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presents a feature article from Blitz martial arts magazine Vol 25 No 04 (April 2011):

Roy Fuller, Renshi

AUSTRALIA'S #1 MARTIAL ARTS MAGAZINE

BLITZ

AUSTRALASIAN MARTIAL ARTS MAGAZINE

SUBMISSION KING

Tips from BJJ world champ
Robson Moura

Nasty Ninja Moves

Ancient weapons exposed

Street Savvy DRILLS

Are you ready
for reality?

Lethal Legs

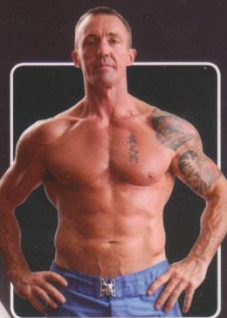
Sparring tips
from a NAS
champion

Beat the Blade

Train your brain to
face the worst

The Ultimate KUMITE

How a kung fu
master found full-
contact karate



NO-NONSENSE KARATE

Why Wado-ryu is more lethal
than you thought



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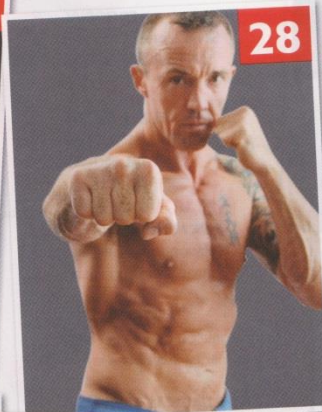


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A family affair

An interview with
Kyokushin karate
sensei Roy Fuller



Sensei Roy Fuller has karate spirit and life experience in abundance, and is still in pursuit of both at 76 years old. Proof that martial arts training can indeed be a lifelong pleasure and passion, the inspirational instructor was recently awarded his 5th Dan in karate by Australian Martial Arts Association (AMAA). Sensei Fuller took some time out to chat to *Blitz* writer and WA AMAA rep Kyoshi Gary Simpson about his long history wearing the gi.

INTERVIEW BY GARY SIMPSON

Roy, can you share with us the daily routine that keeps you so fit and active?

Apart from my karate training, which I do every day, I train at the gym four times a week and swim for aerobic exercise. You don't overheat when you are swimming.

Good point. I'm sure that our

readers would like to know something about your youth and how you got started in martial arts. Can you give us a brief overview of that?

I commenced school at the outbreak of WWII. At the time my family was living at Hornchurch, which was 15 kilometres from the centre of London and next to the RAF station, which was a fighter-command station.

No sport was practised for many years due to the frequent bombing raids. It was a terrible period. However, towards the end of the war schools in the area started competing in sporting events. At this time, at the age of nine, I started boxing. A year later I was inducted into the school boxing team. Boxing was widely accepted in those days. There was no headgear or mouthguards available back then, only gloves. You just got in the ring and slugged it out. Today it would be considered unacceptable.

Or illegal, especially with the wide-ranging duty-of-care provisions we have today – not to mention insurance and the propensity these days for people to go to civil litigation over even a minor injury. Tell us more, Roy...

The competition between schools was fearsome. The local doctor would attend together with the local vicar.

Why the vicar?

It was a church school. I was also a member of the church choir. The vicar was probably concerned I might end up with a thick lip and not be able to sing in church on Sunday. I'm not really sure why the vicar was always there. Maybe he just liked boxing... I just don't know for sure.

Anyway, frequent nosebleeds and cut lips were the order of the day. Today it would be considered brutal, but back then it was just accepted. I carried on boxing while still at school.



Young club members with their trophies

Did any experience stand out for you back in those early days – something that maybe shaped your future in martial arts?

An incident I clearly remember involved our school boxing champion. This boy carried on amateur boxing after completing school and at the age of 20 he was the London champion. He was admired, highly respected by everyone and considered unbeatable.

One day a fair visited a local park and it included a boxing booth. A fighter was put on display. He looked in bad shape, smoked heavily and had most of his teeth missing. We were all watching this guy and after shadow boxing for about one minute he appeared exhausted.

He sat down and drank what looked like a glass of whiskey.

The owner of the boxing booth offered £1 [a large sum in those days] for anyone who could go three rounds with his boxer. Our school champion took up the offer. Comparing the two, it was obvious that the boxing booth man did not stand a chance. The difference between them was enormous – age, physique, condition, skill, you name it. This was going to be a slaughter. We all eagerly watched as the bout began.

Our much-admired 20-year-old school champion got knocked out in less than one minute by this very unfit boxer. As a 14-year-old it was the biggest shock of my life. I couldn't believe it!

Never underestimate anyone. Good point! So, boxing was your initiation into the pugilistic arts. How did that transcend into the Oriental martial arts?

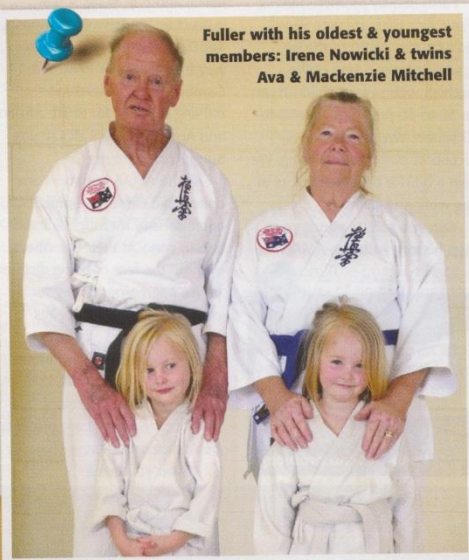
Just after WWII ended, a local judo club started; it was called The Bell School of Judo. A few mats were placed along the driveway of the instructor's house. He was the only person to wear a gi at the club; it was everyone's ambition to own a judo outfit but due to rationing, including clothing, none were available. The only exception was the instructor, who bought it before the outbreak of war. The rationing of everything continued pretty much until 1954. There wasn't much of anything that was freely available in those post-war years.

That was all in the UK. How did you end up in Australia?

At the age of 18 I got called up for national [military] service. I continued boxing for some time while in the Royal Air Force. I came to Australia for the first time in 1956 and served at Maralinga while working for the atomic weapons research establishment. I immediately fell in love with Australia and migrated here in 1971 with my wife and two young children.

How did you become involved in martial arts?

In 1960 I took an interest in Kyokushin karate, mainly because of the exploits of its founder, Sosai Mas Oyama [best known for fighting bulls bare-handed, and never refusing or losing



Fuller with his oldest & youngest members: Irene Nowicki & twins Ava & Mackenzie Mitchell

a challenge bout, of which he fought hundreds].

Much later, in 1972, I met Bill Vaughan. As it turned out, Bill lived just down the road from me and he ran a club practising a hybrid style of Kyokushin karate called Zenbukan karate. Bill was also from the UK, was the president of the AMAA and had been personally graded by Mas Oyama himself. I believe he was a 5th Dan at the time and, although he was small in stature (about 5'5" in the old scale), he was a fierce fighter.

At this time, due mainly to family commitments and work, I was unable to join Bill's club. But I always kept myself fit and I regularly exercised with my two girls, who were heavily involved in swimming. My eldest daughter was second in the top 10 swimmers in our State. While still working I occasionally went to the Adelaide University Judo Club.

After I retired as a lecturer in electronic engineering, at the age of 57, I finally joined Bill Vaughan's club. They were great times for me because Bill was an exceptional sensei of karate.

Not many 57-year-olds do that Roy. How did you cope with the rigorous training of the Kyokushin-based style?

After five years of continuous training I got my 1st Dan Black-belt, my *Shodan*. Obviously, that was at the age of 62. At 65, I was admitted to hospital with blood clots in my leg. This was due to a lot of kicks to my legs during sparring. Kyokushin karate is renowned for full-contact sparring and Bill's club was no exception.



Push-ups, no problem!

He had a lot of tough fighters there.

Both my daughters are doctors and they both correctly diagnosed the clots. I did not believe them at the time and thought it was just a strain. Anyway, I decided that at my relatively senior age it was about time to 'hang up the gloves' so I started my own club for women and children only.

Tell us about your club, Roy. What is it called and where is it located?

It's called Bushido Karate and we operate from the Burragah Recreation Centre in Modbury, South Australia.

The members of our club are great enthusiasts of the tournaments run by the AMAA.

tournaments and your current role with the organisation?

I've been a member of the AMAA now for 16 years, first under the presidency of our founder, Bill Vaughan [deceased] and now under its present president, Hanshi Barrie Revell. The AMAA is an excellent umbrella organisation for martial arts (based in Adelaide, South Australia). It conducts training days for its many member clubs, tournaments and even gradings, when required, for its members and senior instructors. All gradings are scrupulously examined.

"I believe that every martial artist should be 100 per cent fit. People should look at you and see the obvious advantages of doing martial arts."

They enter every tournament and win a lot of trophies. I'm very proud of that achievement.

I also heavily promote fitness. I have girls who are nine years old who can do 20 push-ups in perfect form. Some of the mothers with several children can do 30-to-40 push-ups and 50-to-70 squats. We have a fitness section as part of our grading. We train a bit like boxers with lots of bag work and skipping.

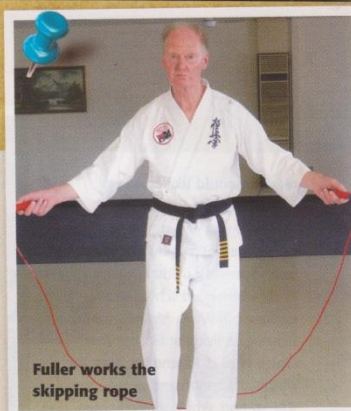
Can you tell us about your own history with the AMAA

The support between member clubs and the friendships are wonderful. For instance, Hanshi Revell and one of his senior instructors, Andrew Quin [Renshi, 4th Dan], recently drove all the way from Adelaide to Mount Gambier to hold weekend training sessions for Bruce Jordan and Amadeo Cella's Jik Cheung Kung Fu club there.

All the AMAA members are united in a common bond. It's apolitical and member clubs are free to conduct their operations without the fear of being dictated to. It's been around now for over 25 years, which makes it one of the longest-serving multi-disciplined martial arts associations in Australia.

I've served as secretary, treasurer and now I am proud to be its vice president.

Given you are a



Fuller works the skipping rope

representative of a martial arts body, what are your thoughts on the way that martial artists should present themselves?

I believe that every martial artist should be 100 per cent fit. People should look at you and see the obvious advantages of doing martial arts. You should be a living example of a fit and healthy person.

I think you are a great example of that, Roy. Can you tell us a little bit about the technical aspects of your club?

We have a full repertoire of Kyokushin katas. To achieve Shodan our candidates must be able to perform 21 kata with *bunkai* [combat applications]. They must also pass a line up of 12 rounds of sparring to get their Black-belt. These are the requirements.

Our members are always polite and courteous and always avoid confrontation. Some of our teenage Brown and Black-belts are responsible for grading younger members for the 9th and 8th Kyu levels. Afterwards they grade in front of the grading panel and class.

What else do you teach them? Is it all martial arts?

No, it's not only about martial arts, though that is the basis for all our teaching. The older members are taught management skills and the younger members are taught how to gain confidence. I believe I have a responsibility to help prepare members for adult life and to give them some life-skills: **BLITZ**

SOMA can provide training, tournaments, gradings (after a qualifying period and assessment) and a whole host of other benefits. For more information about how you or your martial arts organisation can join the **Society of Martial Arts** please contact admin@societyofmartialarts.com