

# Master Chris Carter

*'Energy and sacrifice is needed to understand the martial arts!'*

**T**ough training, repetitive basics, kicking taped cardboard boxes until they fell apart. The voice of Stefan Coleman my instructor, a second degree black belt from the American Air force calling the commands. These are the very first memories of Master Carter's training thirty years ago. The year was 1974 and two of his school friends were excited that a Korean martial art called 'Tang Soo Do' was starting in a new Recreation Centre in St Ives Cambs, his home town. Master Carter will always remember his first class, how nervous with excitement he felt, how unusual it was to be in bare feet performing the warm ups such as push ups on knuckles, stretches that his body had never experienced before.

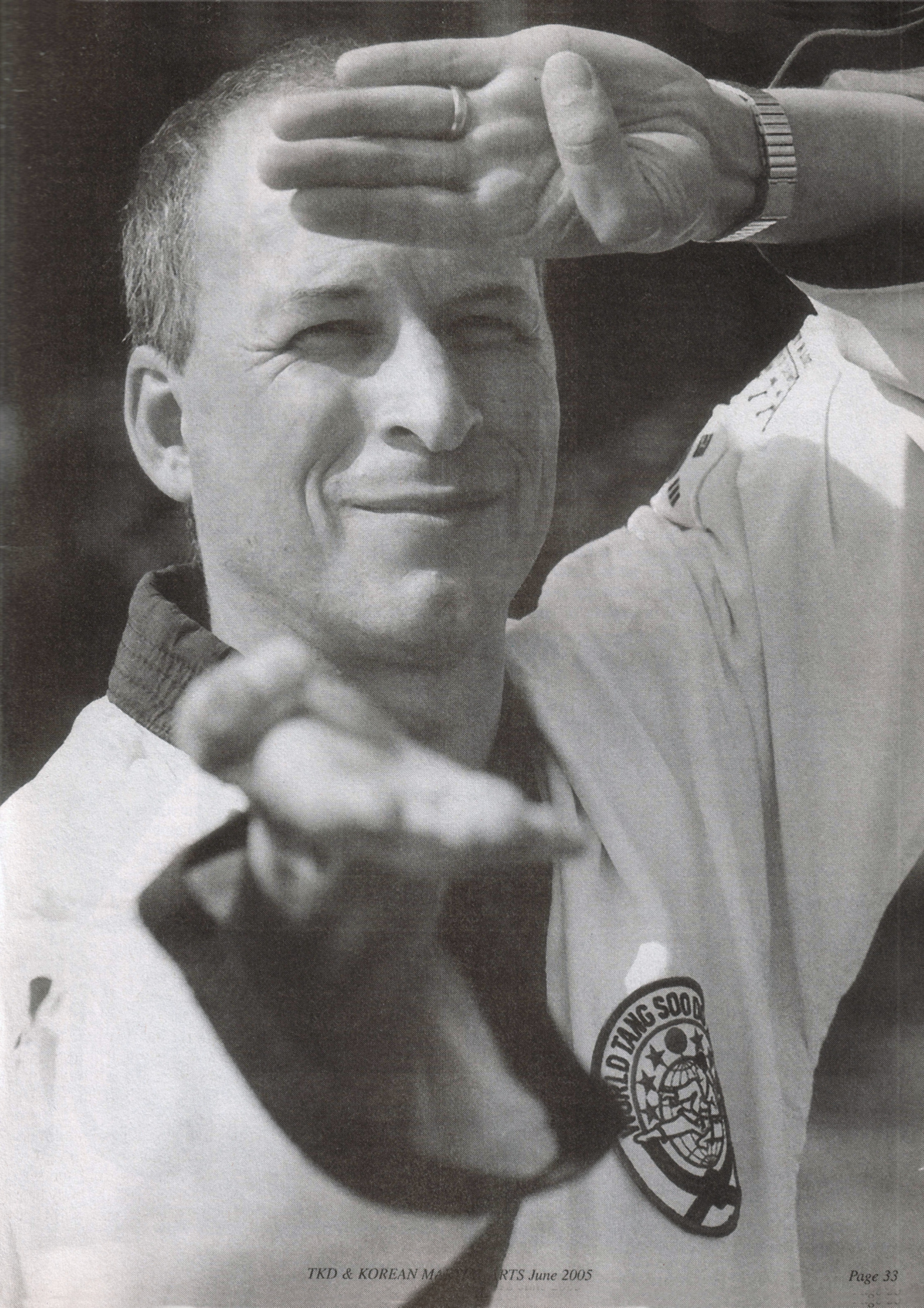
Basic hand and kicking drills, trying to coordinate his brain with the rest of the body and not forgetting the movements called forms. There were approximately twenty to twenty five people attending the class. The training room was well heated and was soon given the nickname the sweat box. That night he found out from his instructor that after the 15 week course, if successful, a yellow belt would

be his 1st step in this Martial Art. The next morning he felt as if he had a new body, unfortunately it ached all over! Fortunately the pains dispersed just in time for the next training session. As the lessons went by he gradually became accustomed to the warm ups, stretches, basics, forms, the free sparring and the whole class environment of Tang Soo Do and soon the day came for him to be examined for his first colour belt.

This would be a special day, as Grandmaster H. Kwang Kee would be watching, examining and presenting the yellow belts. Also there would be senior black belts, 5th and 6th Dans, showing their special breaking techniques and demonstrating black belt hyungs for the first time. It certainly was a memorable occasion. Soon the instructor increased the classes to 3 times a week and this was tough training-there weren't any fancy combinations- basics were the menu of the day every day.

He distinctly remembers training on Sunday mornings in the winter, the classes in old scout huts with no sign of heating, ice on the windows, floors freezing cold and seeing your own breath. After the two hour class the body heat melted the ice on the windows, the floor became warm and the body felt like a furnace.







January 1975, Master Carter received his first colour belt and that same year also graded for orange, green and blue belts. He gained his red belt in 1977 and acquired his black belt 1st degree in 1981, senior 1st degree 1982, with the next step ahead the World Tang Soo Do Association, where his journey was to begin.

*TKD-KMA: Why does Tang Soo Do retain your interest after all these years?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** After so many years training, practicing, conditioning your body with physically warming up, stretching, hands and feet combinations, forms, free fighting and much more. You find your body and mind being molded by Tang Soo Do. These aspects, being good for the body and mind, feeling healthy and a good stress buster, also being given responsibility, such as judging competitions of national, European and World Championships, teaching gives you the same buzz as training yourself-Tang Soo Do still keeps me interested for all of the above reasons. I feel younger and healthier! It gives you a positive mind and still is a very good stress buster. I have also made many friends within circles of Tang Soo Do.

*TKD-KMA: What responsibility does Master status bring with it?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** Being a Master in TSD, all students look to you, so your behavior is critical- the way you conduct yourself inside and outside of TSD. When teaching students they listen to your every word and examine your technique when demonstrating. Traveling is also part of my responsibility and to support every WTSD event, such as Gup gradings, Pre and black belt gradings, Black belt classes, seminars. I also travel to Northern TSD four times a year to support the club with seminars and Gup gradings. A master's responsibility is to continue to strive to ensure standard is kept high and to reflect to other instructors the importance of guiding their students and black belts in correct manners of TSD.

*TKD-KMA: What has been the influence of Master Khan?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** Did Master Khan have any influence when joining WTSDA? The answer is definitely yes! He has a natural enthusiastic ability when teaching Martial Arts and his unselfish attitude and trust towards other people was a deciding factor. Prior to me joining WTSDA I attended Master Khans classes and free fighting with Master Khan at every opportunity at warming up and at the end of the class. We also regularly trained full contact and gave demonstration at a local championship.

Now Master Khan is at the pinnacle of GBWTSDA- he is the chief instructor and the European director, through working diligently and extremely hard to achieve this position. Master Khan has this aura when teaching any subject within TSD and has a wide knowledge of Martial Art. His family is enveloped within TSD and he has a serious, unselfish business sense for the future of GBTSD. He listens

to his senior Masters and respects their views and comments.

He keeps one step ahead and has the disguised subtle comments to put people on the right path. Master Khan is one step away from achieving 6th Dan. I have great respect for his achievements and I'm sure all masters, instructors and students agree.

*TKD-KMA: How does your own teaching differ from his?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** We wouldn't get away with teaching the way we were taught, children learn with abundance when having fun and enjoy what they do. Keeping to the same pattern during class is important. It is important to teach basics and have fun and when I walk in the class and look at the age and rank. I adjust teaching towards those students ability. TSD students, especially children, keep occupied by unusual noises, for example animal noises. Mix these with stretches and kicking and their concentration is kept. The belt we wear can be used for skipping, stretching, kick, self-defense, in fact, every aspect in the class.

*TKD-KMA: What is the essence of Tang Soo Do to you?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** The higher and more years you commit and train and work with TSD the more intrigued we are to find the values of the martial arts we belong to. To totally understand any martial art, time, energy and sacrifice for many years is needed to be attained by the practitioner



with one martial art. Therefore Researching history of the Korean people's troubles, tribulations, tributes and triumphs bring the TSD student closer to their martial art, this leading on to terminology, learning their tongue and dissecting the language- reading, writing, speaking, journeys towards, philosophy and etiquette. Without etiquette there would not be a traditional martial art.

*TKD-KMA: Is the Scientific aspect important?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** Yes, at the right time, to gradually introduce to colour belts- they need to know the basics and to practice these constantly so they appreciate the scientific aspect. Teaching too much too soon, they will have a lack of appreciation for the inner techniques. Learning the scientific aspect of TSD also teaches you workings of the human anatomy internally and externally. Exploring the scientific aspects of a basic front stance or individual block or punch is important to understand. These lead to Hyungs and the inner techniques and a clearer understanding. At black belt level, correct scientific aspect and the basics are just as important, if not more and the introduction of the inner Hyungs are appreciated at black belt level.

*TKD-KMA: TSD, is it really practical for all?*

**CHRIS CARTER:** When looking for a new occupation,

your first job, they really don't suit every body- finding the right job for you mentally or physically or both, depends on the type of person you are, whether the job suits you or you suit that job. Observing a TSD class, the above details are very similar- the whole environment in the place of training, the instructor, the manners of the instructor and students towards each other, also to new students starting, the contents of the class, the awareness of the instructor to keep a balance between basics and creativity but still teaching a traditional martial art.

Seeing new students mature from white belt through colour to black belt gives similar feelings- watching and guiding your own daughter or son towards their own importance in life. In class and at gradings we see many students varying from as young as 5 to approximately as old as 50. Mums and Dads occupations range from teachers, doctors, police, firefighters even politicians and many other various occupations. Children with learning difficulties, ranging from deafness, dyslexia, cerebral palsy and down syndrome, these children learn TSD at varying degrees by strengthening their bones and muscles, giving them balance and coordination. At the same time, exercise and discipline gives them a healthier lifestyle and more determination and friendship.

As we know not all occupations suit everybody, but looking at WTSD many students that practice and train with us make WTSD practical for all.



**TKD-KMA: Is Tradition still important?**

**CHRIS CARTER:** As parents, manners are extremely important to teach to your son or daughter. Unfortunately these are being lost through a changing society. WTSD also promote manners in the class-bowing- if these manners are abandoned the etiquette would be lost and a big essence of the martial art would vanish. The white suit worn by traditional instructors and students gives a smart appearance and although the material is very hard to maintain cleanliness, doing so shows parents looking in that TSD isn't just about kicking and punching-appearance is important and first impressions count. Also wearing the white suit reminds the practitioner at whatever level, that they are still a white belt and there is always something new to learn and we are learning new beginnings everyday.

Should students be examined before a panel? Yes, being examined in front of senior examiners can be nerve racking but if your homework is done with hard work in the class there should not be a problem. In WTSD new belts aren't just given to students, they have to be earned, after a deserving testing a student appreciates that they have to work hard to gain the next grade. This also makes them aware that working hard at school, home or work, the outcome should be the same and nothing is given for free in life.

**TKD-KMA: How do you remain motivated and inspired?**

**CHRIS CARTER:** We all need motivating at times and when you become idle, try to overcome this, this is one of the fourteen attitudes WTSD requirement. You can motivate people by giving responsibility and setting goals. As masters of TSD, we have responsibility to stay motivated and by attending seminars and gradings, being creative when teaching, and by ideas shown from master to master. The best motivator for me is the practice of hyungs. Through research by Master Khan and Master Green, I also truly believe that within every movement there is an attack, defence and self defence if not all three at the same time. Through practising these movements many ideas are passed to me, for example warming up exercise basics and conditioning the body.

It is my feeling that when you practice any hyung, even for many years, there is something different learnt each time and appreciated. As well as keeping the body motivated, it is also a great healer for the mind. In life we have to keep an equilibrium with our family and work commitments-these hyungs maintain the enjoyment and keep me inspired.

**TKD-KMA: What does the future hold for you and TSD?**

**CHRIS CARTER:** Since joining WTSDA and then looking 20 years forward into the future I could never foresee the path I took from 2nd Dan to 5th Dan. By attending the Masters seminar where I was once a candidate (3rd Dan) for Masters belt -this is where I made many friends, senior masters and candidates. They kept a watchful eye over us, where we were scrutinised and evaluated for the next step forward. This Seminar in Florence Alabama is held annually, where

Masters from all states of America, as far as Alaska and many countries including Argentina, Mexico to refine all the qualities needed to continue in a traditional Martial Art.

I philosophically associate masters of the WTSDA with qualities of bamboo-these being of loyalty, perseverance, unselfishness. Once it has matured, the parent bamboo only gives the best quality food to the young shoots, not for itself. They are known to live close together, just like a large family giving the appearance of proud, rigid but flexible. Grandmaster has now given permission to hold European Leadership clinics, to help with the popularity and growth and travel expenses. I had the opportunity to organise and direct one of these seminars in Cambridge.

The WTSDA set very high standards and preach qualities within the association. Grand Master J C Shin wants these standards kept and improved. Masters, senior instructors together with Master Khan strive to maintain and develop these attributes within the GBWTSDA.

