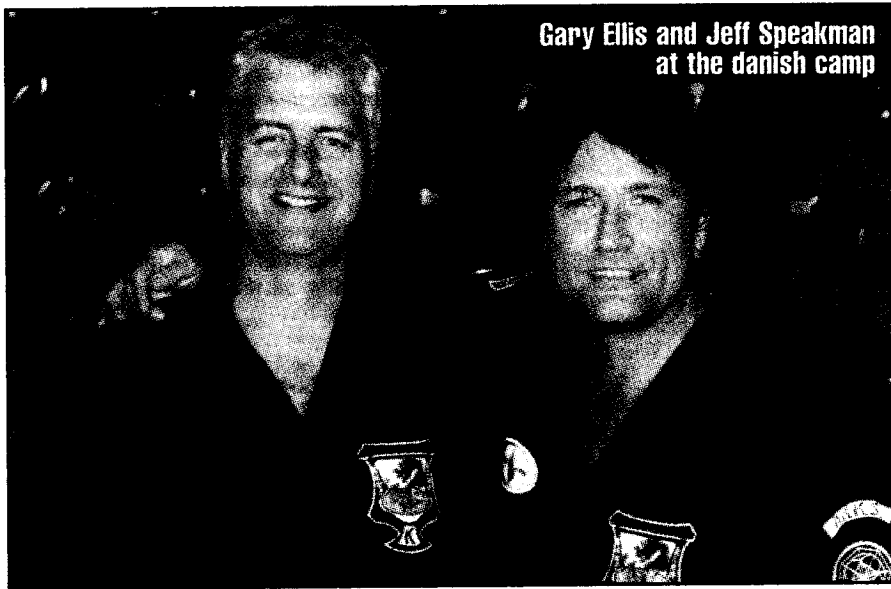


Gary Ellis and Jeff Speakman
at the danish camp



and followers. When you look at their students you will find that they are kind and courteous. Some very good instructors are able to organise a large number of schools under their direction and still turn out students that seem to be without ego”.

Ed Parker's physical prowess was legendary;

“Ed Parker was such a big man. He had such a presence! To watch somebody that big, move that quick and generate all that power, and yet, be so graceful. It was very unusual to see somebody like that, I had heard many stories and had seen many videos, but to see him in person was a completely different thing. To then be able to work with him and feel the energy and the power and yet be so gentle. I was pretty much in awe of him!”

- John Sepulveda.

“What was it like to be hit by Ed Parker? In a weird way it was kind of cool, it wasn't like being hit by the average 'Karate Guy'. It was more like having a hot poker run through your body. Being the Master and the Creator of the system he had something to prove. The first time he hit me, it was not very hard but it was a lightning fast elbow sandwich (I can hear the groans now!). I have a video of it, I just kind of stood there. I remember being dazed and at the same time realising that it was just a tap. Other times it was the rip/tear stuff he did that had you up on your toes just wishing for him to let you go!”

- Lee Wedlake Jnr.

“I remember one time in Plymouth, England, Mr. Parker was conducting a seminar and he deviated from the theme of the seminar into some of his concepts of knife work. He pulled Gary Ellis out to dummy for him and proceeded to demonstrate these ideas with a rubber knife on Gary. After the

seminar Gary showed me his neck and chest and there were these big red marks criss-crossing over his chest, neck and arms where Mr. Parker had been working with the rubber knife! It was awesome to think what would have happened if it was a real knife?”

- Graham Lelliot

Ed Parker in the early years was known as a Martial Arts rebel:

“Ed Parker's label of being a rebel I think was not deserved in the sense that when you think of the word rebel you think, you know, rebel rouser and that was not so much the case as he was more of a revolutionist in the sense that he would take new ideas, theories, principles and concepts and try them out. If they worked he would elaborate on them. He didn't stick to tradition”

- John Sepulveda.

After his passing many individuals have sought to either attach themselves to the worth of his name or have chosen to degrade both Ed Parker and his system. Over the years false claims have been made to discredit Ed Parker and American Kenpo. These claims have been submitted after his passing and the individuals involved seek to get mileage from his name only. If he were alive today these individuals would be silent as lambs.

One of the claims was that Ed Parker was totally money-orientated. I can state from personal experience that this was not so. We had him over to England on many occasions during the 1980's and not once did he charge us for his time. All we ever had to pay was his expenses. Clearly he loved his Kenpo family and cared for them.

Hundreds of clubs and groups throughout the world can trace their lineage back to him. Many are offshoots of the Parker system and some teach using material from the many videos and books on the art as

their instructors were never exposed to the man or any of his senior students. You can tell straight away a Parker trained man or woman. It takes years of hard dedicated study before you are a 'qualified instructor' in Ed Parker's American Kenpo.

As the year 2000 comes upon us, interest in American Kenpo is growing worldwide and it is important that if the art is not to be watered down that instruction in American Kenpo must come, not from the books and videos but from 'qualified instructors' who worked directly with Ed Parker and/or his senior first generation students.

Ed Parker was many things to many people. He was not a god, he was after all only human. However, his achievements and the fond memories of those whose lives were touched by him stand as a testament to the man. I asked some of my Kenpo mentors, friends, associates and senior students of Ed Parker if they had to sum-up Ed Parker and his achievements what would they say? So many peoples lives were influenced by Ed Parker that it would be impossible in the confines of this article to have a contribution from everyone. So, if you are not included it's only because the contributions that are included came back before the cut-off date. I have listed each contributor by name only and have left out any title or ranks. Many Kenpo Associations are represented by these individuals. The order that they are listed in is as I received each contributor's reply.

Ed Parker Jr;

“I would have to say in speaking of my father that sometimes less is more. Keeping that thought in mind let me share with you what I feel is the essence of what my father was about to me. At least looking at my father through eyes with perspective.

I know that my father was always in a state of wonderment and discovery. A man who enjoyed his discoveries and loved sharing it with others a way for them to enjoy these discoveries for themselves. This was not his life's work but his life's joy. He logically understood motion, movement and its application. I saw a man who loved his fellow man and gave of himself selflessly. To the Martial Arts community they called him a Master. I feel a Master is one who has mastered the basics. To himself he was no more than a kid playing his whole heart and soul, I agree. To me, he was a father who left the world a little more wiser and logical and enlightened with wisdom both in the arts and with the lives he touched”.

Richard 'Thuk' Planas;

“To me it is very simple. The Old Man took a look at everything he could and took what he wanted and made one of the best fighting systems ever put together. He was like my dad to me, as I really never had a dad