

MICHAEL FARRELL 1st Degree

2nd Degree BLACK BELT ESSAY

Instructor: Karim Belgacem 4th Degree

I have been doing Tae Kwon Do since I was 6 years old. The first club that I trained in was in Hamilton town hall which then moved to Hamilton College (WTF) and I staid there till I got the rank of green belt. From there I went to another club in Larkhall, but it did not give me what I was looking for. From this club I finally went to Larkhall leisure centre and joined Mr Kirkwood's club which was the "Scottish Tae Kwon Do Association" which is now known as AIMAA Scotland.

The biggest jump was going from a WTF to an ITF styled club, but I managed to learn all the new patterns as I trained under Mr Kirkwood. Mr Kirkwood gave the Larkhall club to Mr Belgacem and from then he has remained my Instructor until the present date, and will be for many years to come.

When I got my black belt I was 16, I can still remember when Mr Belgacem took me aside and told me that I had got it and asked me what I wanted to do now. I told him that I would like to help out more in class and since then I have been helping teach the kids class at Cho's Larkhall.

During this time I have learned a lot from teaching in the kid's class and occasionally in the adult's class. I plan to open school with the help of Mr Belgacem and take what I have learned over the years and give it to new students who wish to learn Tae Kwon Do.

Other black belts tell you that you get your black belt and it's like going back to being a white belt. This is true, as in you need to take your training up a level if you want to be a good black belt. I am going for the next step in my black belt life which is to become a second degree black belt. Getting my 2nd degree will be the combination of the last three years of hard work to obtain it.

Since I got my black belt there has been many changes in the way our schools have been run with the addition of AIMAA one-step and the curriculum, there has been a lot to take in over the last three years, but I felt I have managed it. Since we joined AIMAA I have been over many times to train with our European Director Master Darcy and have taken a lot of skills back each time I visit him in Ireland, or attend one of his seminars.

The AIMAA one-step, these replace the two-step, which I was sorry to see go at first, but now the less it was replaced by a far superior one-step. I have enjoyed learning then and out of the 1-30 that I know I enjoy doing the jumping ones the best. The best ones are numbers 11,18,22,23,24 and 30. The reason for me enjoying one-step so much is because that they are so simple and effective, I like things that would work. That main thing that I have enjoyed in my training is teaching I feel real good when I see one of the guys/girls get something right, that they have found real hard to do.

The hardest part of my training has always been learning the meaning too the patterns and Korean but the only way for me to overcome and preserve and keep going. I will be able to overcome this problem. On the physical side I am currently working on conditioning my knuckles and plan to be able to do handstand press ups on my knuckles. The other thing is that I am working towards winning some trophies, I got a 2nd in the AIMAA Scotland Championships and I plan to get first at the next one.

Through the years I have met many people who have started training and has to stop for whatever reason, but there are people that you can count on and will always be there, these people help us by making it worthwhile coming to class and always put their all into each class.

When this happens you find yourself training harder and bringing the standard of the things you do higher, so that you can push them harder as they are black belts. As a black belts we show them what is needed so we not only have a duty to ourselves to train hard, but to others so that they can get their all out of training.

I have found that I have has a lot of work to do for my 2nd degree, I know there is still a lot of work to be done in my TKD life and that it is not always easy, but nothing worthwhile is. So I will keep my standards high and push my self and others so that we can get the best we possibly can. I know it is not the amount of press ups you can do, it is the effort you put into it. This is true to all parts of life and decisions to my training has helped me in my life to stay directed in Uni, as I try to get my degree.