with padded vests, sticks, headgear and groin guards

The Arnis Philippines system uses foam-padded sticks about an inch in diameter with thin rattan cores roughly a centimeter in diameter. These sticks are meant to break before serious injury occurs. For protection, the same headgear used in the WEKAF system, and a large groin guard is

required for males. Vests (optional for men, required for women), optional armguards, shinguards and leg wraps are used. Scoring is more similar to fencing where fighters are separated after solid clean hits are made (observed by multiple judges stationed at different positions to observe if hits were clean and unblocked, and determine the strength of the strike by the loudness of the impact). Alternative ways to score are to disarm one's opponent or to force him to step outside the ring.

Any part of the body, from head to toe, is fair game as a target – except for the back

of the head, which the headgear does not protect. Stabs to the face are not allowed, because the thin rattan core may penetrate the padding and slip through the grills of the headgear into the player's eye. Thrusts to the body score points, but are harder to present to judges for scoring because they make less noise and it is difficult to determine impact.

Punches, kicks and throws are not allowed. Prolonged clinching to prevent the opponent from striking is not allowed (similar to Western Boxing) to keep the game moving and more interesting for audience that may not appreciate the fine

and practical aspects of grappling.

Disarms must be performed quickly and cleanly to count. Because the legs are fair targets, in lighter weight divisions, complex evasion and deep lunges where players lie horizontal with the torso almost touching the floor to extend reach are often seen.

The emphasis of the ARPI system is on player safety, as proponents are applying to become a recognized Olympic sport like judo, karate, taekwondo, wrestling, boxing, and fencing.

Even though padded sticks are used in the sport, players regularly retain large bruises that last for weeks and sometimes minor injuries to joints and because of the sheer amount of force generated by conditioned practitioners. Sometimes the stuffing commonly comes off from the harder hitting players and one cause of injury is when a player is struck by the exposed rattan core. Still, these are relatively minor as compared to injuries sustained when practitioners spar with live sticks.

One major problem with the ARPI system is that because the padded sticks with light rattan cores are used, they tend to

flex and "lag", thus making the experience significantly different from using a live stick and in that sense, lessens the "realism" of this system. This is acceptable though as again, the emphasis is on safety.

Like the sayaw (meaning "dance") in the WEKAF system, the ARPI system has a separate single and team choreographed division called *Anyo* (Tagalog for 'forms'). From 1986-2004, ARPI did not have Anyo or forms competitions. The rules for Anyo was created by Richardson Gialogo, former ARPI Vice-President, for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Aside from the

visual appeal, practical combative applications must be clearly seen so as to avoid looking like just majorettes in marching bands who just twirl batons and dance (a concept similar to the *Floreio* ("flourish") aspect of Capoeira and to Tricking which are more for show than practicality). IMAFP Standard Equipment is being used in the international Arena.

Others

In another variation that simulates knife fights, competitors use false blades edged with lipstick to mark where an opponent has been struck. These matches are

considered more similar to traditional duels than the WEKAF point-system.

Weapons

Arnis students start their instruction by learning to fight with weapons, and only advance to empty-hand training once the stick and knife techniques have been sufficiently mastered. This is in contrast to most other well-known Asian martial arts but it is justified by the principle that bare-handed moves are acquired naturally through the same exercises as the weapon techniques, making muscle memory an important aspect of the teaching. It is also

based on the obvious fact that an armed person who is trained has the advantage over a trained unarmed person, and serves to condition students to fight against armed assailants. Most systems of Arnis apply a single set of techniques for the stick, knife, and empty hands, a concept sometimes referred to as motion grouping. Since the weapon is seen as simply an extension of the body, the same angles and footwork are used either with or without a weapon. The reason for this is probably historical, because tribal warriors went into battle armed and only resorted to bare-handed fighting after losing their weapons.

Many systems begin training with two weapons, either a pair of sticks or a stick and a wooden knife. These styles emphasise keeping both hands full and never moving them in the same direction, and trains practitioners to become ambidextrous. For example, one stick may strike the head while the other hits the arm. Such training develops the ability to use both limbs independently, a valuable skill, even when working with a single weapon.

A core concept and distinct feature of Filipino martial arts is the *Live Hand*. Even when as a practitioner wields only one

weapon, the extra hand is used to control, trap or disarm an opponent's weapon and to aid in blocking, joint locking and manipulation of the opponent or other simultaneous motions such as bicep destruction with the *live hand*.

Baston

A pair of rattan bastons

The most basic and common weapon in Arnis is the *baston* or *yantok*. They are typically constructed from rattan, an inexpensive stem from a type of Southeast Asian vine. Hard and durable yet lightweight, it shreds only under the worst abuse and does not splinter like wood, making it a safer training tool. This aspect makes it useful in defense against blades. Kamagong (ironwood or ebony) and *bahi* (heart of the palm) are sometimes used after being charred and hardened. These hardwoods are generally not used for sparring, however, as they are dense enough to cause serious injury, but traditional sparring does not include

weapon to body contact. The participants are skilled enough to parry and counterstrike, showing respect in not intentionally hitting the training partner. In modern times, many Arnis practitioners have also come to wear head and hand protection while sparring with rattan sticks, or otherwise use padded bastons. Some modern schools also use sticks made out of aluminium or other metals, or modern high-impact plastics.

Impact weapons

- Baston, olisi, yantok: stick ranging from twenty-four to twenty-eight inches long.

- Largo mano yantok: longer stick ranging from twenty-eight to thirty-six inches
- Dulo y dulo: short stick about four to seven inches in length, held in the palm of the hand
- Bankaw: six-foot pole. Staves can be used to practice sword techniques
- Wooden dagger measuring 12 to 14 inches (300 to 360 mm)
- Panangga: shield
- Improvised weapons: Wood planks, steel pipes, umbrellas, flashlights, rolled-up magazines/ newspapers, books, cellular phones, tennis rackets, butt of

billiards cue, bottles, coffee mugs, chair legs, tree branches or twigs, etc.

Edged weapons

Traditional bolos from the Visayas islands (ginunting on the left, and three talibongs).

Baraw is a Cebuano term used in eskrima that means knife or dagger. The term *Baraw* is more commonly used on the Cebu Island in the Visayan region whereas other islands and regions more commonly

use the term *Daga* but both terms are often interchangeable within the Filipino martial arts community.

The terms Baraw and Daga can be used either as *Solo Baraw* or *Solo Daga* associated with single knife fighting and defense systems, *Doble Baraw* or *Doble Daga* associated with the double knife fighting systems or even with a combination of long and short weapons e.g. stick and dagger fighting systems *Olisi Baraw* or sword and dagger fighting systems *Espada y Daga*.

- Daga/Cuchillo (Spanish for dagger and knife) or Baraw/ Pisaw: daggers or knives of different shapes and sizes
- Balisong: fan knife or butterfly knife from Barrio Balisong in Batangas province. The handle is two-piece and attaches to a swivel that folds to enclose the blade when shut.
- Karambit: claw-shaped Indo-Malay blade held by inserting the finger into a hole at the top of the handle.
- Bolo: a knife/sword similar to a machete
- Pinuti: a type of sword from Cebu blade shaped similar to a Sundang but elongated.

- Iták or sundáng: a farm or house hold bladed implement, its blade has a pronounced belly, chisel ground edge with the handle angled down.
- Barong: wide flat leaf shaped blade commonly used by women.
- Binakoko: long blade named after a porgy fish
- Dinahong palay: has a very narrow blade shape similar to a rice leaf.
- Kalis or Kris: Indo-Malay dagger, often given a wavy blade, it is most commonly used in the southern provinces
- Kampilan: fork-tipped sword, popular in the southern Philippines

- Sibat: spear
- Improvised weapons: Icepicks, box cutters, screwdrivers, scissors, broken bottles, pens, car keys (using the push knife grip)

Flexible weapons

- Sarong: a length of fabric wrapped around the waist
- Ekut: handkerchief
- Tabak-toyok: chained sticks/ flail or nunchaku
- Latigo (Spanish for whip): consisting of a handle between 8 and 12 inches (200 and 300 mm), and a lash composed of a

braided thong 3–20 ft (0.91–6.10 m) long. The "fall" at the end of the lash is a single piece of leather 10–30 inches (250–760 mm) in length.^[57]

- Improvised weapons: Belt, bandana, handkerchiefs, shirts, towels/socks with hard soap bars/rocks, ropes, power cables, etc.

Technical aspects

Ranges

Most systems recognize that the technical nature of combat changes drastically as the distance between opponents changes, and generally classify the ranges into at

least three categories. Each range has its characteristic techniques and footwork. Of course, some systems place more emphasis on certain ranges than others, but almost all recognize that being able to work in and control any range is essential. The Balintawak style for example, uses long-, medium- and short-range fighting techniques, but focuses on the short-range.

To control the range, and for numerous other purposes, good footwork is essential. Most eskrima systems explain their footwork in terms of triangles: normally when moving in any direction two

feet occupy two corners of the triangle and the step is to the third corner such that no leg crosses the other at any time. The shape and size of the triangle must be adapted to the particular situation. The style of footwork and the standing position vary greatly from school to school and from practitioner to practitioner. For a very traditional school, conscious of battlefield necessities, stances are usually very low, often with one knee on the ground, and footwork is complex, involving many careful cross-steps to allow practitioners to cope with multiple opponents. The Villabrille and San Miguel styles are usually taught in this way. Systems that

have been adapted to duels or sporting matches generally employ simpler footwork, focusing on a single opponent. North American schools tend to use much more upright stances, as this puts less stress on the legs, but there are some exceptions.

Strikes

Many Filipino systems focus on defending against and/or reacting to *angles of attack* rather than particular strikes. The theory behind this is that virtually all types of hand-to-hand attacks (barehanded or with a weapon) hit or reach a combatant via

these angles of attack and the reasoning is that it is more efficient to learn to defend against different angles of attack rather than learn to defend against particular styles, particular techniques or particular weapons. For instance, the technique for defending against an attack angle that comes overhead from the right is very similar whether the attacker uses bare fists, a knife, a sword or a spear.

Older styles gave each angle a name, but more recent systems tend to simply number them. Many systems have twelve standard angles, though some have as few as 5, and others as many as 72. Although

the exact angles, the order they are numbered in (numerado), and the way the player executes moves vary from system to system, most are based upon Filipino cosmology. These standard angles describe exercises. To aid memorization, player often practice a standard series of strikes from these angles, called an **abecedario** (Spanish for "alphabet"). These are beginner strikes or the "ABC's" of Arnis.

Some angles of attack and some strikes have characteristic names:

- **San Miguel** is a forehand strike with the right hand, moving from the striker's

right shoulder toward their left hip. It is named after Saint Michael or the Archangel Michael, who is often depicted holding a sword at this angle. This is the most natural strike for most untrained people. It is commonly referred to as "angle #1", in systems where striking angles are numbered for training purposes, because it is presumed the most probable angle of attack.

- **Sinawali** is the signature double-stick weaving movement associated with Arnis named after the woven coconut or palm leaves called *sawali* that comprise the walls of nipa hut dwellings. It is

commonly seen in double-stick continuous attack-parry partner demonstrations.

- Another signature technique is the **Redonda**, which is a continuous circular downward-striking double-stick twirling technique.
- A **redonda** (Spanish for "round") is a strike that whips in a circle to return to its point of origin. This is especially useful when using sticks rather than swords, such a strike allows extremely fast strikes but needs constant practice.
- An **abanico** (*Spanish for fan*) or **witik** is a strike that is executed by flicking the

wrist 180 degrees in a fan-shaped motion. This kind of strike can be very quick and arrive from unexpected angles.

- *Pilantik* is a strike executed by whipping the stick around the wrist over the head in a motion similar to the abanico, but in alternating 360 degree strikes. It is most useful when fighters are in grappling range and cannot create enough space for normal strikes.
- **Hakbang** (Filipino for "step") is a general term for footwork. For example, *hakbang paiwas* is pivoting footwork, while *hakbang tatsulok* is triangle stepping.

- **Puño** (Spanish for "fist", "hilt", or "handle") is a strike delivered with the butt of the weapon. It usually targets a nerve point or other soft spot on the opponent but in skilled hands, the puño can be used to shatter bones.

Note that many Arnis techniques have Spanish names, because Spanish was the lingua franca spoken during colonial times among the natives who spoke over 170 different dialects in the archipelago's 7,100+ islands.

Arnis techniques are generally based on the assumption that both student and opponent are very highly trained and well

prepared. For this reason, Arnis tends to favor extreme caution, always considering the possibility of a failed technique or an unexpected knife. On the other hand, the practitioner is assumed able to strike precisely and quickly. The general principle is that an opponent's ability to attack should be destroyed rather than trying to hurt them to convince them to stop. Thus many strikes are aimed at the hands and arms, hoping to break the hand holding the weapon or cut the nerves or tendons controlling it (the concept of *defanging the snake*), but strikes to the eyes and legs are important. A popular mnemonic states that "stick seeks bone, blade seeks flesh".

Mano Mano

Mano Mano is the empty-hand component of Filipino martial arts, particularly *Arnis*. The term translates as "hands" or "hand to hand" and comes from the Spanish word *mano* (hand). It is also known as suntukan or *panununtukan* in Luzon and *pangamot* in the Visayas, as well as *De Cadena* or *Cadena de Mano* in some FMA systems. American colonists referred to it as "combat judo".

Mano mano also includes kicking, punching, locking, throwing and dumog (grappling). Filipino martial artists regard

the empty hands as another weapon and all the movements of mano mano are directly based on weapon techniques. In Arnis, weapons are seen as an extension of the body so training with weapons naturally leads to proficiency in bare-handed combat. For this reason, mano mano is often taught in the higher levels of Arnis after weapons training has been mastered because advanced students are expected to be able to apply their experience with weapons to unarmed fighting. This not always the case though, as some systems of Arnis start with (and at times only consist of) empty hands fighting.

Some notable masters of Mano Mano include:

- Antonio Ilustrisimo
- Venancio "Anciong" Bacon
- Rey Galang
- Leo Tortal Gaje
- Edgar Sulite
- Danny Guba

Kicking

Paninipa, Pagsipa, Pananadiyak, Pagtadiyak, and Sikaran (all terms for "kicking" in various regions, dialects and styles) are components of eskrima that

focus on knees, tripping, low-line kicks, and stomps. *Pananjakman* is also a term used in Filipino-American-developed and Western FMA systems, usually referring to the system from the Lucky Lucaylucay, Floro Villabrille and Dan Inosanto blend lineage. Except for the distinct style of Sikaran from the Baras area of the province of Rizal, which also uses high kicks, kicking as a separate art is never taught by itself in the Philippines, and this practice is only done in the West with *Pananjakman*. *Pananjakman* is usually taught together with Panantukan.

Paninipa can be regarded as the study of leg muscles and bones and how they are connected, with the goal of either inflicting pain or outright breaking or dislocating the bones. Most striking techniques involve applying pressure to bend the target areas in unnatural ways so as to injure or break them. Such pressure may be delivered in the form of a heel smash, a toe kick, a stomp, or a knee. Targets include the groin, thighs, knees, shins, ankles, feet and toes. The upper body is used only for defensive maneuvers, making *pananadiyak* ideal for when combatants are engaged in a clinch. When used effectively, the strikes can bring an

opponent to the ground or otherwise end an altercation by making them too weak to stand.

Fundamental techniques include kicking or smashing the ankle to force it either towards or away from the opposite foot (severe supination or pronation, respectively), heel-stomping the top of the foot where it meets the lower leg so as to break or crush the numerous bones or otherwise disrupt the opponent's balance, and smashing the opponents knee from the side to break the knee (with severe supination and pronation as the desired result).

Drills

Kali stick drills during seminar at Ben Poon's Riseup Crossfit center by Terry Lim and Maurice Novoa Ruiz in Melbourne Australia

Several classes of exercises, such as *sombrada, contrada, sinawali, hubud-lubud* and *sequidas*, initially presented to the public as a set of organized drills by the Inosanto school, are expressly designed to allow partners to move quickly and

experiment with variations while remaining safe. For example, in a *sumbrada* drill, one partner feeds an attack, which the other counters, flowing into a counterattack, which is then countered, flowing into a counterattack, and so on. The *hubud-lubud* or *hubad-lubad* from Doce Pares is frequently used as a type of "generator" drill, where one is forced to act and think fast. Initially, students learn a specific series of attacks, counters, and counterattacks. As they advance they can add minor variations, change the footwork, or switch to completely different attacks; eventually the exercise becomes almost completely free-form. Palakaw, from the

Balintawak style, are un-choreographed and random defensive and offensive moves. Palakaw in Cebuano means a walk-through or rehearsing the different strike angles and defenses. It may be known as *corridas*, or striking without any order or pattern. Disarms, take-downs, and other techniques usually break the flow of such a drill, but they are usually initiated from such a sequence of movements to force the student to adapt to a variety of situations. A common practice is to begin a drill with each student armed with two weapons. Once the drill is flowing, if a student sees an opportunity to disarm their opponent, they do, but the drill

continues until both students are empty-handed. Some drills use only a single weapon per pair, and the partners take turns disarming each other. *Seguidas* drills, taken from the San Miguel system, are sets of hitting and movement patterns usually involving stick and dagger.

Rhythm, while an essential part of eskrima drills, is emphasized more in the United States and Europe, where a regular beat serves a guide for students to follow. To ensure safety, participants perform most drills at a constant pace, which they increase as they progress. The rhythm, together with the southern Filipino attire of

a vest and sashed pants, is commonly mistaken for some sort of tradition when practicing eskrima in the Philippines – perhaps incorrectly derived from traditional rhythm-based dances or an attempt to add a sense of ethnicity.

Eskrima is usually practiced in the Philippines without a rhythm, off-beat or out of rhythm. The diversity of Filipino martial arts means that there is no officially established standard uniform in eskrima.

The live hand

The *live hand* is the opposite hand of the practitioner that does not contain the main weapon. The heavy usage of the *live hand* is an important concept and distinguishing hallmark of eskrima. Even (or especially) when empty, the *live hand* can be used as a companion weapon by eskrima practitioners. As opposed to most weapon systems like fencing where the off-hand is hidden and not used to prevent it from being hit, eskrima actively uses the *live hand* for trapping, locking, supporting weapon blocks, checking, disarming, striking and controlling the opponent.

The usage of the *live hand* is one of the most evident examples of how Eskrima's method of starting with weapons training leads to effective empty hand techniques. Because of *Doble Baston* (double weapons) or *Espada y Daga* (sword and parrying dagger) ambidextrous weapon muscle memory conditioning, Eskrima practitioners find it easy to use the off-hand actively once they transition from using it with a weapon to an empty hand.

Doble baston

Doble baston, and less frequently *doble olisi*, are common names for a group of

techniques involving two sticks. The art is more commonly known around the world as *Sinawali* meaning "to weave". The term *Sinawali* is taken from a matting called *sawali* that is commonly used in the tribal Nipa Huts. It is made up of woven pieces of palm leaf and used for both flooring and walls.

This technique requires the user to use both left and right weapons in an equal manner; many co-ordination drills are used to help the practitioner become more ambidextrous. It is the section of the art that is taught mainly at the intermediate levels and above and is considered one of

the most important areas of learning in the art.

Sinawali

Practicing Sinawali activity at Arnis seminar by Terry Lim and Maurice Novoa Ruiz at Marcos Dorta's Essential Defence Academy in Melbourne, Australia

Sinawali refers to the activity of "weaving", as applied Eskrima with reference to a set of two-person, two-weapon exercises. The

term comes from "Sawali", the woven walls of nipa huts.

Sinawali exercises provide eskrima practitioners with basic skills and motions relevant to a mode of two-weapon blocking and response method called *Doblete*. *Sinawali* training is often introduced to novices to help them develop certain fundamental skills – including: body positioning and distance relative to an opponent, rotation of the body and the proper turning radius, recognition of one's center of gravity, eye-hand coordination, target perception and recognition, increased ambidexterity,

recognition and performance of rhythmic structures for upper body movement, and muscular developments important to the art, especially, the wrist and forearm regions. It helps teach the novice eskrimador proper elbow positioning while swinging a weapon.

Cross-training

Kali stick seminar by Terry Lim and Maurice Novoa Ruiz at Marcos Dorta's Essential Defence Academy of combat Jiu Jitsu in Melbourne Australia

The Chinese and Malay communities of the Philippines have practiced eskrima together with kuntaw and silat for centuries, so much so that many North Americans mistakenly believe silat to have originated in the Philippines.

Some of the modern styles, particularly doce pares and modern arnis contain some elements of Japanese martial arts such as joint locks, throws, blocks, strikes, and groundwork, taken from: jujutsu, judo, aikido and karate as some of the founders obtained black belt Dan grades in some of these systems. Some eskrima styles are complementary with Chinese wing chun,

or Japanese aikido because of the nervous system conditioning and body mechanics when striking, twirling or swinging sticks.

In Western countries, it is common to practice eskrima in conjunction with other martial arts, particularly Wing Chun,^[55] Jeet Kune Do and Silat. As a result, there is some confusion between styles, systems, and lineage, because some people cross-train without giving due credit to the founders or principles of their arts. For example, American Kenpo and Kajukenbo cross-training traces back to the interactions between Chinese, Japanese

and Filipino immigrants in territorial/pre-statehood Hawaii, and to a lesser extent in other parts of the United States. In the United States the cross-training between eskrima and Jeet Kune Do Concepts as headed by Dan Inosanto of the Inosanto Academy in Marina del Rey, California, goes according to the maxim "Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless".

Proponents of such training say the arts are very similar in many aspects and complement each other well. It has become marketable to offer eskrima classes in other traditional Asian martial arts studios in America but some

practitioners of other eskrima styles often dismiss these lessons as debased versions of original training methods.

Notable styles and practitioners

The Arnis Law

Republic Act No. 9850 of the Congress of the Philippines, approved on December 11, 2009 declares Arnis as the national sport and martial art of the Philippines for promoting patriotism, nationalism and appreciation of the role of national heroes and symbols in the historical development of the country.^[58] There were many

versions of the Arnis Bill but the version chosen was drafted by Richardson Gialogo which was submitted to the Senate.

Because of this law, Arnis becomes a prerequisite for P.E. classes in most colleges in the Philippines.^[59]

The body of the law is as follows:^[60]

Fourteenth Congress, Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-seventh day of July, two thousand nine.

Republic Act No. 9850

AN ACT DECLARING ARNIS AS THE NATIONAL MARTIAL ART AND SPORT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. It is the policy of the State to inculcate patriotism, nationalism and appreciation of the role of national heroes and symbols in the historical development of the country. Furthermore, the State must give priority to education, science and technology, arts and culture, and sports to foster patriotism and

nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

Section 2. Definition of Arnis. - Arnis, also known as *Eskrima*, *Kali*, *Garrote* and other names in various regional languages, such as *Pananandata* in Tagalog; *Pagkalikali*, Ibanag; *Kabaraon* and *Kalirongan*, Pangasinan; *Kaliradman*, Bisaya; and *Didja*, Ilokano, is an indigenous Filipino martial art and sport characterized by the use of swinging and twirling movements, accompanied by striking, thrusting and parrying techniques for defense and offense. This is usually done with the use

of one (1) or two (2) sticks or any similar implements or with bare hands and feet also used for striking, blocking, locking and grappling, with the use of the same principle as that with the canes.

Section 3. Arnis is hereby declared as the Philippine National Martial Art and Sport. The official adoption of arnis as the national martial art and sport shall be promulgated by inscribing the symbol of arnis in the official seal of the Philippine Sports Commission and by making it as the first sport competition to be played by participating teams on the first day in the annual Palarong Pambansa. The

Philippine Sports Commission shall be the lead agency to implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 4. The Department of Education, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine Sports Commission shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 5. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule or regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby

repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

Prospero C. Nograles, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Juan Ponce Enrile, President of the Senate

This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 3288 and House Bill No.

6516 was finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on October 14, 2009.

**Marilyn B. Barua-Yap, Secretary General
House of Representatives**

**Emma Lirio-Reyes, Secretary of the
Senate**

Approved: December 11, 2009

**Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the
Philippines**

Arnis in popular culture

Records

More than 4,200 students and athletes performed Arnis in the Cebu City Sports Center during the closing ceremonies of the Batang Pinoy 2015, to set a record for the largest arnis class in the world for Guinness World Records.^[61]

See also

- Balisong
- Eskrimadors (documentary film)
- Fight Quest
- Filipino martial arts
- Human Weapon

- Juego del palo
- Kinamotay
- Knife fight
- Mind, Body and Kick Ass Moves
- Sikaran
- Suntukan
- The Way of the Warrior
- Yawyan

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External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to ***Eskrima***.

- [The Arnis Philippines organization website](#)
- [IKAEF – International Kali Arnis Eskrima Federation](#)
- [The Filipino Martial Arts Forum](#)

- FMA Informative – Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines
- Eskrima entry on Wiki Martial Arts
- The FMA-Eskrima-Kali FAQ
- Eskrima-Arnis, Martial Arts of the Philippines
- Eskrima books at Goodreads.com
- FMATalk Live! – Podcast Dedicated to the Promotion of Filipino Martial Arts

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