

MY LIFE & “TAEKWONDO”

ALAN WHITEWAY 7TH DAN (1972 – 2005)

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS:

Army Service: 1. Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75(Clasp Vietnam); 2. Vietnamese Campaign Medal; 3. Vietnam Medal ;4. Infantry Combat Badge; 4. Returned from Active Service Badge; 5. National Service Medal.

Taekwondo: .1. Bronze Medalist at 1st W.T.F. Asian Championships Korea 1974. 2. Australian Sports Medal 2000. 3. International Referee at W.T.F. World Taekwondo Championships Korea 2001. 4. Citation from Korean Moo Duk Kwan Taekwondo for service and development of Taekwondo. 5. Citation from W.T.F. President for service to Taekwondo. 6. Award from Taekwondo Australia Inc. as an Australian International Medalist.

BACKGROUND:

The year was 1964 and I was a brash 15 year old in year 3 of my high school education at Marion High School. I had played soccer and football. A teacher Mr Bates who had a background in boxing formed a School Boxing Club and I was one of the first students to join. It was hard training but I enjoyed the sparring and contact in the ring. I learnt valuable “hand skills” and the importance of “leg work and balance”.

I commenced work in 1966 and my sport for the next 4 years was surfing. I spent every weekend and my spare time chasing waves enjoying the sun and sea. I also built up my muscles with weight training with free weights; working out in the sleep-out bedroom I shared with my 2 older brothers Graham and Brian. Weight training in those days was not common and there were only 2 Gyms in Adelaide. Surfing every weekend and combined with the weight training I developed strong upper body and leg strength as well as “excellent balance and co-ordination”.

At the end of 1968 my marble came up and I left the comfort of my Government Office Employment for a 2year period as a National Serviceman in the Australian Army. After recruit training I was consigned to the Infantry Core and after 12weeks intensive physical training I was posted to the 7 Battalion Royal Australian Regiment for further Infantry training and then a 11 month tour in Vietnam with the Battalion in 1970. Looking back at this period in the Army as well as making life time mates it gave me the valuable assets of “self-discipline and endurance”.

TAEKWONDO JOURNEY

The Beginning:

After returning from Vietnam at the beginning of 1971 I recommenced my employment back in the South Australian Government in the administration field. Shortly afterwards a friend introduced me to the Karate Academy of South Australia and I started training up to 6 two hour sessions a week.

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*The Instructor of the Academy was Mr Frank Griggs who was very strict on basics and body conditioning. At the time there was only about 3 Martial Arts Clubs in Adelaide. I remember Mr Griggs breaking bessar-blocks with knife hand and fist techniques; his hand conditioning and power was tremendous and I gained valuable **“hand techniques, conditioning and toughness.***

Introduction to Taekwondo:

In 1972 the Karate Academy hosted Mr Choon Bong Lee a 6th Dan Taekwondo exponent from Korea to teach at the Academy. All the seniors met Master Lee at the airport and so began my serious and dedicated journey in the Korean Martial Art of Taekwondo.

Master Lee was allowed in Australia on a limited 3month Visitor's Visa. I was training every day and some mornings with Master Lee whose techniques in all facets of Taekwondo were just excellent and I just wanted to absorb as much as I could as quickly as my body and mind allowed.

The seniors did not want Master Lee to return to Korea after his 3month visa expired. Myself and my life time friend Michael Broughton arranged an appointment with the then Minister of Immigration Hon Al Grasby. The two of us accompanied by Master Lee drove the long overnight journey to Canberra and did a presentation to the Minister that resulted in Master Lee being granted permanent resident status in Australia.

Master Lee then established the first World Taekwondo Federation club “Lee's Taekwondo Academy” in Adelaide South Australia. I was fortunate enough to be graded his 1st W.T.F. Black Belt and since that time I am priviledged to be his most senior graded student and he remains my Master Instructor and my students Grand Master.

*Master Lee taught me a **very high technical standard of all facets of Taekwondo with emphasis on Moo Duk Kwan principles and traditions. Black Belt training included break falling and Judo techniques, Aikido techniques and Kendo.***

Established own Taekwondo School:

As a Senior Instructor under Master Lee I was instructing and organising 2 Lee's Taekwondo Branches as well as attending classes at headquarters. In 1991 Master Lee graded me to 5th Dan. The following year 1992 with Master Lee's blessing I opened my own Taekwondo School named “Whiteway's Taekwondo”.

I bought a property in June 1993 at Marion South Australia and after extensive renovations opened “Whiteway's Taekwondo” full time purpose built Taekwondo Head Quarters. I became a full time professional Taekwondo Instructor teaching up to 35 lessons a week and was involved in doing “specialist training”with players from the Adelaide Football Club.

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For the past 13 years Whiteway's Taekwondo has been a leading Taekwondo School in South Australia with members winning State and National titles. It currently is the only South Australian Club with a Senior representative in the National Australian Team Shane Whiteway (Feather Weight). The Club also has a representative in the National Junior Team Brittny Penglase.

Whiteway's Taekwondo provides separate classes for Children and Adults divided into their belt level with individual attention. Traditional Classes and Tournament Sessions are separate and updated regularly.

MY COMMENTS ON TAEKWONDO:

I have seen the development of "Sport Taekwondo" from the early 70's to being an Olympic Sport. Techniques have had to change for students to be successful at competition level. The new W.T. F. Poomsae Standards are also a result of the techniques necessary to be successful at competition. Examples are shorter stances; blocking closer to the body; more natural movements (relaxed shoulders).

It is important that the new WTF Technical Standards for Poomsae be embraced by all Instructors to ensure that students then have the opportunity to compete in Poomsae competitions in hopefully a fair and equitable judging system. As Instructors we should be striving for "Technical Excellence" and continuing development of all facets of Taekwondo.

I have seen the tremendous growth of WTF Taekwondo Clubs in Australia from 1973. Taekwondo is not only a "Martial Art" and "Sport" it is now very business orientated. Unfortunately in my opinion there are too many Instructors that have been graded too quickly for their black belt Dans without the appropriate technical standard or time training. This flows onto the technical standard of their students.

There is on going reviewing of the "Competition Rules and Interpretation" which is very important if Taekwondo is going to be seen as an exciting and spectator friendly Olympic Sport. I consider that any form of "holding, pushing, grabbing" should be outlawed completely. More point scoring should be emphasized for contact to the front of the body (vital point) with fist techniques as well as leg techniques instead of the current side body flank leg techniques that score the majority of points.

To enhance and develop the standard of Referees retired International Competitors should be encouraged to become Referees. Without financial incentive this may be difficult but I believe it would certainly be most beneficial.