



In The Down Time - Fighting Fit Family

By Darren Gallagher

In *The Down Time* is a regular feature in dFM that talks with a member of the ADF about their hobbies and outside of work passions. This issue we're talking with Sergeant Paul Edwards of the RAAF about his and his family's hobby of martial arts.

So firstly, what is it you do in the Air Force?

I work at the Defence Explosive Ordnance Training School (DEOTS) at Orchard Hills, near Penrith NSW. I have been in Orchard Hills for about 5 years, the kids were just starting school when we came down. Now, my oldest is about to start High school!

Tell us about your family? I can tell by the photos that they seem to be involved in it too.

My wife, Deb is a homemaker, Brooke is 11 years of age, attends Regentville public school and has just graded to Yellow belt. Lauren is 9 at the same school and has also just graded to Yellow belt. As a family, we are all involved in the gym with Deb starting Yoga a few months ago.

How did you get into Martial Arts?

We started a couple of years ago to boost the self confidence of my children, Brooke and Lauren. We were

looking for a sport they could do (play), that worked into my hectic schedule. At the time I was involved in a local four wheel drive club and I was doing university studies as well. The kids just seemed to be 'hanging around', so we decided to look for something for them to do. We went for their introduction day at the Gym, with both of them loving it, we signed them up. It was another eight months before I started and about a year later again the gym started advertising Yoga lessons, my wife decided to get involved in that, so now it is a family affair at the gym.

For those of us that don't know the difference, what are the basic principles of your particular discipline?

For the adults Hapkido is a style that involves the use of Kicks, Punches, Strikes, Joint Locks, Falls and Throws. For the kids it is the same, but there is also an element of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ), which involves ground fighting. This style of Hapkido is very technical, using "coordinated power" as the guiding principle to all self defensive techniques. But the prime reason for doing this martial art over any other is the instructor, Steve Perceval. He is fantastic with the kids, and great with the adults.

We look to Hapkido as a form of fitness that generates self confidence rather than a fighting or self defensive skill, but



that those are also taught, learned and demonstrated is just an added bonus.

There must be a lot of discipline involved. Has that been good for the kids?

Great for the kids. The instructor at the gym is hard on the kids to instill their own discipline. Some of the locks and throws could be dangerous if not done using the correct techniques, so the kids have to be mature in their training and this is reinforced at every opportunity. The maturity the children develop during Hapkido also comes through in other aspects of their life, including their schoolwork, homework and around the home.

Do you get involved in martial arts competitions, what style of competitions are they?

The kids have competed in the NSW state titles at Manly (Sydney) and have done quite well. We don't actively participate in competitions, though. We really only train at the gym.

Do you find the being involved in the sport makes the whole moving around with Defence experience that little bit easier?

Haven't been doing martial arts that long, but I guess on my next posting, I can imagine it might make it easier to settle in an area knowing that we already have a sporting base to make new ties with. Hapkido is located in every major capital city, so it stands to reason that my next posting will have a Hapkido gym somewhere.

What advice would you give to either a Defence member or spouse that is considering a sport of this nature?

Go to a local dojo/gym that teaches martial arts. Have a go. They sometimes offer free lessons to start with. Select the gym for the instructor, not the style of martial art and make sure you have fun. If you don't like it, then don't do it, but on the chance you do, enjoy...the kids will benefit from it immensely and it will give everyone self confidence, co-ordination skills and fitness.

