



Martial arts and their importance for military training

By David Stainko

Man has been a part of fighting and battles since his very beginning. His movements are natural- atavistic reactions similar to those of animals with the primal goal to survive and self- preserve. This is why we can conclude with certainty that fighting is as old as the human race. Fighting and battles will follow man later on throughout his life and in all of his stages as well as various areas of expertise. During childhood, fighting begins

as a sort of a game and fun, whereas later on, it continues as an existential, cultural, religious or political struggle. Human life itself is a source of his wish and struggle to become affirmed and recognized as well as to gain social prestige and value. Since man's origin, the fight between two people has been viewed as a sort of a psychosocial phenomenon. No matter which type of physical conflict we are talking about, the

man-individual is always in its centre. So, in the earliest periods, the first battles for hunting grounds, power or group domination begin. This was also true in cases where two tribes would differ and share the wish to dominate over one another as well as because of the difference in cultural- religious- philosophical characteristics of their environment.

The struggle to survive has forced man to develop his physical

features since the very beginnings. This crude and merciless fight made our ancestors defend themselves and attack. This is why people trained various martial arts and strived to show their skills and capacity in competitions, gatherings and ceremonies. It was almost always the case where different city or rural middles wanted to resolve rivalries by challenging each other in some kind of a sports match or game. Sports, sports trainings and game have evolved in this way.

According to their origin, all sports and sports games have actually developed on the basis of martial or war- like games whose goal was to compare and judgement physical attributes, defense skills, but also to assert personal bravery. In addition, the invention of various tools and weapons has forced people to practice systematically in order to use them purposefully when collecting food, as well as in need of personal protection or an enemy attack. Since the advantage of a person with knowledge of martial arts is obvious, practicing has become a part of a preparation for a life- long struggle and military training where these skills are being gained or maintained.

Martial arts were once called – athletics. For example, in Ancient Greece, the term *gymnastics* covered physical exercizes which, primarily, had a military character and, later on, a scientific one. The Old Greek called their



martial (militaristic) disciplines *athletics* (in Greek *athlos*- fight). In 1880 the term has changed so, besides javelin throw, other non-martial disciplines are included. Martial sports have gradually been classified according to different martial techniques and styles of fighting that they include. We are witnesses to a huge number of various martial sports that are being practiced around the world.

Today, martial arts represent a legal and humane style of martial competition which, with certain boundaries, replaced physical destruction with points, i.e. scoring. By using points, human aggression is being controlled and switched to a sports match with rules which is, again, filled with emotion and suspense.

The expansion of the popularity of various martial sports across the world is a phenomenon which is difficult to explain even for psychologists and sociologists. It is certain that film, TV series and other competitions helped expanding this popularity. They are the reason why thousands of young people of different character features submit themselves to long- lasting and exhausting trainings which carry a potential danger of injury.

Not even the basic motives which attract an individual to a sports activity, and which could be explained as a need to fight, move,



gain personal satisfaction or the company of other people, are not the crucial factor that guide young people to a marital sport. Other sports are able to satisfy those needs as well. The real reason why people take up martial sports is to fulfill the strong desire to satisfy one's aggressive impulses (which are strongly controlled by society) and to release anxiety.

Sportsmen who practice in the domain of martial sports must not be anxious or uncontrollably aggressive and should be able to control their emotions. Since aggression and anxiousness are reasons why certain people take up these kinds of sports, as well as the main factors on which antisocial behaviour depends, it is possible to guide an individual's aggression and reduce his anxiety with organized and professional help. Many martial skills have, therefore, a positive socializing and therapeutic function.

Unfortunately, because of his primordial need to fight, man use martial skills in warrior-militaristic purposes although their real and original purpose was bot to attack, but to defend. All martial skills were, at some point, used in these negative purposes and used on the battlefield. Later on, because of the desire to preserve a fighting condition, these skills were turned into so- called military sports as well as various martial sports. One of the most famous is surely the modern military pentathlon which exists since 1948. It was later abolished by sportsmen who were involved in existing sports. Various martial skills are a main part of today's trainings for

soldiers. Among them, skills such as shooting, fighting with weapons or weapon throwing skills etc. are useful in close combat.

The military, i.e. fighting have a connection to modern sports because the majority of today's sports games uses certain military terminology. Examples of this include names of roles and positions of certain players in a gaming system- attacker, defender, offense, counter- offense, defense, player blockade, body-check, goalkeeper, offensive defense, zone defense, man on man strategies and so on. Because of its positive influence on the growth and development of youth as well as its tremendous importance for general national defense, martial arts and martial sports take on an important role in society and in today's progress of Physical Education.

Various persons are starting to take part in the development of different martial arts clubs. They feel the need for sport, sports recreation, the need for self- defense and self - protection; they want to gain new knowledge and skills and protect themselves from the attacker or any kind of unfavourable situations. They also wish to protect themselves from injuries. This is why such a variety of martial arts makes possible for an individual to find a sport or a skill which will satisfy his wishes and needs.

By analyzing the development of certain martial arts styles and sports, it is clear that today's styles strive to use techniques that allow more physical contact. Of course, that style of fighting often leads to more serious injuries which includes a humane as well as a sports aspect. This is why, in order to keep the fighters from harm, the use of protective equipment should be tolerated. It sometimes even fails to protect the fighter if a trained fighter gives it a forceful blow.

The popularity of martial arts is rapidly expanding today. Sports such as boxing, wrestling, judo, karate, kung- fu, kick boxing, savate, tae kwon do, and many other martial

sports such as MMA fighting are becoming more and more popular among young people. Saying that a certain martial sport is better than the other because of its popularity is incorrect and unfair. Every martial style, i.e. martial sport has its strengths and weaknesses. Such a sports activity leads to a massive scale of physical activity among youth which is, of course, good for one's health. Training martial arts and self-defense also fits in the



concept of general national defense which is not to be neglected in today's terms.

The success in mastering a self- defense technique as well as succeeding in a martial sport lies entirely in day- to- day painstaking practice. Training on a daily basis is the only way that leads to the perfection of a technique, it affects one's psychosomatic abilities and health, it has an effect on the mind and personality traits and it develops a consistent and socially- adaptable character. A lot of practice is needed in order to become a skillful fighter. Training martial arts certainly gives knowledge to a man who wants to gain power and skills. Defensive skills will develop only as a result of long- lasting, hard training and gained knowledge. Training martial skills or sports will help us use the grip that we have already acquired and we will be able to use it if we will find ourselves in a situation that requires it to be used.

The knowledge of different punching techniques with the hand or foot, different throws, grips, locks and choking, various grips and take downs, using different tools and weapons which are taught at martial arts clubs will help an individual to defend himself from an attacker. The knowledge in martial arts and its practice can have a crucial role in the concept of general national defense and

social self- defense as well as a special style of guerilla warfare or close combat. Nevertheless, always keeping its defensive character.

Martial arts have always been of a great importance for a versatile development for the members of the military and the police force. Thanks to the regular and systematic practice of various martial sports, soldiers and policemen are physically and psychologically speaking more prepared for carrying out their tiresome and demanding duties. Many soldiers and policemen are involved in different sports competitions of certain martial sports and are also active participants in the, for example, World Police and Fire Games and Military World Games.

The whole defensive- security system of every country lies on the extraordinary capabilities and immaculate physical abilities of the members of the military and the police as well as their professional training and fitness, the amount of their versatile knowledge and skills as well as their knowledge in martial arts.

The knowledge in martial arts belongs to a fundamental and mandatory training of all members of the police and military, no matter their role or instantaneous position in which they belong in a given moment. The tasks they are given are also of a crucial importance and are given with confidence and trust.



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David “ Sensei“ Stainko, the Master of Kinesiology and senior organizer of kinesiological recreation was born in Rijeka, Croatia in 1962.

At present he is a Physical Education teacher and a counselor for martial arts skills. He lives in Rijeka, Croatia.

David Stainko has been active in martial arts since 1972. In 1978 he founded the Youth Budokai Club and got the titles of 1st DAN Budokai and WAKO instructor.

Since 1981 he has been intensely practising boxing and kick boxing , and in 1982 he also took part in Korean skills tae kwon do and kung fu style- thai chi. At the same time he was perfecting the skills aikido, judo, ju-jutsu and kung fu wing-tsun. In 1983 he obtained the master title of 3rd DAN (Budokai), and a year later the title of the instructor of Jeet-kune do, and kung fu style – thai chi.

He got the master title of the black belt of 4th DAN and he became a kick boxing and tang soo do coach in

1986. He also became the trainer of karate kyokushinkai in 1987. At that time he got introduced to Vietnamese skill viet vo dao.

In 1988 David Stainko reached the title of the black belt 1st DAN shotokan and enhanced his knowledge of wrestling and Russian skill – sambo. In 1989 he got the silver glove title and the coaching licence for savate- boxing, and a year later the title 5th DAN kick-boxing (PKA).

From 1989 he was also practising Brazilian skill capoeira, hwa rang do and pa kwa kung fu with masters from England, Korea, Japan, America, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy and Russian.

David Stainko is one of the founders of various martial arts associations as well as a federal judge for boxing, karate (WUKO). tae kwon do (ITF) and international judge for kick- boxing and savate boxing.

He is the author of a number of articles on martial arts and sports, and a correspondent and counselor in several magazines in Croatia and abroad.

In 1997 Stainko was ready to acquire the master title MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) of 6th DAN after 25 years of martial arts study.

His permanent and intense research of martial arts has continued since 2000 so that in 2010 he fulfilled the conditions to gain the master title of 7th DAN MMS (Mixed Martial Scientists) that qualified him as an expert for mixed martial sciences (published articles and books).

The year 2018 will bring him the master title of 8th DAN at the age of 55+ and 45 years of practising and studying of martial arts (with published articles).

David Stainko took part in 4 European and 3 world championships. He was the European champion in 1986. In 1987 he became the member of the European martial arts team. In 1988 he won the second place in the world championship (WMMAF). Today, he has the status of consultant for various Martial Arts with about 70 professional articles published in 25 different world magazines in 15 foreign languages. David Stainko, prof. has the status of a Croatian military veteran from the Homeland war.