

# SENSEI BRADLEY HOFFELD... THOUGHTS ON CAMP PHOENIX USA

**August 2010**

Another year of karate training has both ended and begun with the passing of Camp Phoenix XXVII. Usually as karateka, we sum up the quality of a past camp by simply saying "it was good," and then focusing our sights on future training. For this most recent camp, however, I'd like to focus on why this was not just a good camp, but a great one. We will find that the strength of Camp Phoenix XXVII really comes from the diversity, quality and number of its attendees, as well as the intensity of our training together.

In anticipation of camp, Kancho sent out a tentative itinerary and roster to many of the Yudansha. The roster featured the names of about 80 potential camp attendees, strongly representing all of our active branches. While this was not the highest-attended camp ever, Camp Phoenix XXVII had such a strong showing of students that we needed more than our "usual" wing of the seminary to house everyone! Kudos to Shihan Codispoti, who brought over 30 of his students to the event, six of whom ascended to the coveted rank of Shodan. One of his students, Sempai Tony Cuocco, even won the tamashiwari competition with a difficult two-handed shotei block break. As hard as it is for this Rockville-bred karateka to admit, this was the year of New Jersey. The success of Shihan Codispoti's efforts for the Association are manifested not only in his beautiful new training facility in Shrewsbury, NJ, but also in his promotion to full Shihan Rokudan. Now he has a new flock of fantastic Shodan to help his dojo realize its full glory.

This camp also featured a visit from Sempai Anton Berezhnoy of our branch in Ukraine. Sempai came out to get his first taste of an American gashuku, and he received it with full flavor. Now he knows what kind of difficulty he can expect for his nidan test at the next camp! We were also lucky to be in the presence of Shihandai Natalie, a regular attendee at our Summer Gashuku and a leader in the development of Ukrainian karate. The former Sensei received a surprise promotion to the rank of Shihandai Godan in a beautiful Saturday evening ceremony. Like Shihan Codispoti, Shihandai Natalie's promotion is merely a symbol and acknowledgement of the success that she has sown for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine- but it's nice to have a new Shihandai in the Association!

In preparation for any Camp Phoenix, we can expect that we will be doing bag work and grappling with Shihan Codispoti, kihon and lake training under Kancho Soller, and a *lot* of kumite wherever we may be. All of those expectations were met at Camp Phoenix XXVII, but we were also exposed to some new training segments. We had the first-ever

early-morning promotion review session with Sensei Mazur. This was a time for any candidate to work closely with Yudansha on areas of their training. Stations were set up for kata, grappling, kihon, and takedowns. The karate cram-session seemed to be very beneficial for kohai and Yudansha alike, and I imagine we'll be seeing more of this in future gashukus.

Another first for our Summer Gashuku was a group-wide breaking seminar. Led by Shihan Reburn, this seminar was organized so that the entire camp would focus on a new, challenging breaking technique all at once. From descending haito uchis to descending koken ukes to various speed breaks, Shihan Reburn led us through a wide variety of techniques, taking us away from our typical tamashiwari techniques. Aside from being fun, the seminar helped karateka gain confidence in their ability to break the unbreakable. And for some, like Annie Limowski from our American University dojo, the seminar was a test in determination: Annie practiced her one-inch punches until her board was blood-stained! This segment was a rousing success, and rumor has it that Shihan Reburn will be planning a sequel for Camp Phoenix XXVIII.

If I had to select one moment from camp that could summarize the spirit of Camp Phoenix XXVII (and our Association at large), it would be a moment that not too many people witnessed: Grotto training with the Shodan candidates. After running stairs for over a half hour on Saturday morning, the eight candidates were given the task of running the entire grotto one final time. The caveat was that all of them had to do it together- Sempai Frank Caccavo was given the responsibility to set the pace. When the time came for the candidates to make their final trip up the grotto, they were traveling as fast as they did on their first trip of the day, and they all made it up as one unit. There's nothing more inspiring for a teacher than to see his/her students lift themselves up for one more round, one more flight of stairs, one more pushup, or one more kata. Our new Shodan, in their pursuit of perfection, make me want to achieve the same goal by working that much harder. Congratulations to all of our newly-promoted Yudansha and Kohai for a job well done at this camp.

In closing, it was a combination of the attendees and the intense training that made Camp Phoenix XXVII particularly memorable. I've never been to a bad camp. There are good camps and great camps. With about 80 attendees, each with a fantastic spirit and a passion for training, how could this one *not* have been great?

## **YUDANSHA PROMOTIONS**

Shihan Anthony Codispoti	Shihan Rokudan
Shihandai Natalie Snyegir'ova	Shihandai Godan
Sensei Elias Mazur	Yondan
Sempai Bob Buchanan	Shodan
Sempai Frank Caccavo	Shodan
Sempai Julia Caccavo	Shodan
Sempai Anthony Cuoco	Shodan

Sempai Melissa Hoffeld  
Sempai Alyssa Marie  
Sempai Kristen Marie  
Sempai Glenn Marie

Shodan  
Shodan  
Shodan  
Shodan



Sensei Bradley Hoffeld is a Sandan currently residing in Santa Cruz, CA. He began his training in the Rockville, Maryland Dojo under Shihan Reburn and Melanson. Known for his competitive energy, kumite skills and his open personality, this picture captures his youthful appearance and sophistication. He is a former Dai Sempai of the Association and holds his master's degree from American University in Washington, DC.