

Remi Lessore gives an insight into the history and structure of the FEKM (Fédération Européenne Krav Maga) from its early days to the present.

THE PAST:

“SO THAT EVERYONE MAY WALK IN PEACE...”

Imi LICHTENFELD (1910-1998)
Krav Maga Founder



Imi Lichtenfeld - knife defence



Imi sentry take out

violent confrontations under stress.

Krav Maga is not another martial art school based on a traditional approach. It is first and foremost a modern self-defence system. It is distinguished by a consistent and logical thought process, leading to a natural, practical and fighting technique easily executed and based on simple body movements.

This discipline has to be realistic. This precludes any rules, boundaries as to target areas or sport competition. Krav Maga arose in

PASSING ON THE SPIRIT OF KRAV MAGA

HISTORY

Simplicity and efficiency are key features of Krav Maga. This is why Israeli military forces as a whole, some law agencies, F.B.I. agents and gendarmes from the G.I.G.N. embraced it. Imi Lichtenfeld (1910-1998) created it. He was born in Czechoslovakia and practised many sports, finally deciding to focus on gymnastics, wrestling and boxing. He became an active participant in several competitions, which he often won, especially in wrestling. He chose to join the nascent state of Israel in 1948. There, he became the Chief Instructor of Physical Training and Krav Maga for the army, and served in the I.D.F. for 20 years all the while refining and expanding his system of self-defence.

Imi personally trained the very best of Israeli elite units. He also taught many generations of Krav Maga instructors like F.E.K.M. President Richard Douieb, official representative of the discipline's founder in Europe.

THE PRESENT

DEFINITION:

Krav Maga literal means 'contact fight' in Hebrew. In other words: 'Close Combat'. It encompasses two key areas:

■ **Self-defence**, which provides its primary framework. This includes different techniques



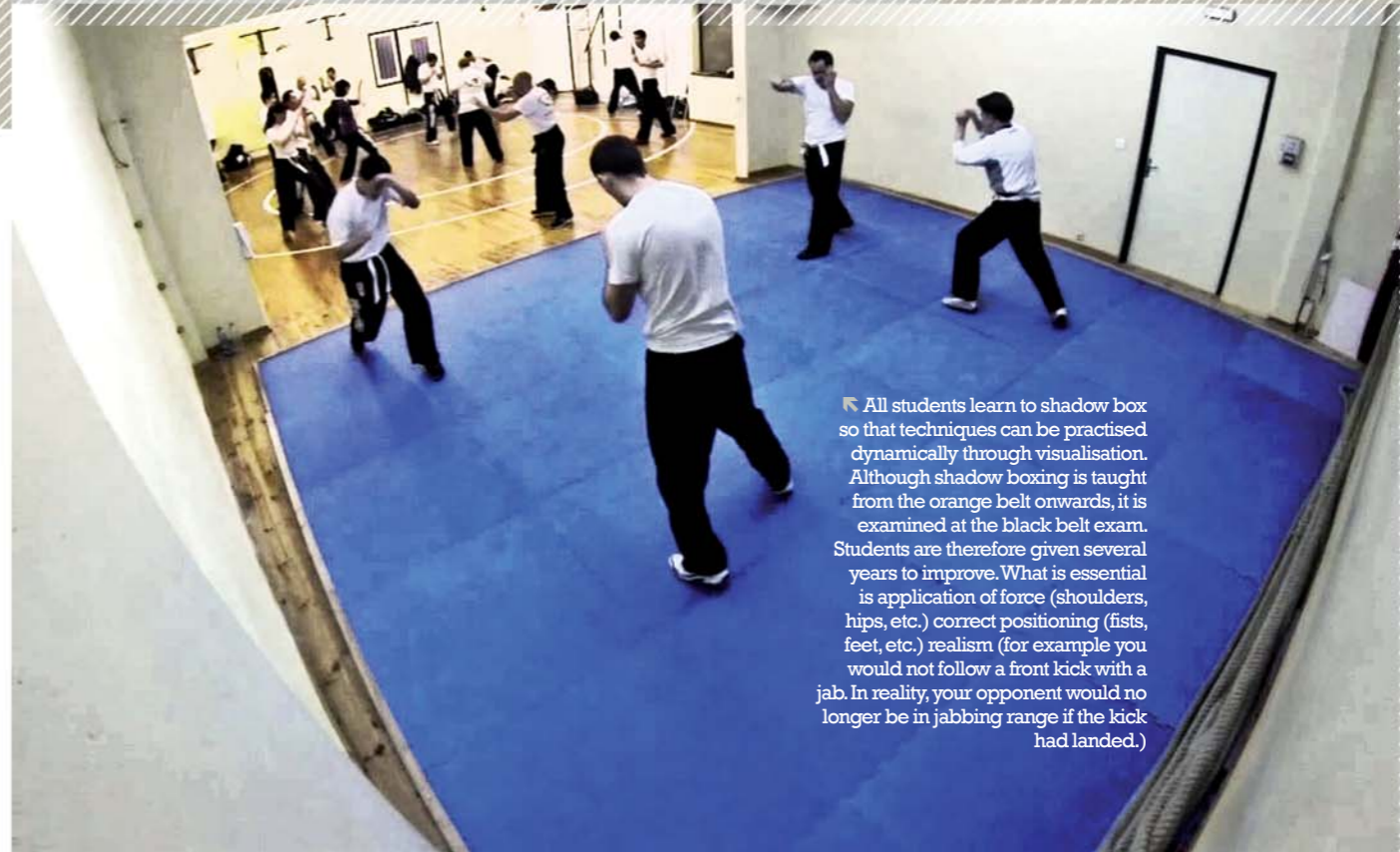
to fend off attacks, avoid injuries and defeat opponents in a wide range of unarmed or armed attacks and from different positions: standing, seated, even lying down.

■ **Close combat**, which is a step further in Krav Maga: it is designed to train you to swiftly and efficiently neutralise your opponent. It contains elements specifically related to combat: tactics, feints, the combination of different attacks, the psychological aspects of combat, and many exercises to strengthen one's mind and develop an ability to cope with

a context where violence – especially political or ideological – was commonplace. As a direct result, this allowed the discipline to be tested, studied and improved. Krav Maga proved itself to be a ideal self-defence system against dire threats in the real world.

BENEFITS

- Accessible to everyone, Krav Maga training brings a wide variety of benefits.
- It enables all to develop strength, flexibility, coordination and spatial awareness.



All students learn to shadow box so that techniques can be practised dynamically through visualisation. Although shadow boxing is taught from the orange belt onwards, it is examined at the black belt exam. Students are therefore given several years to improve. What is essential is application of force (shoulders, hips, etc.) correct positioning (fists, feet, etc.) realism (for example you would not follow a front kick with a jab. In reality, your opponent would no longer be in jabbing range if the kick had landed.)

- It is a comprehensive physical activity which brings with it moral and physical benefits. A sound body leads to a sound mind.

- **MUSCLE TONE:** Krav Maga strengthens muscles as a whole. The warm up and general fitness training, movements and partnered exercises tone and strengthen all of the body's muscle groups.
- **STRETCHING AND GENTLE FITNESS ROUTINE:** Promoting suppleness and physical recovery, practising Krav Maga nurtures physical awareness and leads to better and lasting health.
- **BALANCE:** Krav Maga strengthens the legs and core through basic positioning and stance training. In turn this develops greater balance and confidence.
- **COORDINATION:** Movement visualisation and practice helps the practitioner develop good coordination, bodily awareness and a relationship with their surroundings..
- **CARDIO-VASCULAR:** A Krav Maga session includes regular intense activity at the student's own pace. This quickly leads to physical fitness, muscle tone and develops a balanced, athletic physique.
- **MEMORY:** Practising and repeating specific movements, strikes and parries against visualised attackers, which we call 'Shadow Boxing' is an excellent way of developing muscle-memory and reflexes.
- **STRESS:** The physical activity expended during Krav Maga is a proven method of healthy stress relief, providing the practitioner with better control over their emotions and behaviour during tense personal or work situations.

Many of our members regularly report back to us on the various benefits Krav Maga has given them in their daily life.

RANKS AND BELTS

The technical programme of the F.E.K.M. and



Outer upper 360 defence which leads to: Outer upper 360 counter attack

most other federations (although the IKMF grading programme is quite different) divides itself up between various coloured belts, then into Dargas (Hebrew for 'Step') after the first black belt – equivalent to 'dan' grades in other systems.

The club handles the students' development and grading up to brown belt. However, starting with the black belt, each can only be graded at national exams, where they are tested by a high ranking jury of three members chosen by the F.E.K.M. To reach the exam is a distinction in itself!

The opinion of the student's own instructor remains a determining factor as to whether a belt is earned.

GENERAL THEMES WITHIN THE GRADING SYSTEM

- NB. Grading is not compulsory.

A student can have access to the entire programme, and even teach, without ever having graded. But we are conscious that the students themselves benefit from these tests which ratify their ability and give them short-term measurable goals to achieve.

Note also that in the FEKM, schools derive no great benefit from gradings. There is a



moderate one-off admin. fee for each grade which is not charged again next time if the student fails the exam on the first attempt.

YELLOW BELT

(First Year)

- Guard position
- Movement
- Breakfalls and Rolls
- Base striking techniques (feet, hands, elbows, knees) and defence against direct strikes.

KRAV MAGA

- Defence against basic grabs and strangles
- Defence against simple knife attacks

ORANGE BELT

(also in the first year)

- Intermediate striking techniques (hook, uppercut, hammer)
- Defence and strike combinations
- Evasion
- Various kicks while static and moving
- Defence against more active grabs and strangles
- Parry/counter against direct punches or kicks
- Shadow boxing
- Light sparring

From the orange belt onwards there is no more than one grading per year.

GREEN BELT

(Second Year)

- Turning kick
- Additional grab defences – hair, wrist, etc.
- Basic ground fighting training against chokes, throttles and grabs
- Parries and counters against various strike combinations
- Combat readiness
- Additional and more advanced striking techniques

BLUE BELT

(Third Year)

- Parries and counters against various kicks and punches
- Defences against various knife attacks
- Defences against various stick or baton attacks
- Sweeping techniques
- Basic throwing techniques



BROWN BELT

(Fourth Year)

- Defences against more advanced grabs and strangles
- Dynamic throws - throws while moving in combat
- Defences against knife, staff or baton attacks from any angle.
- Defences against pistol and extreme knife threats
- Parries and counters from a sitting or lying down position.

BLACK BELT 1ST DARGA AND UP

(Fifth Year and onwards)

- Perfection of all the techniques from the yellow belt onwards
- Implementation through specific exercises with or without a partner
- Demonstrating competence from both static and dynamic positions
- Combat against multiple armed opponents,



Pre Black-Belt exam briefing



Threat from a gun examined at black belt. **NB.** Our first principle is to comply if safe to do so for oneself and others. If this is a kidnap situation, for example, we would say, Fight! Whatever the aggressor intends is more convenient for him elsewhere when you might be bound, and unable to defend at all

and so on...

THE FUTURE

TO TEACH KRAV MAGA

As has been said in a previous article, the teaching method is very part of the discipline. It is not only the techniques which have to be fast, simple, effective and controlled, but the very way in which these are taught must also abide by these principles. The IDF, the FBI, the GIGN do not have the resources to train people for years before they are combat-ready. Since Krav Maga is accessible to all (health permitting), so is teaching it.

In order to understand and to properly convey the teachings of this discipline, Richard Douieb established instructor training from the outset for anyone who was interested. This training is effectively free to anyone attending the summer or winter camps. This structure means there is no particular interest in inducing people to pay large sums in order to qualify as instructors. When this happens there is a temptation to compromise in technical standards because people who have paid want to come away

with a qualification and instructors will want to provide a perception of value for money.

The FEKM qualification is awarded at two distinct levels, according to the level of the person wishing to instruct.

F.E.K.M. INITIATOR

As the name suggests, this is where the instructor begins to instruct others in the basics of Krav Maga. This can be relatively soon after beginning their own training – they have to be of at least green-belt standard. In order to attempt the exam they must attend three long training courses over the course of the year. These last four or five days with several belt-specific groups. People from outside the federation can train in any group they are able to follow. Note that these are not courses aimed at trainers. Instructor training takes place for an hour each day after four hours of technical training. In addition, during the summer courses, extra-curricular activities are organised. For example, last year, a workshop was organised on handling and using fire-arms, and another on visualisation as an aid to learning in martial arts.



1. An initiation course (this is exempted for those students who have already obtained their green belt): During this course, the student studies the technical programme from the yellow belt to the green belt. If the student attends a club his or her instructor makes a report to Richard Douieb or a senior instructor

registered teachers: During this course, the candidate will improve their knowledge of the technical programme, and will acquire a greater understanding of the structure of a lesson, the attitude that a Krav Maga instructor must have and the subtleties of the KravMaga teaching methods.

3. One last long course: supervised by Richard Douieb: At this stage, the candidate will finalise his or her instruction and will present a lesson in front of Richard or one of his senior instructors. If it is approved, and after having presented his or her official first aid certificate,



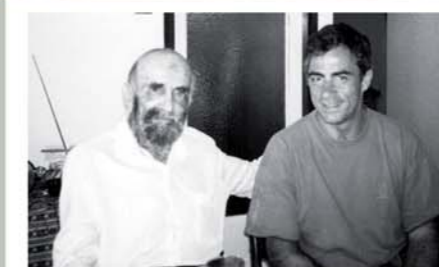
Candidates for the Instructor qualification, where each has to demonstrate their teaching ability, as distinct from their technical ability.

on the physical and technical capabilities of the candidate, as well as their moral capacities. This follows from the fact that Krav Maga conveys the moral values passed on by Imi Lichtenfeld, and the F.E.K.M. intends to maintain the spirit established by its founder.

However, there may be cases when the student who wishes to instruct is not a member of an FEKM club. He or she may not live in a part of Europe where the FEKM is present. How can they progress to become instructors?

Well, these students attend the courses, the camps, the seminars. On their return home they begin teaching and practising with associates in a private capacity. When competent they can pass their grading by continuous assessment at one of the camps, as well the Initiator exam. Note that the minimum level for an Initiator is competence at green belt level. It is not strictly necessary that they formally pass their exams as long as they demonstrate the technical ability to teach at that level (- granted, this would be unlikely or impossible if they had failed the technical grading). So people living in parts of Europe where the FEKM was not previously implanted have been able to open their own clubs and even start up their own national federations. This is what has happened in the UK.

2. A second long course: supervised by Richard Douieb, or one of the F.E.K.M.



Imi Lichtenfeld with Richard Douieb

he or she will obtain the F.E.K.M. Initiator Qualification.

F.E.K.M. Instructor Qualification: In order to gain the full F.E.K.M. Instructor Qualification, the candidate must have achieved their black belt 1st Darga, and also have been through the initiator training courses as above. If a student reaches their Black Belt 1st Darga and wishes to teach they must still go through the initiator courses, have their first aid certificate, and be examined as any other student. Technical ability is not confused with teaching ability, related though they are.

For further information visit www.soutlondonkravmaga.com

The FEKM president Richard Douieb offers these words to all new students:

"First of all I would like to thank you for



Krav Maga Winter Course 2013

your interest in Krav Maga. It is due to your enthusiasm and that of many before you that our discipline is now recognized as 'the self-defence' of choice. Other systems refer to or draw an inspiration from it thanks to its founder, Imi Lichtenfeld, his genius, and his training which I have had the privilege to follow for twenty four years.

"Of course Imi taught me Krav Maga, but also much more than that. He changed my outlook on life and even my understanding of it. This is the mark of a great teacher... I wish that each of you could have met him. It was he who taught me simplicity of movement both in Krav Maga and in my daily life and to keep to what is essential.

"Ever since he entrusted me with the responsibility of bringing Krav Maga to Europe, my main purpose has been to pass on that wealth of knowledge. We need to understand that Krav Maga, the purpose of which can be drastic and uncompromising, is wholly compatible with humanism and tolerance.

"You are perfectly free to be as involved or not as you like when practising Krav Maga.

"You might concentrate specifically on self-defence and simply to learn the techniques you might need one day to save your life. However, if you choose to make this discipline a greater part of your life, it may also become a combat sport or even a true martial art.

"Whatever happens, if you want to experience the benefits it has to offer, all I suggest is that your learning remains truthful and genuine. Welcome to the school of Krav Maga."

**- RICHARD DOUIEB
F.E.K.M. FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT**

When Richard Douieb refers to 'truth' he means that we only train in techniques that are able to work in a real situation, and in such a manner as to make them work. For self-defence purposes, there is no point in taking ages to learn elaborate techniques when simple ones can be assimilated quickly and will be better retained and applied under stress. There is no point in rushing any technique when training. Each has to be practised slowly, quickly, respecting form and function, application of force, pressure testing, mirror practice, etc. until it is really learned. Then it needs to be practised again, and again. We must not fool ourselves that we know something when we do not.

The FEKM has grown into one of the largest martial arts organisations in Europe because of this commitment to authenticity. ■

REMI LESSORE