

Resume of the Martial Arts for Jeffrey D. Beish (revised November 17, 2021)

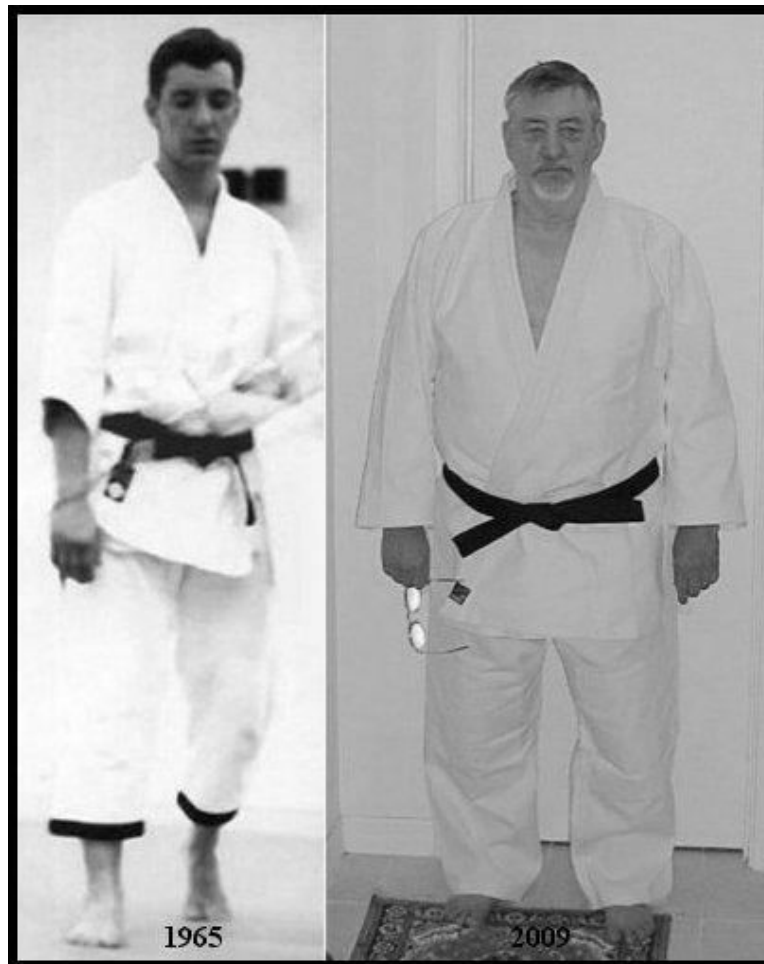


Figure 1 What a Difference four decades make. Getting Older is no Fun!

My love for sports goes back to my grade school years in Charlotte, North Carolina during the 1940's. One of my fondest memories of those years was when taking my younger brother to the swimming pool at the local YMCA and also being a Cub Scout. While at the YMCA pool during a late spring weekend I had to stop swimming and find a rest room in the main building. I found myself lost and then accidentally wandered into a room and watched a small oriental man demonstrate what seemed to me then as some kind of magic. He would throw others down and disarm them -- with little or no apparent effort. There were a few other kids my age there, so the man asked if I would like to join them. It was my first knowledge of the little known and unappreciated art of Jujitsu and/or Judo; rarely seen in many regions of these United States.

My first lessons in the Martial Arts began at 11 years of age. So, my grade school years consisted of afternoon swims, Jujitsu or Judo, movies on Saturdays (9 cents to get in), school and laying out in the yard gazing up at the stars. A full life of a boy! This was a time never to forget -- May 1952 through April 1953 -- my life in the Martial Arts began.

Before finishing sixth grade we moved to Greensboro, NC where I finished grade school and moved on up to Jr. High. There was a wrestling class available after school hours so I joined in

and found that one of the coaches was a Judo player as well. I continued with sports in Jr. High and played a little league baseball, a little league football, school wrestling team, did a lot of yard work for people for money (\$2 to cut a yard) -- and Martial Arts at the Methodist Church we attended. It was Judo this time, but, not as it is seen today. The Judo instructor was also the Boy Scout master at the church. Judo practice was only two or three times a month during that period; however, that ended when we moved to Tennessee where I began high school. While I was far from mastering Judo in those first years I did learn some fundamentals that lasted over my career.

In 1955 we moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. Because a few of us rowdy school guys got into some trouble we were required to join the Boy's Club and take part in the activities. One of the trainers there was a black belt in Judo and took me under his wings. He was one of the Air Force people who had been sent to Japan for training at the [Kodokan](#) in the early 1950's and after he was discharged came home to find no jobs available, so he took over activities at the Boy's Club. Judo practice was in those days when ever we showed up or a couple times per week. In between football, wrestling, girls, hot rod cars and everything else I managed to be promoted to Yonkyu (4th class white belt). I used an oversized Levi blue-jean jacket without buttons as my Judo uniform.

After graduating from high school I worked at various jobs and began the process of joining the U.S. Air Force in late 1959. During the late 1950's a deep recession was going on and jobs were hard to find, especially for a high school graduate without fulfilling his draft obligation (military duty). So, I opted to join the U.S. Air Force and while boot camp early in 1960 I met a Nisei (second generation Japanese-American) Judo competitor by the name of Masato J. Yamashita. Masato and I practiced together for over two years at Lackland AFB, Texas, Chanute AFB, Illinois, and finally Naha AB, Okinawa. His abilities in Judo were very well known both in the U.S. and the Far East. He later became one of the youngest men in the USA to obtain Godan (5th degree).

One of our drill instructors at Lackland AFB, Texas was SSGT Linan, was one of the black belt Judo instructors who had obtained his rank at the Kodokan in the early 1950's. After the few weeks of basic training (boot camp) we could begin to talk to the drill instructor (TI) without shaking in our boots and he would let us workout with the Judo club he ran. We still had to be military! Mas bought me my first Judogi! They were like \$2 back then. After several weeks of training we were transferred to attend technical school at Chanute AFB, Illinois.

The Chanute Judo Club was great; with 20 or 30 students there and we had plenty of Judo activity for off duty times. Mas promoted me to Sankyū (3rd brown belt) there. Once a short, wide Judoka came to visit our Judo class and was introduced as SSgt. Rick Mertens (deceased, 03/1999). Rick was active in the Air Force Judo Association so recruited club members in the organization. We joined the [Air Force Judo Association](#) (AFJA) then I would remain a regular member until 1969 when I became a life member. The early membership fee was only \$2 a year and the first life membership was only \$100.



Figure 2 Simulator Maintenance School Chanute AFB, IL. Yamashita standing second from left, me kneeling third from left.

After more than six months of school we were called upon for overseas duty on Naha Air Base, Okinawa; a small island 600 miles south of Tokyo, Japan. Mas and I first had to help move some equipment from Ashiya AB, Japan to Okinawa, so we stayed there for a couple months and then flew to Naha AB, Okinawa. After returning Okinawa we were accidently bused to the Kadena AFB transient barracks. We spent several hours downtown in Koza drinking and having fun, but upon returning to the barracks a red-faced Master Sergeant was waiting of us, not happy either, to take us to Naha Air Base. We made friends on the way down and found out he was leaving for the States soon, so was not too mad at us.



Figure 3 LEFT: Naha air Base Judo club patch. RIGHT: Barracks Bed with Motorcycle Helmet, Guitar and Judogi.

Right after we arrived at Naha AB we began practicing Judo at the base gym where they had a stack of tatami in a corner, but no Judo people to be found. Masato and I would workout every afternoon after work and as time passed airmen would drop in and join the Judo activities. After a while we established the Naha AB Judo Club with around 20 members and had a patch made featured in the image above. Some members had Judo experience and led us down to Naha where we began to workout at several Judo dojos, including the Naha Police Dojo that had some high ranking Judo sensei to help us out. In those days we considered the Okinawa Judo as very good and wondered why they did not participate in tournaments in Japan or other countries in the Far East. The only answer we got was that they were not interested in sport Judo as they practiced Judo as more of a Martial Art.

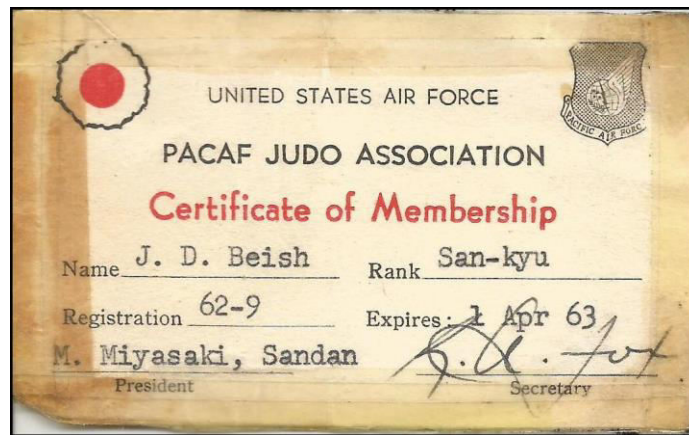


Figure 4 LEFT: Naha AB Gym in 1961. RIGHT: Me in standing outside the Gym back door in Judogi.

Since we would drop in to work out at the Naha Police Dojo occasionally I continued to go there to practice and learn from the black belts. Of course, we met and practiced with many other American GI's from different military services and some would become life long friends. Also, this was one of the dojos that sponsored a variety of different types of shiai (contests); from regular championships, rank promotion batsugan and kohaku shiai. There were no regular Judo classes, per say, but one could just drop in any time and receive training and instruction. [Former "Butoku-den" hall](#) was built in 1939 as martial arts stadium of Okinawa. In 1989, it was dismantled due to aging.



Figure 5 Photo of the Naha Police Dojo or Ryukyu Police Academy (Butokuden) in the late 1950's or early 1960's. Not sure when this photo was taken; Police Headquarters was in a nearby modern office building in the late 1950's.



1962 PACAF Judo Association Membership Card

In 1961 my best friend and sensei, Masato Yamashita, and I were at Naha AB, Okinawa and had won our places in the 313th Air Division, 5th Air Force and PACAF Judo championships, then to the All Air Force championships and then 1961 AAU championships. At the time Mas was a couple of pounds heavier than me, so he had to fight in the next division up. Later he lost the 2-lb for the All Air Force championships and went into the 140-lb class. Unfortunately for me Jim Jarvis and I got stuck in those awful rubber mats and my left knee was injured, so I was out from then on.



Figure 6. 1961 National Judo Team Champions - Eleven man U.S. Air Force team wins team championship for the first time at the 9th National A.A.U. Judo Championships. TOP: Yamashita is kneeling at third from right. BOTTOM: Sitting, L2R: Jim Jarvis, Mas Yamashita.

1961 National Judo Team Champions (March 1961) - Eleven man U.S. Air Force team wins team championship for the first time at the 9th National A.A.U. Judo Championships: **Standing (left to right)** Major Swift, U.S. Air Force Special Services Officer, A1C Ronald Hubbard of MacDill A.F.B., Florida, A1C Ronald Hudson of Yokota Air Base, Japan, SSgt Rudolph Fuller of Lockborne A.F.B., Ohio, TSgt Nelson Cross of Fuchu Air Station, Japan (2nd Place Heavyweight Div.), SSgt George Harris of Travis A.F.B., California (1st Place Heavyweight Div. & 1961 Grand Champion), Mr. Mel Bruno of Offutt A.F.B., Nevada - Civilian head of Air Force Judo Program, 5th Degree Black Belt and President of the Air Force Judo Association. **Second Row (left to right)**, SSgt Charles Brown of MacDill A.F.B. - Team coach, SSgt Robey Reed of Stead A.F.B., Nevada, SSgt James Lord of Stead A.F.B., Nevada, A2C Toshio Seino of Davis-Monthan A.F.B.,

Arizona (160 lb. Champion), Lt. James Tanaka of the Air Force Academy, Colorado - Project officer, Mr. Joseph Knight, National A.A.U. Judo Chairman. **Front Row (left to right) (kneeling)** Mr. Yosh Uchida, 1961 tournament director, A3C James Jarvis of Dow A.F.B, Maine, A2C Masato Yamashita of Naha Air Base, Okinawa, missing - injured, A2C Jeff Beish of Naha Air Base, Okinawa.

Striving to learn more about this fascination, I signed up at the Ryukyu University in Naha, Okinawa to attend a special Judo Class in the Theory of Judo, Self Defense, and the Art of Resuscitation under the direction of Professor Seigen Tamaki and a gentleman who was recognized as the highest ranking Judoman (hachidan) on the island.



Figure 7. The University of the Ryukyu as it was in the early 1960's. Judo and Kappo classes held in building indicated by arrow.

On various dates between 1960 and 1962 I spent many week-ends in Japan either visiting or participating in Judo tournaments. Judo shiai on Okinawa was a weekly affair and I would participate in a tournament every few weeks if and when time permitted. I would spend a few hours in Judo class at the Kodokan Judo Institute in Tokyo or at the Tokyo Police Judo Training Center.



Figure 8. LEFT: The Kodokan as it was in before 1958. CENTER: The Kodokan in 1960 - 1962 and RIGHT: Judo Institute in Tokyo Japan as it was in 1958

In August 1961, Mas and I stayed at the Kodokan for five weeks to attend the [SAC/ARDC](#) Combative Measures course at Kodokan (August 1961). The course was also open to PACAF experienced Judoka, Air Policemen and physical conditioning unit personnel. While Mas and I were not officially qualified to attend the course our friend and sensei at the Kadena AFB Judo Dojo, Richard Whitcher (sandan), managed to get us into the program with the Kadena Air Police squadron. The course was under the direction of the Kodokan International Instructor of the

Kodokan, Professor [Sumiyuki Kotani](#), Hachidan (8th degree then), who was promoted to Judan (10th degree) in 1984.



Figure 9 Sumiyuki Kotani sensei (August 3, 1903 - October 19, 1991)

NOTE: I ran across an old interview article in a 1978 American Judoman that was an interview of Kotani sensei and it listed his promotions. Here is the list of Kotani, Sumiyuki sensei promotions: Shodan (1922), Nidan (1923), Sandan (1925), Yodan (1925), Godan (1927), Rokudan (1932), Shichidan (1937), Hatchidan (1945), Kudan (November 17, 1962) and Judan (1984). Kotani sensei taught me Judo at the Kodokan in the early 1960's and the last time I saw him was sometime in 1965 or 66 when he was touring Air Force bases in the USA. He should go down in history as a special person.

Then my best friend and teacher left the service in early 1962 to return to his home in California. After decades of searching for information about Masato nothing to date has been discovered. I wrote to the VA and Air Force records department but they did not help. With only a few of Yamashita's Judo club members that stayed around we were without a real sensei at the dojo, so it was not long until activities of our club slowed down to nothing. After Mas left I spent more time studying karate and less time practicing Judo, so my Judo skills began to wane.

Later on an Okinawan named Uehara took over the Naha Judo Club class. He was All-Okinawa Judo Champion for several years before then. He was like a human brick; nothing could move him. We would occasionally drink beer with him at the Airman's Club and we became friends. Along with some of the other members two black belts joined the club, Bernard "Butsy" Wrye and James "Jimmy" Hatch where we practiced several nights per week and trained together for weeks for major tournaments. It is interesting to note that Butsy and Jim were former students of Robby Robinson, who I will write about later on in the section below of the time after I returned the USA.

Also, we Naha members would work out at the Kadena Judo Club with Ronald Johnson (Shodan), Richard Whitcher (Sandan), Bob Coffey (Nidan), Preston Pugh (Nidan), Edward Kirby (Ikkyu), Leroy Hutchenson Jr. (Shodan), Vetus McCray (Ikkyu) and Stanley Arakawa (Sankyu). Also, we would work out with other military Judo clubs on the island and became friends with the Kadena Judo Club. Robey Reed, well known Air Force Judo competitor, was at Kadena at the time, but was leaving for an assignment in Japan.

In 1962, while in training for the 5th Air Force Championships, I spent several days studying at the Kodokan and then the next week attended the Championships. We used the 5-bad point system then and even though winning my first three matches, two were decisions to pickup two bad points. Then I lost for 3 bad points and as eliminated.

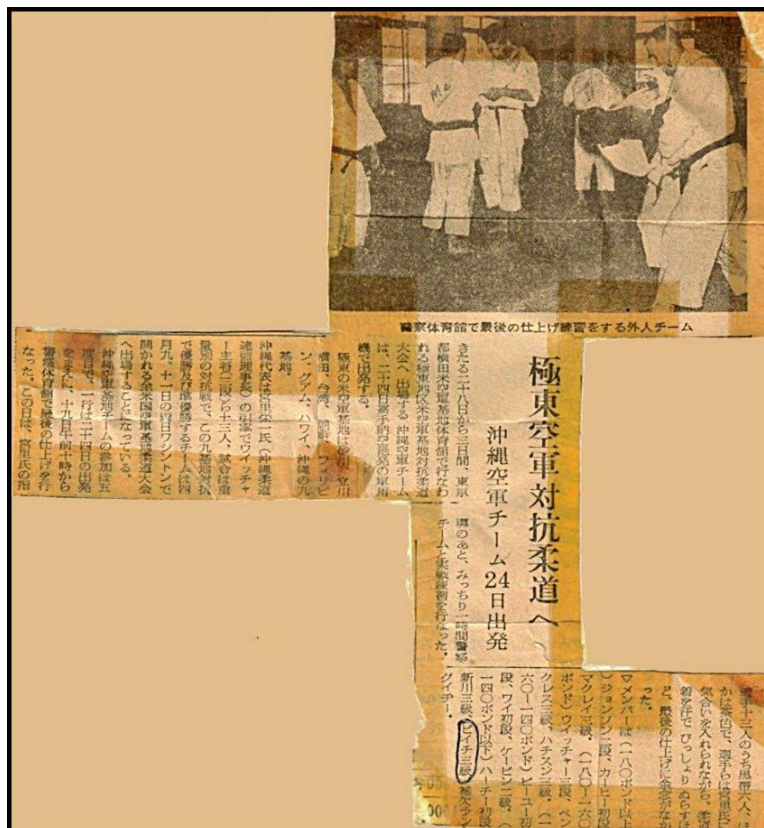



Figure 10 Photo, workout at Naha Police Dojo, Okinawa: L2R: Miyazato sensei, me, Jose Vasquez, Edward Kirby, Preston Pugh, Rich Whitcher.

Small things to remember: to keep track of our progress at shiai they would issue us a thin wooden name placard to hang on the wall to signify attendance and would moved all the

placards around to know where we stood in the competition – similar to a score board. It was especially informative for them because our names were hard for them to pronounce or read in other than Japanese or Okinawan (they used two languages) so we would hold on to the placards for future shiai or some event where our names were needed.



Figure 11 The 1962 Okinawa Air Force Judo Team heading for Japan for the 5th Air Force Championships. Front row (L.R.) Bernard ("Butsy") Wrye, Ronald Johnson, Richard Witcher, Bob Coffey, Preston Pugh, and James Hatch. Back row (L.R.) Jeffrey Beish, Edward Kirby, Leroy Hutchenson Jr., Jose Vasquez, Vetus McCray and Stanley Arakawa.

	1962 FOURTH ANNUAL PACIFIC AIR FORCES JUDO CHAMPIONSHIPS <hr/> Yokota AB, Japan
	NAME <u>A2C J. D. BEISH</u> BASE <u>KADENA AB, OKINAWA</u>

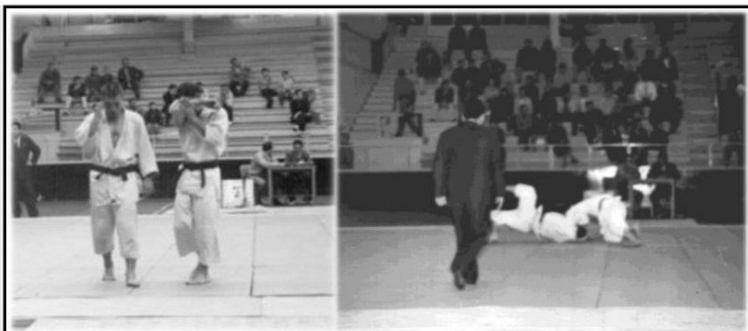


Figure 12. 1962 - 5th Air Force Championships. LEFT: "Butsy" Wrye - Jim Hatch after workout and RIGHT: where I scored Ippon on an opponent with my tokui waza, hidari sei otoshi

OKINAWA KARATE

Okinawa is the birthplace of Okinawa-te ("Okinawa Ti"), or Okinawa-hands, eventually called, Karate -- the Art of Empty Hand Combat. Not wishing to lose the opportunity, I then sought out a teacher of this art and found Okinawa's premier Karate Teacher, Shoshin [Nagamine](#), who founded the [Kodokan Nagamine Karate Dojo](#) in Naha was very well known. I would spend many hours at practice there until attaining the rank of Shodan in the school of Okinawan [Matsubayashi-ryu](#) Karate-do. Also, Nagamine issued us a wooden placard with our name and rank on it so we would hang it up on that dojo wall to signify that we were in attendance. Some months before that, late 1961, his son was awarded Shodan and is now the head of the dojo and ranked Judan (10th dan). Since we did not compete in shiai or kumite events the wooded placard was for the dojo use only. When I was awarded Shodan in May 1962 and the certificate was in the form of a scroll and when I left Okinawa Nagamine sensei used my name placard to cover a small wooden box with the scroll in it for a keepsake. Nagamine sensei passed away in 1997 at the age of 90.



Shoshin Nagamine sensei, 10th dan and founder of Matsubayashi-ryu Karate-do.



Nagamine Matsubayashi-ryu karate dojo. LEFT: as it looked outside in the 1960's. RIGHT: as it looked inside in the 1960's.

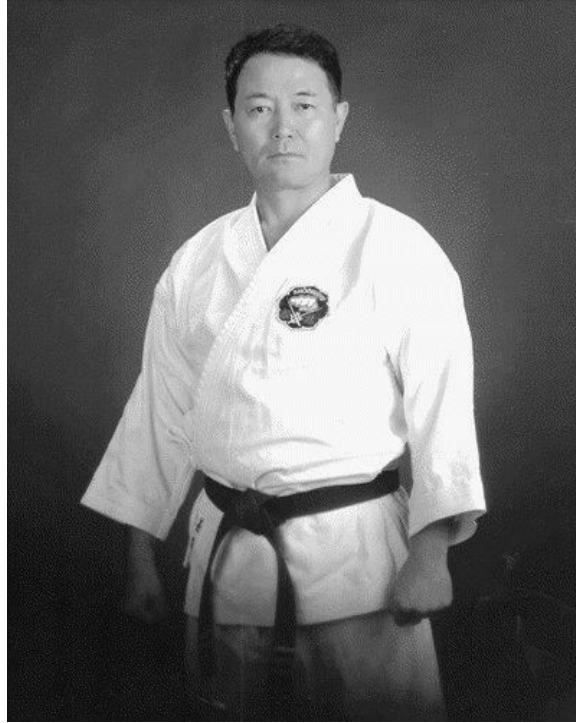


Kodokan Nagamine Karate Dojo [Modern Photo Gallery](#)

Since many of the karate members and Nagamine sensei had practiced Judo then and in the past we would occasionally take some time out to relax and randori together on the dojo wooden floor! One can learn a lot about falling ways on those old wooden tongue and groove floors, but they were not as hard as one might expect. The dojo floors appeared to be laid on floor joists that were limber and had some give to it, so it was not like a solid floor over a hard surface. From photos I gather since my days there that the floor had been replaced with Vanier flooring as illustrated in the image above.

R.I.P. TAKAYOSHI NAGAMINE

Takayoshi Nagamine (August 12, 1945- April 27, 2012), son of sensei Shoshin Nagamine, was one of my friends and dojo mates under his father in the early 1960's. I remember him as an energetic person who was a little abrupt but funny.



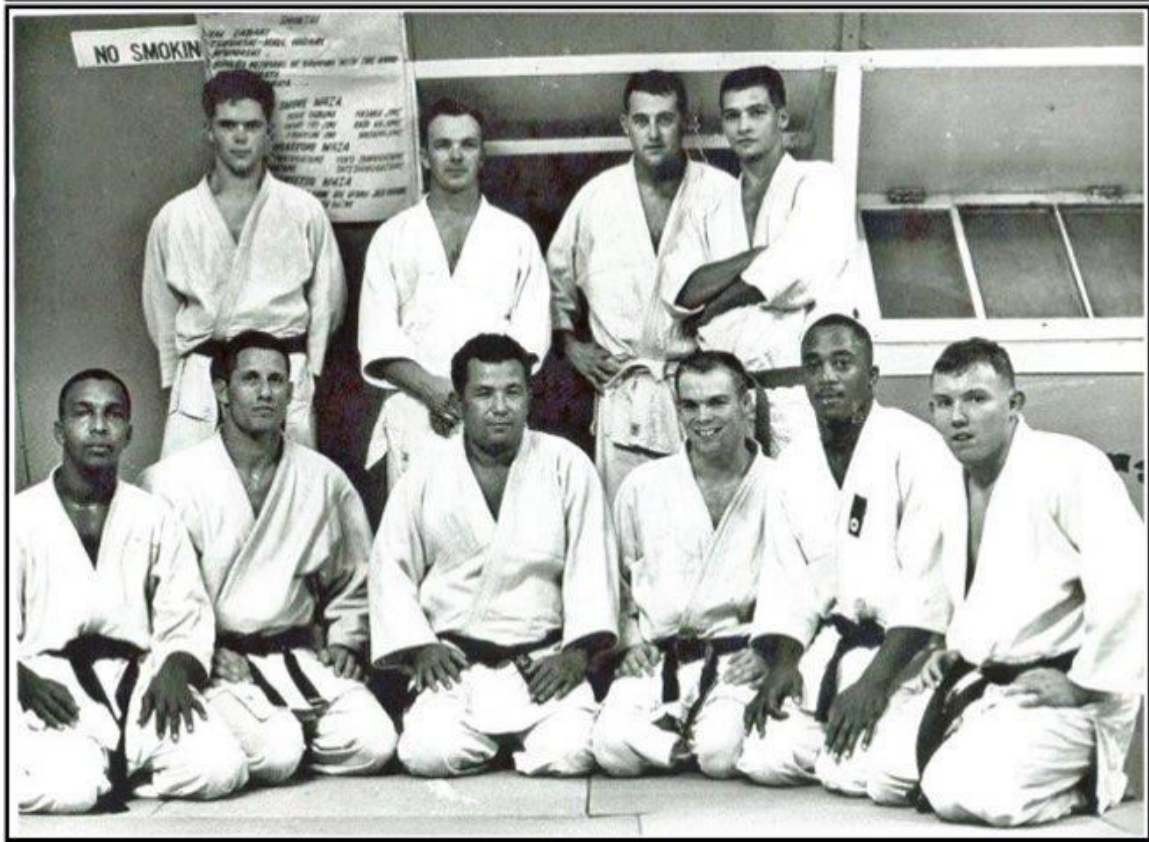
Takayoshi Nagamine (August 12, 1945- April 27, 2012)

Michael Cox (<http://www.okinawan-shorinryu.com/>) sent me a neat photo of Nagamine sensei in his early Judo days, shown in this image:



Shoshin Nagamine sensei, receiving Judo shodan in 1946.

Since [Miyazato](#) sensei was President of the Okinawan Judo federation the U.S. Air Force would invite him to accompany the Air Force Judo Team from Okinawa to Japan when we needed a coach. He liked that because it was a free trip to Japan to see relatives and catch up on politics. He was a very good Judoka as well as Goju-ryu karate master. I remember once he drove me to his new dojo in north side of Naha and allowed me to train there for an hour or so. After that I would go up once a week to train and learn from him. Goju is a very different type of karate that I was used to and I was usually drained of energy after practice. At any rate I would never practice Matsubayashi-ryu or Goju-ryu karate formerly at a dojo again. Miyazato sensei passed away in 1999. Eiichi Miyazato : biography - [Eiichi Miyazato biography](#), [Early life](#), [Later life](#), [Karate career](#)



Miyazato Ei'ichi O'Sensei - Goju Ryu Karate-Do Okinawa and President of the Okinawan Judo Federation. TOP: Photo of Miyazato at barracks window on Johnson Air Base, Japan. BOTTOM: Miyazato Judo class at Kadana AB; Kneeling, L to R- Ree C. Fitzpatrick, Patrick J. Goldsworthy, Ei'ichi Miyazato (Sensei), Dean Tower, ? Matthews, name (?). Standing: L to R- Steve Vorweck, name(?), Dave Gorden, Walt Conlon



Miyazato Ei'ichi O'Sensei - Goju Ryu Karate-Do Okinawa (judan) barracks window on Johnson Air Base, Japan and posing

BACK TO THE USA

While stationed at Westover AFB, Massachusetts (Strategic Air Command) my time was limited so I didn't practice but a few times there. Other Judo people at Westover were Sam Williams, Ronald Hubbard (see placard below; Judo Olympic Tryout), Jerry Cassell, Guy Coachman, Paul Shaffer and Ed Meade, and more. The Judo club at Westover was a very active club and was visited by many of the great American Judo players of that time. I worked out whenever I was at the base but that was not frequent due to the TDY trips. One of the Curtis-Wright Tech reps for the B52 Simulator section was Judo player, Nidan, and we would practice together after work during those brief periods that I was at the home base. He broke my little toe on the mat! Cannot remember his name. Ronald Hubbard was in the 1964 Olympic tryouts, but according to some people his wife put a stop to that.

JUDO OLYMPIC TRYOUTS

The first Judo Olympic Tryouts were held June 12 and 13 in the Singer Bowl and in the Pavilion of the World's Fair. Almost one hundred top judokas from all over the United States competed in four weight divisions to try to gain a position on the U.S. Judo Olympic team.

Below are the contestants who finished 1-2-3 in their respective weight classes. The winner and runner up in each division will go to the Olympic training camp at Moffitt Field, California for two weeks of intensive training under the direction of Yosh Uchida, Olympic Judo Coach.

On October 1, the first place winners in each division will leave for Japan and two more weeks of training before the Olympics.

LIGHTWEIGHT DIVISION (149.6 lbs.):

Paul Maruyama	Nanka
Lloyd Migita	Hawaii
Tosh Seino	AFJA

MIDDLEWEIGHT DIVISION (176.4 lbs.):

James Bregman	Shufu
Harry Kimura	Army
Ron Hubbard	AFJA

HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION:

George Harris	AFJA
Bill Paul	Hokka
Frank Rackley	Chuka

OPEN DIVISION:

Ben Campbell	Hokka
Richard Walters	Shufu
Robert Nishi	Hawaii

A more detailed report of the tryouts will appear in the next bulletin.

14

1964 Olympic Tryout Placard

It must have been bad luck to return to the USA then because only a couple of months later, in October 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis erupted and the wing commander told us that "we were target number one for the USSR, so think in terms of being expendable!" That was a scary time, especially for a military person on a SAC base. Then and only one other time did I watch every B-52, KC-97 and KC-135 take off, with all bombers taking off within fifteen minutes. We were sure the *end of days* were at hand. Things calmed down and we more or less forget about it. It did delay deployment of the B-52 mobile simulator until January 1963. Also, the Air Force extended our enlistments and after that I decided to stay in for another enlistment.

In January 1963 I went on the B52 mobile simulator to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio finding my old friend, Preston Pugh, who was an instructor at the Kittyhawk Judo Club (from 1955 to 2000, Ref: Russ Scherer, Kettering Recreation Center Judo Club, Dayton, OH). The facility was housed in the old Civilian Club that had been built before the Second World War! He and I were at the Kodokan and various Judo tournaments together in Okinawa and Japan. The mat area was on the stage of the big club and eventually the Judo club bought the place and made a 100x30-foot Judo mat on the main dance floor of the club. During those years Bill Powell was the head instructor at the Judo club. Each three month period we would return to Wright-Patterson for one month to train B-52 air crew members and I would always find time for a good workout at the Judo club. The mobile simulator would be located for a month at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; and then a month at Turner AFB, Georgia and a month at McCoy AFB, Florida.

In late July and early August 1963 I attended the Armed Forces Judo Training Camp at the Denver School of Judo and we all stayed at Lowey AFB, Colorado (see the photo below). In order to attend the Judo Training Camp I made a deal with my NCOIC to volunteer for a special assignment and later in August I was sent to Vietnam TDY until October 15 to install a C-123 simulator somewhere south of Saigon. Many of the participants in the photo are still friends and we correspond regularly. Some of the Judoka in the photo above are: George Harris (Back row, 3rd from left), Jerry Hays (back row, 11th from left), me (back row, 4th from right), Tosh Seino (kneeling, 8th from left). I remember that someone there gave me a head butt and broke my nose.



The First Armed Forces Judo Training Camp at the Denver School of Judo for the 1963 Armed Forces Team in late July and early August 1963. We stayed at Lowry Air Force Base. I am standing 4th from right.

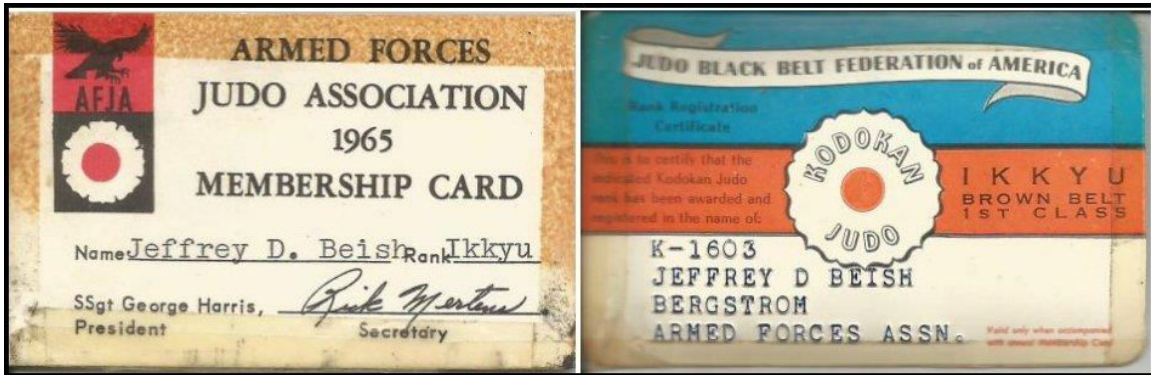
Soon after that I returned to the USA and was on the road for the rest of 1963 and most of 1964. Then I returned to Westover for NCO school in November 1964. Our mobile simulator was also located at Turner AFB, Georgia and I practiced at their club and have forgotten all the names, except for sensei John Sinclair (Nidan). Judo activity was only once or twice a week. John also had Judo club at YMCA in Albany. It was a good club and I learned well. The next location was at McCoy AFB, Florida and it was not a great place for Judo, I think a guy named Charles Brown was the instructor there and my time was limited so I didn't practice but once there.

Much of my time from mid-1962 until leaving the U.S. Air Force in early 1968 I traveled extensively and missed training or tournaments, so my record is incomplete to say the least. In early 1964 I rushed to base operations to catch a flight out to the mobile simulator at McCoy AFB in Orlando, Florida and had arranged with one of our simulator instructors to swear me in for re-enlistment. He was a fine officer and was kind enough to drop of my papers to headquarters. Off I flew into the blue yonder as a career Air Force NCO. While I missed the necessary training the various air bases I traveled to offered me the opportunity to meet Judoka all over the USA and that was more important in my training that going to tournaments.

In February 1965 I was transferred to **Bergstrom AFB, (Austin) Texas**. Finding the base gym was next door to the simulator department I met Harold "[Robby](#)" Robinson (Nidan) who was the head Judo instructor and settled in with his club. From that day on I practiced regularly many times per week and attended many other Judo activities in the area. We attended the 2nd Air Force Judo Championships at Barksdale AFB, LA soon after I arrived there; however; since I had little or no time for training my successes were limited and I was eliminated for competition after two decision wins and a loss.

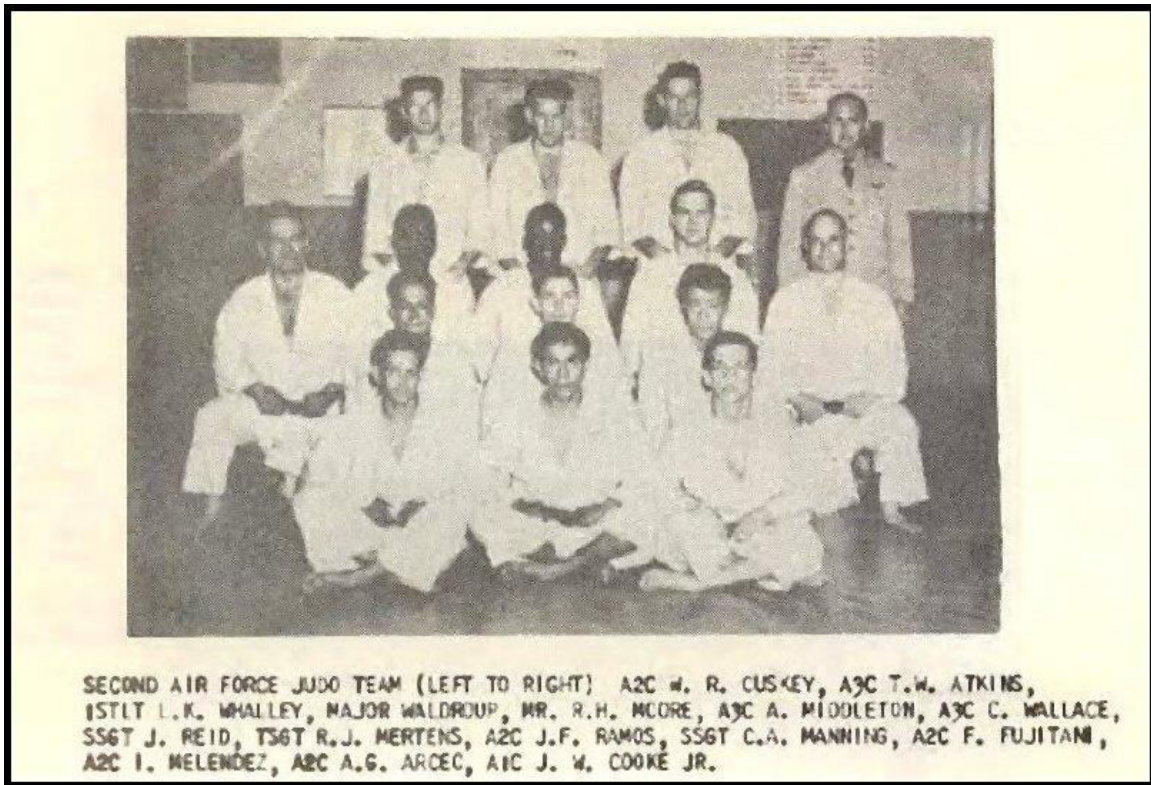


1964 - Camp Drake, Tokyo Japan. SAC Class training at Self-Defense Force Training Facility. Professor Kotani is behind class to extreme right. Mel Bruno is 3rd from the left. [Robinson](#), the SAC Kodokan Training Course Senior NCO is seated at the extreme left. Majority of students are SAC Air Policemen



AFJA and JBBF Ikkyu Rank and Membership Cards

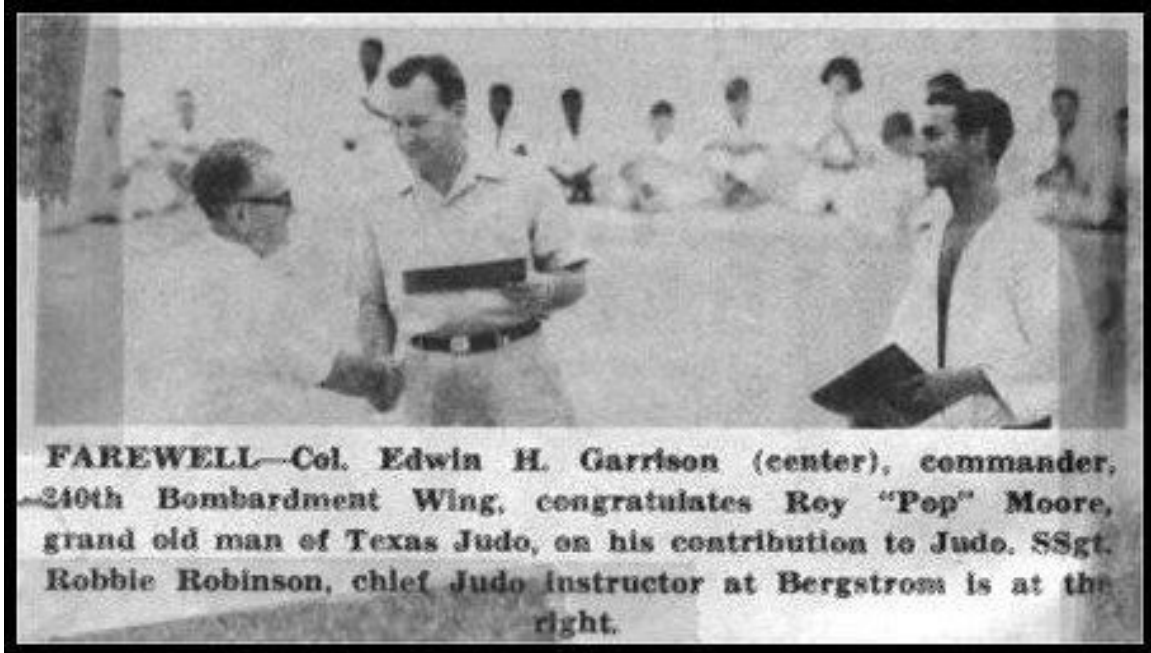
One of our members of the Bergstrom Judo Club was Wayne Atkins; three time Texas State Judo Champion. He was a civil servant working on Bergstrom AFB and also one of the local stock car drivers. Wayne was a great friend and is standing second from left in the back row of the photo below. Also, pictured in the image below are Rick Mertens and Gerry Reid.



1957 Air Force Judo Team from Bergstrom AFB, Texas

Roy "Pop" Moore, Sr., foster father to Mel Bruno - the father of Air Force Judo, had a dojo in Austin where we would work out occasionally. Roy was a student of the founder of Judo, J.

Kano. He was around 75 years old at the time but as strong as a bull and a master Judo teacher. The Bergstrom club had a going away party for "Pop" when he retired and moved away.



Retirement event at Bergstrom AFB, TX for Roy "Pop" Moore.

Robby recommended me for Shodan in May of 1965, so I relented and accepted the promotion and was certified in September 1965. Maybe promotions were low on my priority list.

ARMED FORCES JUDO ASSOCIATION

BERGSTROM AIR FORCE BASE TEXAS



BE IT KNOWN THAT THE STUDENT

JEFFERY D. BEISH

HAS ACHIEVED WITH DISTINCTION THE PROFICIENCY REQUIRED

FOR

SHO-DAN 1ST DEGREE BLACK BELT KODOKAN

NI-DAN KODOKAN
CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

DATE: MAY 19 1965

Harold S. Robinson
JUDO INSTRUCTOR

William S. Lee
WITNESSED BY
Sony Choi Sen Dan

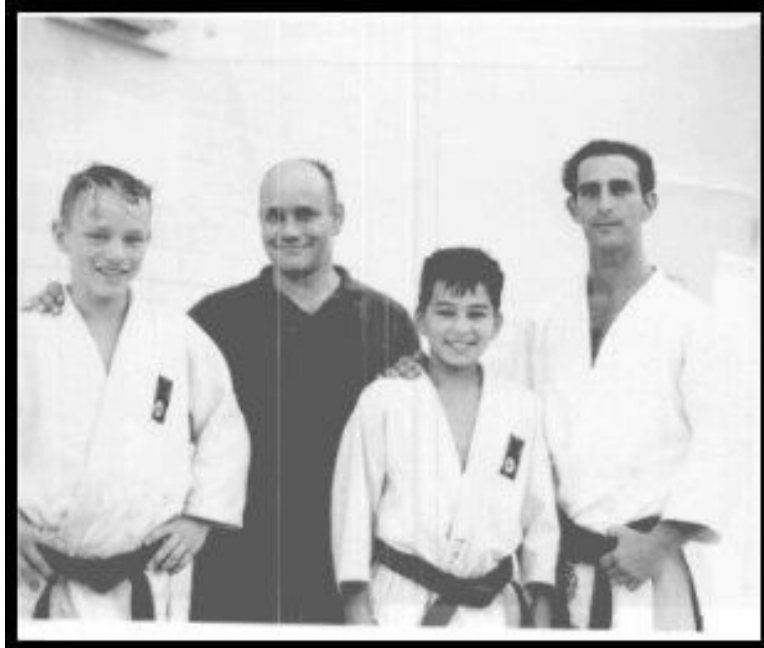
Bergstrom Judo Club Promotion Certificate



Kodokan rank certificate, membership card and JBBF membership card.

Many of our club members were B52 and KC135 crew members who joined in the activities after having combative measures training by Robby. In addition, several of Austin's policemen were members of the club. Our club was very large and work out was nearly every evening and during the daytime on weekends. A booster club had formed to sponsor many of our activities. Our club participated with area Judo clubs and several of Austin's community activities. B-52 Simulator Instructor Pilot, Lt. Col. Ralph Parker was also a Judo student along with B-52 pilots Major Travis Mitchell and Capt. John Mitvalsky, who was the youngest B-52 aircraft commander in SAC.

Our club participated in many of the local activities around Austin and nearby towns. Such activities included teaching or demonstrating Judo and Karate in nearby schools and community centers, as well as during Armed Forces Day at Bergstrom. Our club was awarded "Largest Judo Club in the AFJA" during 1965 and 1966. We had class every week day evening and on Saturday, or a tournament on many weekends.



Rick Mertens and Robby Robinson (with Rick's two sons) at the Bergstrom Base Gym and Judo Club in 1965.

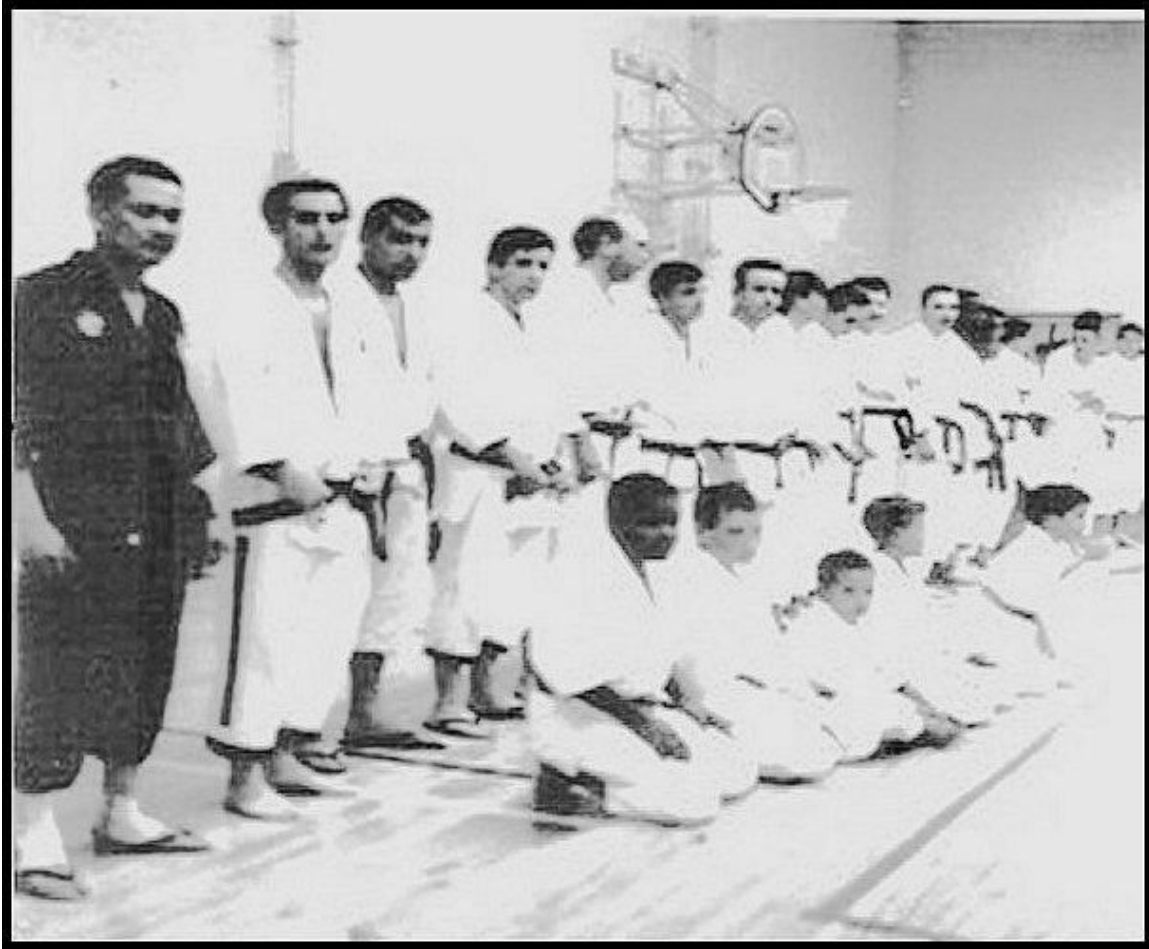
Austin Police Judo class while at Bergstrom AFB, Texas in 1965. The guy standing to the left was a detective with the Austin Vice and Narcotics and I am standing close to center under the basketball net. The guy on the left and on the mat just in front of the standing cop was Billy Speed -- who was shot to death by Charles Whitman on the Texas Tower.



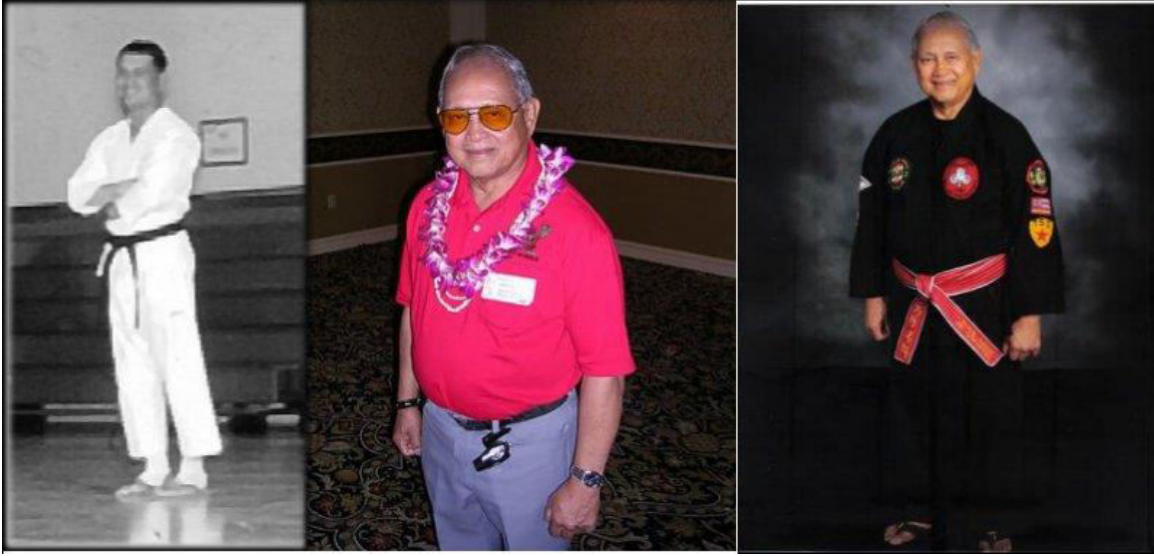
Austin Police Judo class while at Bergstrom AFB, Texas in 1965

This was at the beginning of the class and by the next year we had many more students from the Police department. The Police also had special tournaments and would train at our club. Our club was awarded to largest Judo club in the world for 1965 and 1966. Much of our success in building

it was the cops and SAC bomber crew members. We had many of them in Judo class and they were required to take out combative measures classes (hand-to-hand combat).



LEFT: Me, Robby Robinson and Tony Lasit at Armed Forces Day at Bergstrom AFB 1966. RIGHT: Bergstrom Martial Arts Club (L2R - Tony Lasit, Robby Robinson, unknown, and Jeff Beish).



Tony Lasit; left at age 39 and right at age 81



Kajukenbo Kenpo Club at Bergstrom AFB 1965.



Our Judo student and my soon to be wife, Martha June Willeford in the spring of 1965.

One evening after we had been at a Judo and karate demonstration with KNOW Spinners basketball team my wife, June, and I returned to our apartment at 22nd St, Austin, Texas and were jumped by two teenagers. I fought them off and they ran. I also was the assistant Karate instructor for Bergstrom AFB's [Tony Lasit](#) (Yodan) who represented the Kajukenbo Karate Association. I was awarded honorary Black Belt in Kajukenbo. Tony had studied under the originator of Kajukenbo, Emperiado and Kenpo with a man named Professor Chow in Hawaii. Tony is the Godfather of our son, Donny, who is a U.S. Naval Officer. Both Tony sifu, Robby sensei and this author are still in contact with each other after more than four decades.

My wife, June, was a student at the Bergstrom Judo Club and learned the fundamentals of Kodokan Judo as well as officiating and club management. She always was there to help me run the clubs over the years and actually was in charge of the administration of all my Judo club activities for the next four decades. While our son was only a year or two old during 1966 he was too young to participate in Judo activities we never the less started him off with some basic activities.



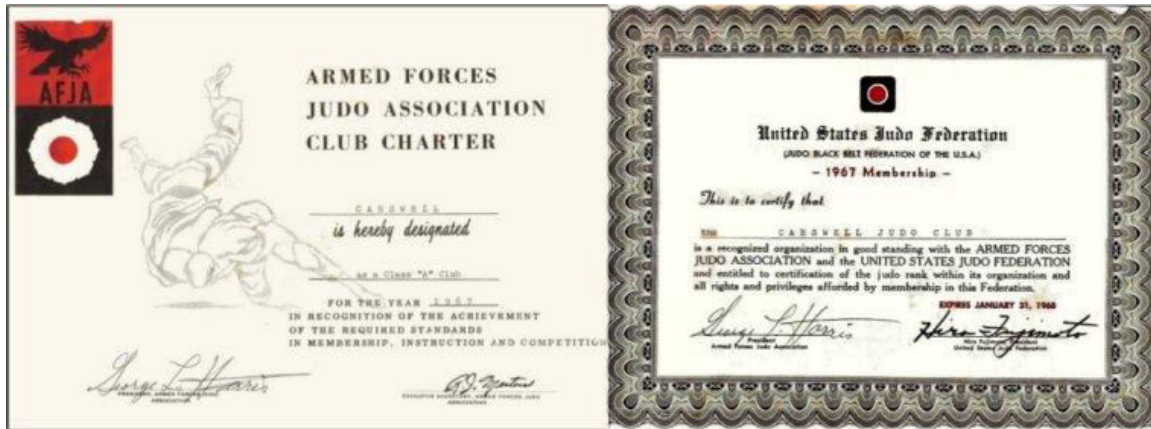
LEFT: Me standing on flight line during 1966 Armed Forces Day. RIGHT: The kajukenbo kenpo class at Bergstrom led by Tony Lasit. A few of Tony's first students to be promoted where John Bowen, Ed Burns, James Calvo, Joe Cappell, Dennis Kijanski, John Mitvalsky, and Don Postell.

I was assigned to the B52 Mobile Simulator and was required to be TDY every few months. I would work out at the base clubs wherever we traveled. Once, while TDY to Columbus AFB, Mississippi I was invited to join in workouts at a small Judo club that had just started. They were interested in joining the AFJA so I registered the whole club. Several bases have small clubs and workouts were scarce. The only tournament I could participate in was a total loss for me so I decided to quit competing and just help Robby teach the classes. During my entire Judo career training for competition was never available to me because of the extensive traveling from air base to base. Maybe competition for me was never meant to be. While on the road trips I would drop in on Jerry Reid's Carswell AFB Judo club and work out with his students. Jay Cooper was one of the instructors at Carswell and I became friends.

Strategic Air Command (SAC) was moved their operations away from Bergstrom AFB and most of us were transferred to other SAC bases during the latter part of 1966. In September 1966 I was transferred to Carswell AFB, Texas. Jerry Reid was the head Judo Instructor at Carswell and was assisted by Jay Cooper. Also, one of the Physical Conditioning specialists, Ray Nadeau, who was a Judo Shodan would help out a little when I would be on travel time, but was not really very reliable. Jerry retired from the Air Force shortly after I joined his club and Jay was transferred to another base assignment, so I took control of the club. I also started teaching Judo at the Carswell Youth club.

The KC-135 simulator arrived and I was assigned back to the simulator shop. We began TDY trips again to the KC-135 Mobile Simulator to Barksdale AFB, LA and other bases. Rick Mertens and George Emert were the instructors at the Judo club there. I worked out whenever possible and would help George down at LSU occasionally with his Judo clubs. Several TDY trips to Clinton-Sherman AFB, Oklahoma was nice when I found a former Judo friend and tournament opponent (cannot remember his name). Also, I worked out at the Little Rock AFB Judo Club with J.D. Jones and others that I had met at Barksdale AFB in early 1965 at the 2nd. Air Force Championships.

Since I was TDY much of the time and did not have an assistant the club just dwindled away. I did have good contact with Ace Sukigara, who lived in Fort Worth after he was discharged from the Air Force. Ace and I were competitors before and very good friends. I assisted him with his club; however, the TDY trips limited my club activities. I left the Air Force in February 1968 and lost contact with all the members of that club.



1967 AFJA/JBBF Club Charter for Carswell AFB Judo club.

During On the Job Training (OJT) for the 7-level testing the Air Force offered trainees the Capital Radio Engineering Institute (CREI) Electronic Engineering Technology. Since I had nearly completed my associate's degree this set me up to finished the credit hours needed. My college hours were piling up. Received an Associates Degree in Electronics Engineering with the University of Maryland, the U.S. Air Force Institute (USAFI), and the Capital Radio Engineering Institute (CREI) during first four years in U.S. Air Force. Received the Bachelors of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering with Capital Radio Engineering Institute (CREI) /New York Institute of Technology (NYIT). This university is currently the Capital University in Washington, DC. Majoring in Electronics Engineering Science for Industrial Automatic Control and Computer Control Systems (Computer Science).

In February 1968 I left the U.S. Air Force and moved to Binghamton, New York as an engineer for Link Aviation. I worked out at the Binghamton YMCA with my son and at [Hideo Otoshi](#) Judo/Karate club. After several field assignments I was reassigned as a Project Engineer for Air Force Flight Dynamics Laboratory, the Air Force Research and Development Command, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio where I returned to the Kittyhawk Judo Club that had grown to the largest club in the United States and was assigned a junior instructor.

The Kittyhawk junior class had over a hundred members that practiced three times per week. John Powell (Sandán), Johnny Barton (Nidan), Ernie Curry (Shodan), Joan Millay (Shodan), Bonny Corte (Shodan), Dave Thorne (Shodan), Dana Rogers (Shodan), Judy Baker (shodan) and others. After Judo was not scheduled in the 1968 Olympics the American Judo team dropped by Kittyhawk on tour and worked out with the seniors at the club. There at least a dozen Judoka on the team; however, I remember only Rene Zeelenberg, Rene Pomerelle, and Paul Maruyama.

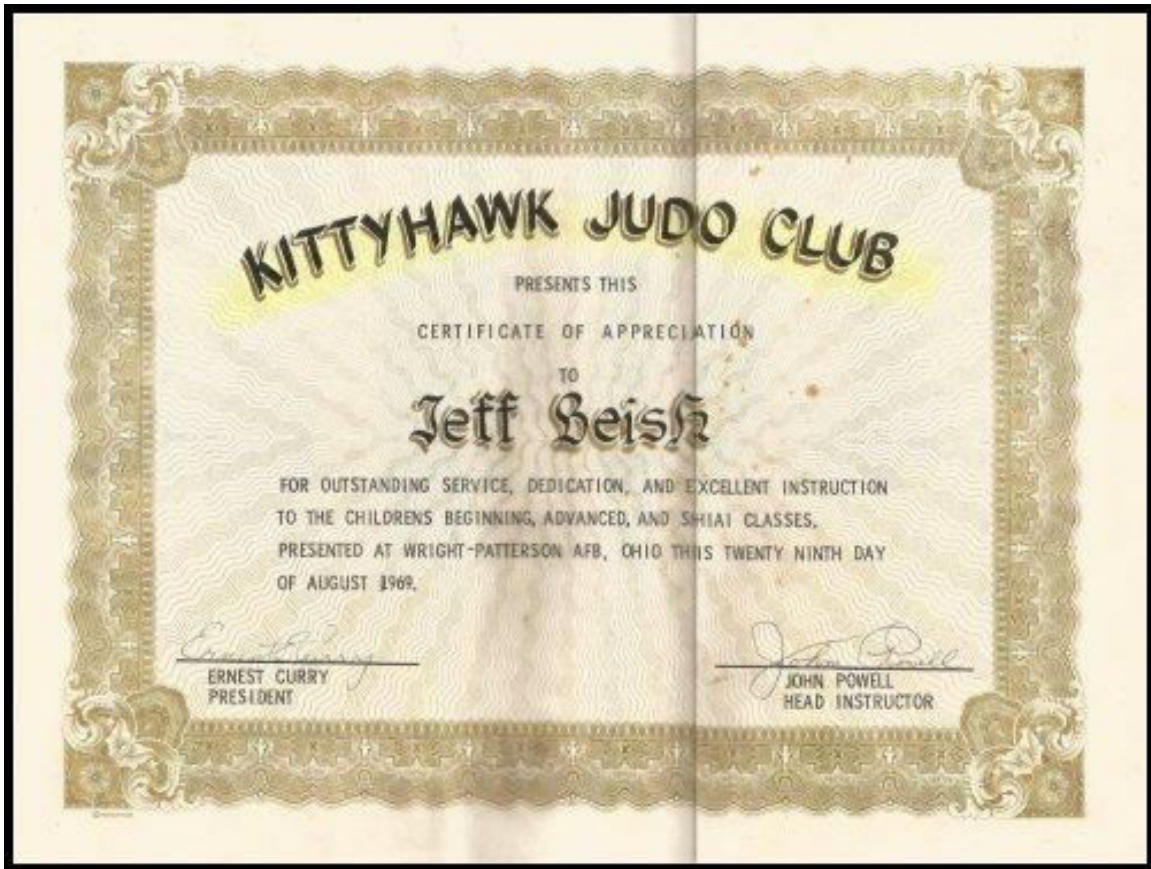
We would also meet with the Lockbourne AFB, Judo Club in Columbus Ohio where Dean Tower had moved to and would have small tournaments with his team. I met Dean at Kadena AFB before I left for the States and we became friends. I left the junior class with a worthy assistant, a USAF 2nd Lt and brown belt, name long forgotten.

My wife, June, returned to Judo practice at the Kittyhawk Judo Club under the instruction from some of the top USA female Judoka; Joan Millay, Judy Baker, Bonny Corte and Sue McConnell. June would assist me at times with the junior class and took care of the class administration work. Our son, Donny (USJA LM-1009), actually began formal Judo class during 1969 in my Kittyhawk classes and would continue to practice after that.

Sometime during 1969 I had the opportunity to reacquaint a friendship with Kotani sensei, from the Kodokan, while he visited our Judo club. The last time I met him was in 1966. Also, Fukuda sensei accompanied Kotani sensei and gave kata demonstrations and instruction to the women Judoka at the club. Both Kotani and Fukuda sensei were eventually promoted to Judan (10th degree).



LEFT: Fukuda sensei (now kudan) teaches a ju-no-kata class at Kittyhawk Judo Club at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. A few of the senior members were John Powell, Johnny Barton, Ernie Curry, Joan Millay, Bonny Corte, Sue McConnell, and Dave Thorne. CENTER: Kittyhawk Judo Club Membership card. RIGHT: News Clip of Kotani sensei visit.



Certificate of Appreciation from Kittyhawk Judo Club -- 1969

After leaving the U.S. Air Force in early 1968 I was a civilian contractor at various Navy and Air Force installations. Some local Judoka approached me to join the regional yudanshikai, so I remained with the AFJA and JBBF as well. Since my travels left me out of the loop of Judo news and politics it kind of passed me up but by mid-1969 Rick Mertens wrote me asking if I would like to become a Life Member in the newly formed USJA. Yes, I paid and went on traveling, but had lost contact with the JBBF that had become the USJF by then and was no longer an official member.



My AFJA Life Membership Certificate; issued October 1969; water damaged August 24, 1992 (hurricane Andrew).

During the autumn of 1969 the company reassigned me back to Binghamton to wait for another field assignment. After a brief time with American Airlines I was assigned to Bremgarten AB, Germany as Field Engineer for RF4E Flight Simulator for the German Air Force. We lived in Germany for a year and a half. Bremgarten is south west of Freiburg in a small town of Eshbach. German airman worked out in Judo at their gym and also in Freiburg where we visited two Judo

clubs, one at the University of Freiburg. While my practice sessions were not frequent they never the less welcomed me several times a month while living there.

Back to the USA

Returning to New York I went back to Hidi Otoshi's karate/Judo club and would work out occasionally there until January 1973 when we moved to Miami, Florida. From March 1973 through January 1978 I was head instructor in several Judo clubs and trained thousands of students, assisted several other instructors in the area as well. I established several Judo clubs in the Dade County Community School system and helped to found several other clubs here in the area. During the mid-1970's I became cofounder of the first all black Judo Club in Miami, the Carver Judo Club, and signed the instructor's recommendation to Shodan. The club is still operating.

20 Monday, April 22, 1974 SOUTH WEST NEWS

He's Been Kicking Around Judo for 21 Years

Judo is one of the most popular youth activities at the Sylvania Heights Community School, according to co-ordinator Roger C. Cuevas.

"Our instructor, Jeff Beish, has been practicing the art for 21 years and has been teaching others for the past 11 years. He has received many awards for his feats," Cuevas said.

This Saturday members of the Sylvania Judo Club will take part in a junior tournament to be held at Ponce de Leon. The Judo club is an A.A.U. sanctioned club and is also a member of the U.S.J.A.

Instructor Beish, who spent eight years in the Air Force, stationed much of that time in Japan and Okinawa, where he studied the oriental art of Judo. He is proud of the fact that more than 30 youngsters are enrolled in the course, which is given Monday and Wednesday. "We are getting new students almost every day," he says.

Other courses offered by the school for the community youth includes beginning and intermediate ballet, ceramics, guitar gymnastics, macrame, modern dance, piano and Spanish. The adult program includes classes in English, Hebrew, Spanish sewing shorthand. Residents over the age of 65 do not have to pay the established fees.

Community interest courses include, arts and crafts, ceramics, creative writing, crochet, interior decorating, flower arranging, macrame, oil painting, yoga and cake decorating.

The school is located at 5901 SW 16th St. Interested residents may call at the school after 2 p.m. Those desiring phone information may call Cuevas after 2 p.m. at 667-7519.

"Sylvania Heights Community School is your community center for cultural, recreational, educational and social activities. It is made possible by the City of West Miami and the Dade County Board of Education," said Cuevas.



JEFF BEISH, instructor in Judo at the Sylvania Heights Community School is greeted by Roger Cuevas, co-ordinator of the school program. Judo classes are held Monday and Wednesday. (Photo by M.J. Harris)

Dade County Community School System, Miami, Florida

From early in 1973 I began to assist teaching in local Judo clubs beginning with the Kolligian Judo Clubs, Miami, Florida (February 1973 - March 1975, Assistant Instructor). I created several Judo clubs after that and founded the Sylvania Judo Club, Miami, Florida (February 1974 - March 1975), the Silver Bluff Judo Club, Miami, Florida (March 1974 - February 1977, and replaced Leonard J. Vieira (LM897) at the Homestead AFB Judo Club, Florida (January 1976 - January 1978), and was affiliated with the Pensacola Area Judo Clubs, Florida as Assistant Coach/Instructor under the care of Harold G. ("Robby") Robinson (Godan).



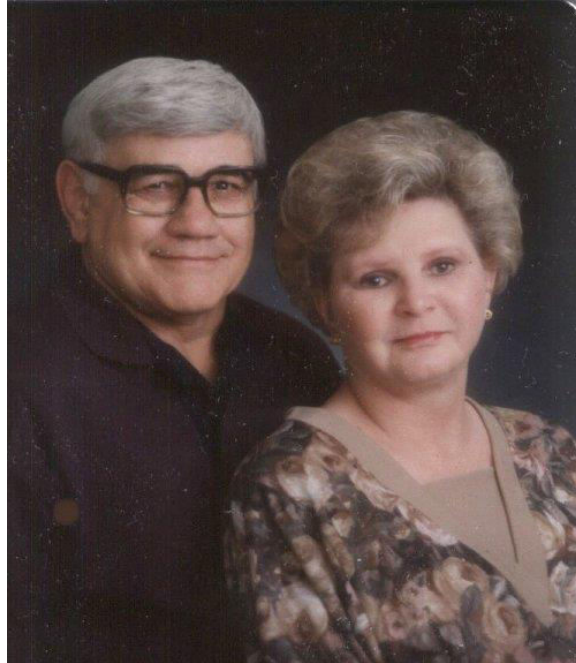
Alberto Sanchez, assistant instructor, is thrown by Chief Instructor Jeff Beish of Sylvania Judo Club (below) during demonstration to class members shown above.

Sylvania Judo Club, Miami, Florida (February 1974 - March 1975)



Silver Bluff Judo Club, Miami, Florida (March 1974 - February 1977).

During one of Rick Merten's visits with us in Miami he signed papers for my promotion to Sandan, but I forgot to send in the recommendation and with the fee. Later on Robby signed my papers for sandan and he reminded to be sure and to pay the fee. Promotions to me have always been like vapor-paper and meant little for my enjoyment of Judo.



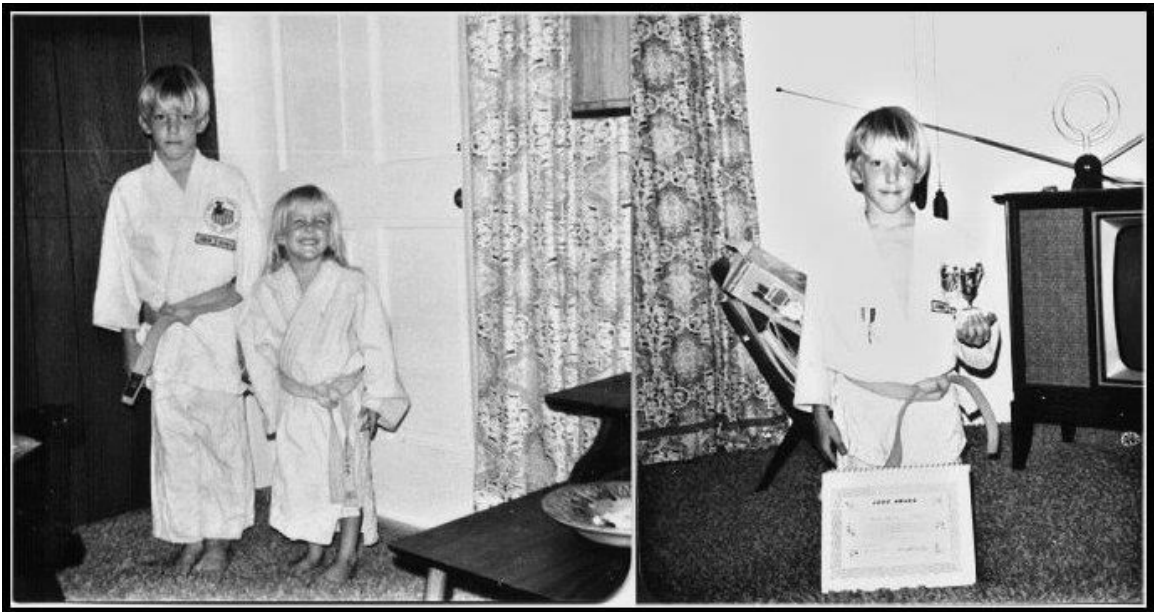
Rick and Nancy Mertens in the 1990's.

Due to working on the night shift schedule my time was limited during the day light time, so my wife, June, took care of many of the club activities and at times would fill in for me as sensei. She was often called "Mrs. Sensei" by the younger students and she recalls those days as fond memories. During the 1975 [USJA](#) Junior National Championships she replaced me as team coach and chaperon and then accompanied the team to Decatur, Illinois. Our son, Donny (USJA LM-1009), would continue Judo during 1973 until 1979 and would become a noted Judo competitor who would attend the 1975 USJA Nationals.

Sometime during late 1977 or early 1978 Rick Mertens and George Emert created a new Judo organization, "Judo For American" and I joined. Not sure how many followed suit but it didn't; t last very long; maybe a year.



Judo For American Membership Certificate



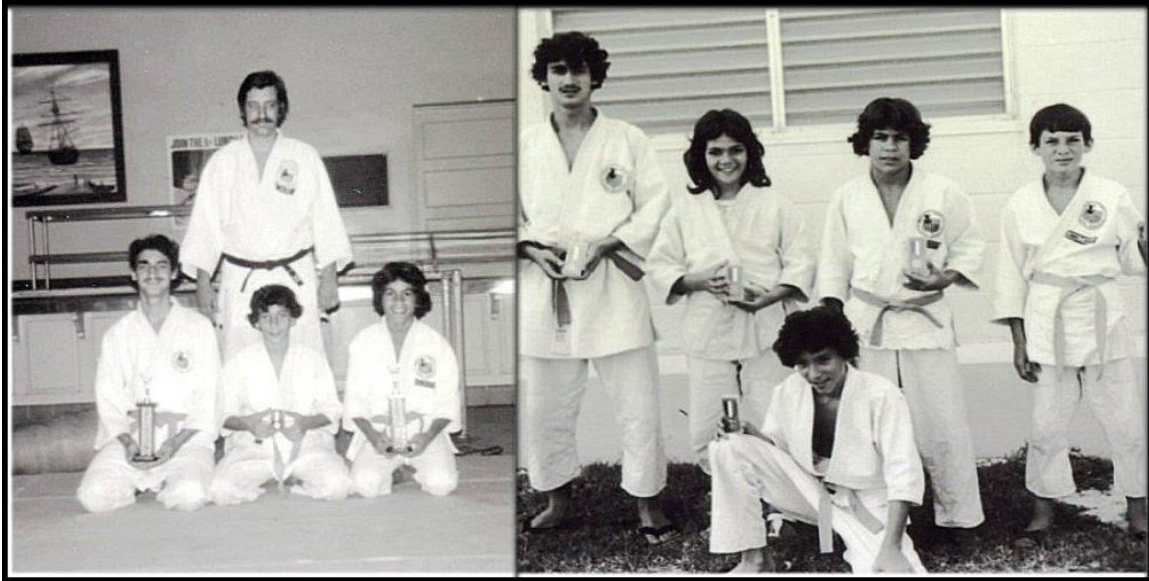
Donny (USJA LM-1009) and Natalie Beish taken in November 1974.

In all the years of assisting and teaching Judo only one Judo student was injured at a club I was involved in and that happened one evening when I was late arriving at Sylvania Judo Club and found one of the teenage Judoka lying on the mat. One of the adults had a fan blowing on her and the girl, who was normally must darker complexion, appeared white as a sheet. She had rolled out and hit her shoulder hard, and broken her collarbone! I immediately turned off the fan, found a blanket and applied CPR - she as in shock! The EMT came and off she went to the hospital.

That very day I ran into one of the soccer and tennis coaches, Tim Foley - who was a Cornerback for the Miami Dolphins football team - who volunteered to help me out with some adult CPR classes. He was a qualified CPR instructor and arranged for a class where my assistant Judo instructors and some school officials and parents attended. I had no idea that many of these people knew next to nothing about CPR or how to handle someone in shock. After that I would train the Judo instructors in kappo (Japanese), the old Judo art of Resuscitation. Black belts were required to understand a certain amount of kappo; at least to aid those who had been choked or kicked in the family jewels.



Four of my Judo clubs in Dade County during the 1970's.



Some winners from Silver-Bluff Judo Club in mid-1970's.



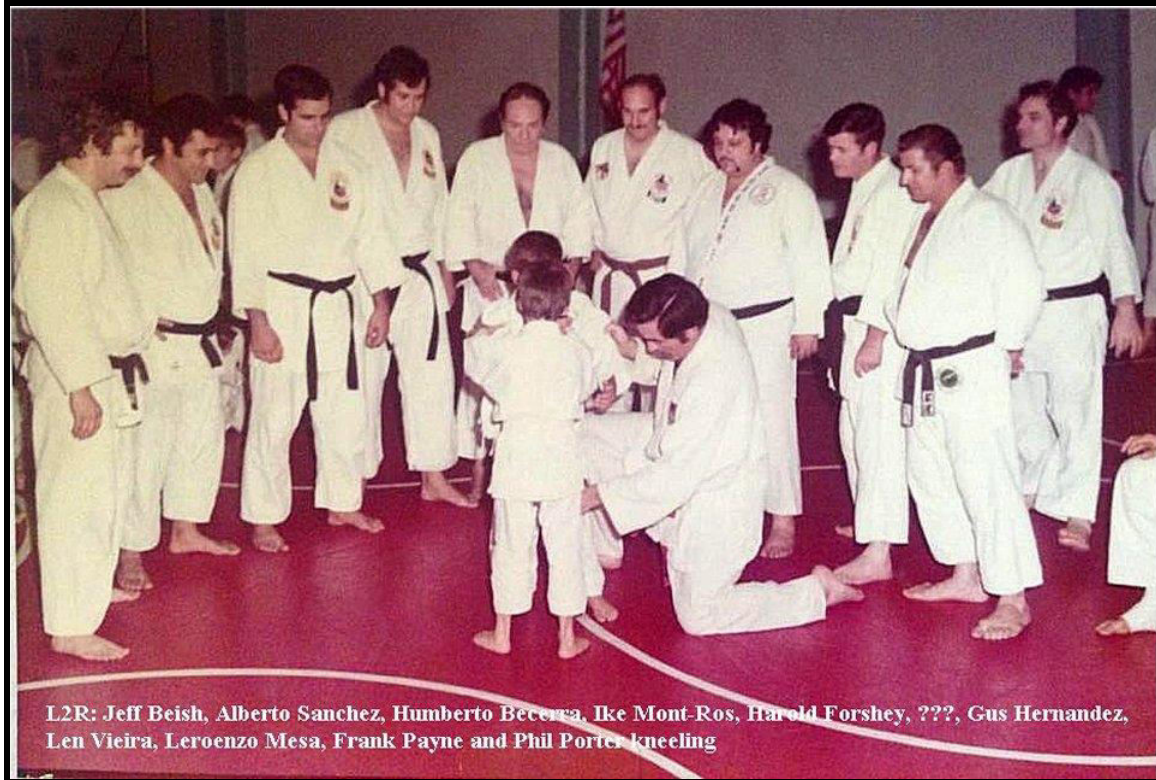
Some older winners from Silver-Bluff Judo Club in late-1970's.

During those years from early 1973 until mid-1978 I supervised many of the area Judo activities such as arranging and hosting Judo clinics by some of the USJA officials and directed many Judo tournaments.



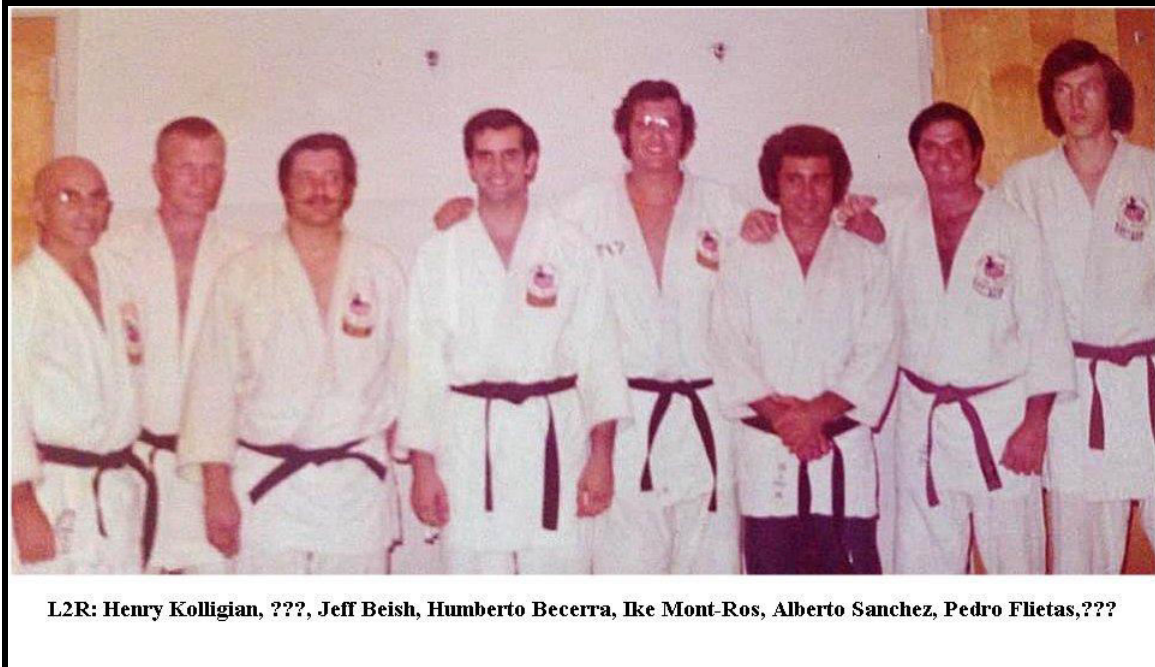
Several of the Dade County Judo black belts with Phil Porter during 1976. Standing L to R: Harold Forshey (Deceased), Gus Hernandez, Humberto Beserria, Phil Porter (Deceased), Leroenzo Mesa, Alberto Sanchez (Deceased) and Frank Payne. Kneeling: L to R: Len Vieira, Jeff Beish, and Ike Mont-Ros

While attending the USJA Board meeting in Bossier City, Louisiana in January 1976 I decided to quit Judo because of the growing power of politicians and opportunists within the organization. It took me another couple of years to finally realize that Judo was not the same as I had learned it and that certain powers were about to crush the USJA and take over control. While the USJA experienced bad financial times during the mid-1990's the organization is still very much alive and well. Also, with my working schedule (midnight to eight a.m.) my health was taking a beating and finally my doctor suggested that I take up something less time consuming and less stressful or find a new job in the day time. Working all night, then trying to officiate in a tournament was just too much for me because once while refereeing I actually fell asleep standing up. A corner judge noticed I was not moving and the contestants were waiting to return fighting, I just stood there like a straw man. It was time to give up that part of Judo.



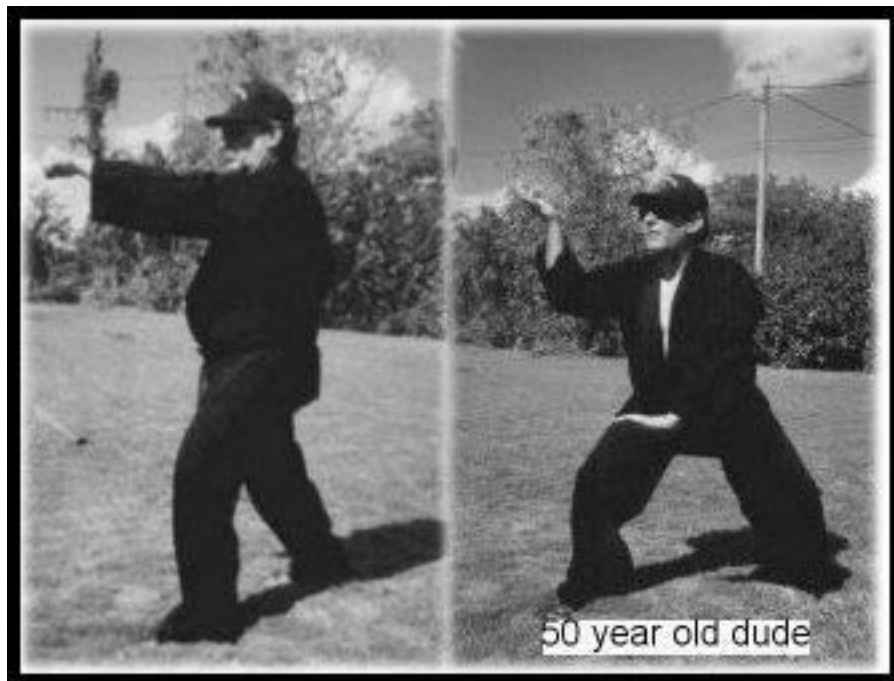
Judo Instructors in Miami, FL During 1970's Phil Porter Clinic

Judo politics in Dade County Florida had always been raging and it seemed to get worse as the years went by. Much of the friction that germinated in the Judo community was misunderstanding between the [USJF](#) and USJA and also between the Cuban-Americans and the non-Hispanic Judo instructors. For several years some of the clubs in the county north of Dade would not invite clubs from Dade County because of ill will and friction that had been building up for years. Since most of my students were of Cuba-American decent this became a source of irritation and grief for me as their sensei and coach. Also, my working all night caused me to be less alert and at times I would be just too tired to officiate in tournaments and other activities.



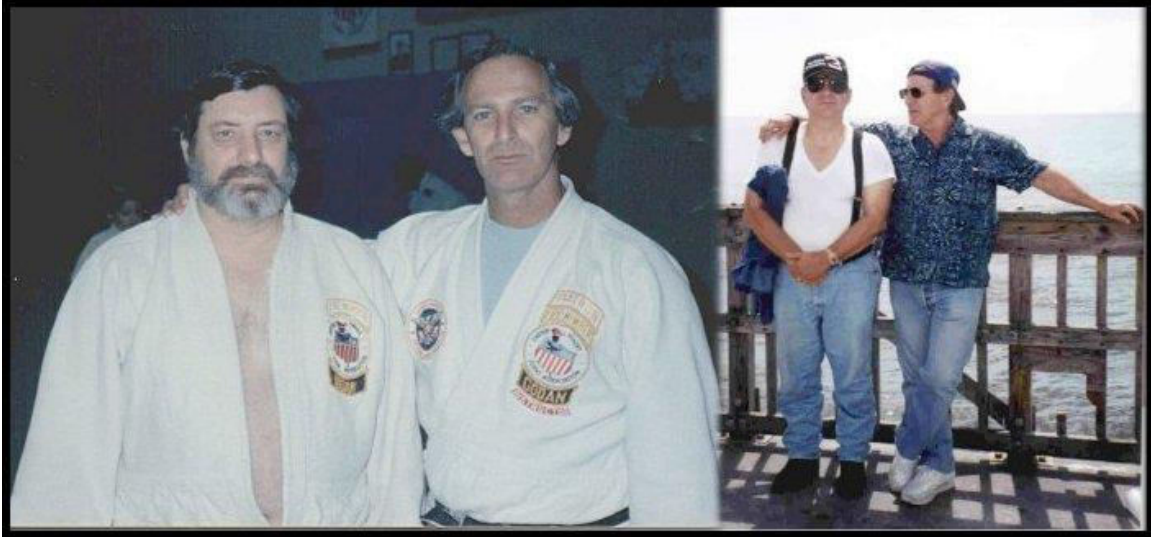
Judo Instructors in Miami, FL -- 1970's Workout

As time passed it became unbearable to continue with running the Judo clubs and trying to keep peace within the Judo community in south Florida, so I gave up. The Judo politics that nearly ruined it all for us became so bad by 1980 that I walked away from the Judo organizations and formal teaching.



Old Jeff at 50 years old in black karategi doing unknown kata.

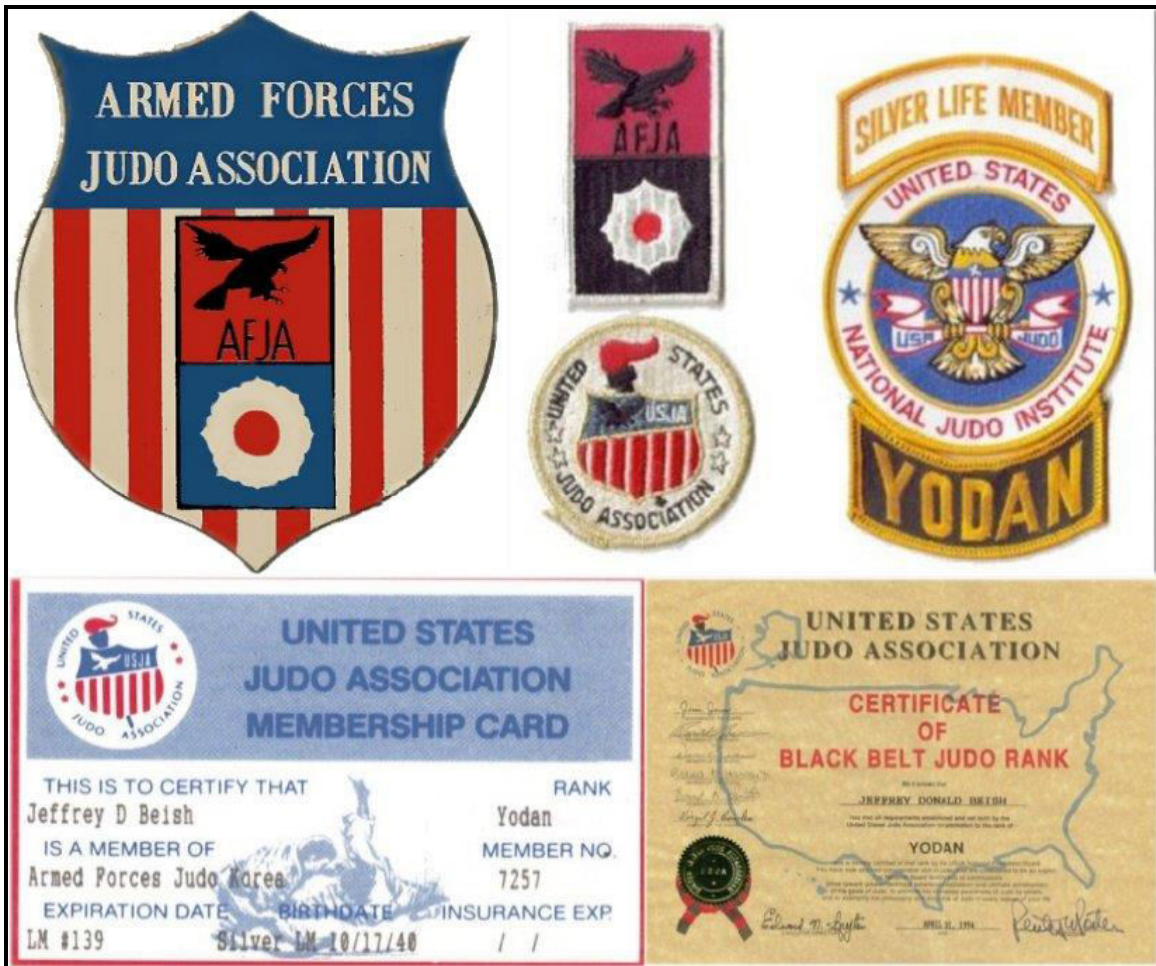
After leaving Bergstrom AFB, Texas in late 1966 I would occasionally drop in on the Judo club and visit with my old friend Robby Robinson. He was transferred to Offutt AF Nebraska later in 1967 and then returned to Bergstrom later on for a brief period before being transferred to an Air Force base in Thailand, then to Vietnam and to Hawaii and places unknown to me. I lost contact with him after that and it would take 22 years before we were reunited. He had moved to Pensacola, Florida sometime in the 1980's and while reading a Florida Judo newsletter saw my name listed as Judo club contact in Miami and called me. Just by coincidence it was a few days before our 23rd wedding anniversary and that Robby had been our best man back in 1965, so we flew up to meet him and reestablished our friendship.



Old friend and best man at our wedding, Robby Robinson and me. LEFT in 1988 and RIGHT in 2002.

After that Robby moved to Korea and stayed in contact with us. He then moved to California for a few years and then to Germany where he continued establishing Judo clubs. A few years later he returned to Thailand for several years then returned to Pensacola, Florida where he lives today with his family.

The last time I practiced Judo in a formal setting was during October 1988 at a clinic held in Stuart, Florida with Phil Porter, Harold Forshey, Robby Robinson and others. I continued to practice Judo at a few clubs around the county until sometimes in 1989 when I just gave up due to health problems and lost interest.



TOP LEFT: AFJA Window Decal. TOP CENTER: Judo patches (AFJA patch and USJA patch). BOTTOM LEFT: USJA Membership Card. BOTTOM RIGHT: Yodan Rank Certificate

After several years of strife between Eastern AL and the Unions a strike was called during February 1989 and the company declared chapter 13 a few days later, so the Eastern airlines came to an end in early March 1989. I had already prepared for that end and had interviewed for a job with the United States Naval Observatory ([USNO](#)) a few months earlier. After waiting several months I was then employed by the USNO Time Service Station (NOTAS) after working for Eastern Airlines for 16 years. After 7 years the Miami Time Service Station was closed and in September 1996 we moved to Dale City, Virginia where I worked at the USNO in Washington, D.C. until retiring in May 2001 and we moved back to Florida, only this time it was in central Florida.

Our son had been in the U.S. Navy for 12 years when he applied and was accepted to Officers Candidate School in Pensacola NAF, Florida and graduated as an Ensign in May 2000 and has now served for more than twenty years. Recently he was promoted LCDR (O-4). In 2002 he was stationed at Atsugi NAF, Japan at the time so we traveled to visit with them in March 2002 to visit him and his family, and to meet with a group of astronomers that I know. We toured an observatory in Yokohama and finished the day at a Chinese restaurant in [China Town](#). Our son took us to visit the [Kodokan](#) in Tokyo. We also visited a nearby Judo club where my son worked out occasionally.

While visiting the Kodokan Museum and Library I talked with Naoki Murata (Curator of the Kodokan Judo Museum and Library) for at least an hour. I mentioned attending the SAC/ARDC Combative Measures course and other events at the Kodokan in the early 1960's; whereby he remembered being there at the time and had assisted Kotani and other sensei occasionally with the classes. We had a great time reminiscing about the "old days" in Judo and shook hands, and bowed, to our new or renewed friendship.



Photograph of Kodokan as it appeared in 2002



Trip to Japan and visit to Kodokan. LEFT: me beside statue of Jigoro Kano during March 18, 2002. RIGHT: main dojo floor as seen from balcony seating section.



June and me in Kodokan Museum (March 2002)

After a three year tour of duty in Japan he was transferred to San Diego, California where he was assigned to the aircraft carrier Nimitz. During July 2005 we flew to San Diego, CA to see our son and his family and were invited to visit with the North Island Judo Club. An old Judo friend from the 1960's, Jerry Hays, sent instructions to find the dojo. We arrived to meet new Judo friends and from the past; Chuck Neuendorf, Dr. AnnMaria (Rousey) De Mars, Joe Ciokon, Jerry Hays, Bruce Knight and Gene Reid, Jim Parker, Matt Ozaki, Roy Moore, Jr. and Bob Spreter. Dr.

AnnMaria De Mars won a gold medal at 1984 World Judo Championships. Roy Moore, seen in the photo below, is Roy "Pop" Moore's son (see the above photo: "Retirement event at Bergstrom AFB, TX for Roy "Pop" Moore).

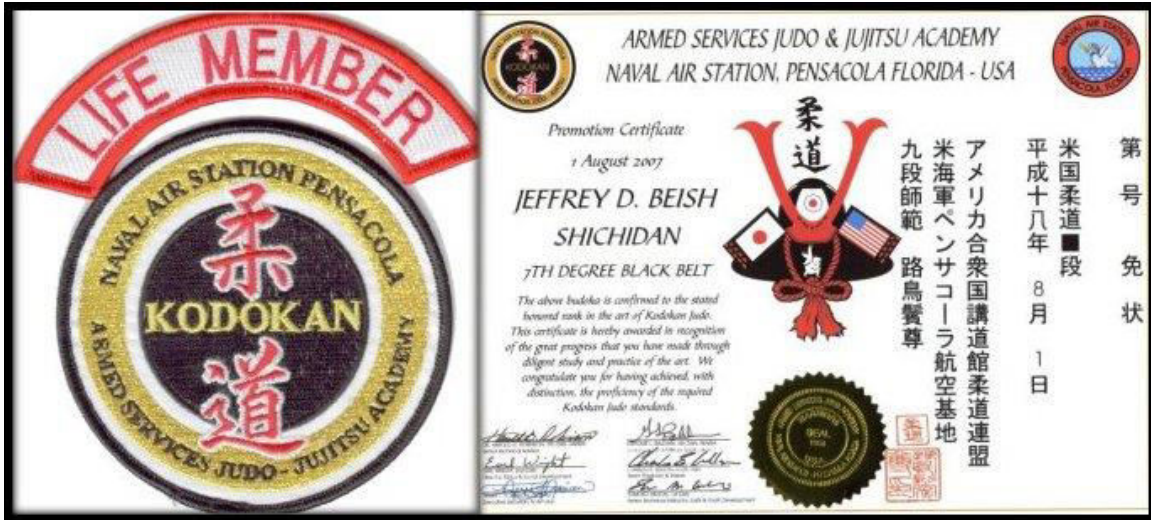


Image of our visit to San Diego North Island judo club. RIGHT: me, Roy Moore, Jr, and Lt. Don Beish (LCDR).

Two of the Judoka shown in this photo, Jerry Hays and me, also appear in the 1963 Armed Forces Judo Training Camp at the Denver School of Judo. My son, seen in the above image on the right, continued Judo on and off since the 1970's. Our son, Lieutenant Don Beish, served on board the Nimitz and in 2006 then made a journey to Army Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan to serve a six month tour there. He returned to San Diego in the last week of September 2006. So far he has had five tours in and around the war zones of the Middle East. Donald Beish was promoted to Lt. Commander on June 1, 2009 and served a year in Bahrain (in February 1, 2010 - March 1, 2011) and then retired from the Navy after 22.5 years. He also is on contract in Camp Eggers near Kabul, Afghanistan for 6 months.

All the years of Judo practice, sometimes intermittent, the most important aspect of it all was having fun and meeting with friends. While I never reached any milestones in competition I did try occasionally to participate in tournaments, both as a competitor and as an official. After the last tournament in 1966 my forte was teaching Judo at the many clubs that I visited or created over the years. From the early Air Force days to the present I still maintain contact with many of my old Judo friends and participate on Internet discussions about Judo and the other Martial Arts I participated in, usually in the history departments, but try to keep up with current events. Judo runs deep into our blood and it is hard to forget even after years of being away from it. In "feeling sorry for myself" periods my wife reminds me of the thousands of Judoka I taught over the years and then it all is better. The one thing in life that will never let you down is having friends and hopefully students that still remember old sensei.

Many of my friends and associates in Judo are gone now and many have retired, never to be heard from again. Their memories will forever be burned into my mind. They helped to shape the character of thousands of people and in a way they fulfilled the dreams of the founder of Judo, Jigoro Kano, who created a Way for people to use their human strengths and knowledge to benefit mankind.



Recent Rank with the Armed Services Judo-Jujitsu Academy ([ASJJA](#))



Miscellaneous tie/lapel pins and belt buckle gifts from past. **Top-left:** Given to me by Mas Yamashita at Kodokan in 1960. **Top-center:** given to me by Kotani sensei at Kodokan in 1961. **Belt buckle** given to me by Mas Yamashita. **Bottom left to right:** AFJA pin (1960), next AFJA 5-year pin (1965), USJA pins and NJI pin. **RIGHT PANEL:** AFJA Lighter from the 1960's.



USJA Necklace and Judo Key Chain

During the days when my Judo activity was waning, my interest in astronomy increased. While on a tour of Miami sometimes during February 1973 we visited the Miami Museum and Space Transit Planetarium. I met several of the local amateur astronomers there and was impressed with their astronomy club and observatory on the roof. They invited me to return and join their group, so I did. Some of my astronomy interest led me to a new job in 1989 and I went to work for the U.S. Naval Observatory at the Time Service Station nearby. For a more complete story of this new endeavor, see [Radio Dish](#) and [My Observatory](#).

The Time Service Station was closed in August 1996 and the U.S. Naval Observatory transferred me to their Washington stations in September. We then moved to Dale City, Virginia. While at the USNO in DC I would visit the weight training room in the Secret Service office, close to the U.S. Vice President's home, and worked out with a couple of Judoka that were interested in some of my old jujitsu and karate ideas. I had to curtail that activity due to my bad knees that were deteriorating at a fast pace. In May 2001 I retired from Federal Service and we moved to Lake Placid, Florida. My formal Martial Arts activities came to an end, except that I now participate on several Internet Martial Arts discussion forums and frequent conversations with my old friend, Robby Robinson, who is still active in the [Armed Forces Judo-Jujitsu Academy \(ASJJA\)](#) in Pensacola, Florida.



Series of random photographs of me in Judogi over the past 49 years

A photo and announcement from Gail Stolzenburg (USAJudo) concerning Jerry Reid: Wayne Martins, Jim Martins, St Clair Newbern, Dale Lehman, Pete Turchiano, Nolan Fry, Ted Henderson, Gail Stolzenburg, Jerry Reid, and Ace Sukigara. Bill Johnson and Mel Slate arrived later. Missing were John Randall, John Rowlett, Joe Rude, Frank Rude, Skip Weigand, and Bud Morgan. We celebrated Jerry Reid's 75th birthday on October 2, 2009 and paid tribute to leaders

who had passed away: Pop Moore, Mel Bruno, Suki-yuki Kotani, Bill Bardsley, Rick Mertens, Nelson Cross, Sam Numajiri, and Frank Fullerton.



L2R: Wayne Martins, Jim Martins, St Clair Newbern, Dale Lehman, Pete Turchiano, Nolan Fry, Ted Henderson, Gail Stolzenburg, Jerry Reid, and Ace Sukigara

My 80th Birthday Party and Judo Students

October 17, 2020: June and Natalie arranged for my 80th birthday party and Scott and Cindy Maxon came and stayed for awhile. Then two of my Judo students from Miami; Alex Herrera and his wife came. Alfredo (“Willy”) Zagales and his son, Israel, came. We had a great time reminiscing old times after so many years.



Alfredo Zagales, Pedro Flietas, Alena and Alex Herrera



Alex Herrera, Me and Alfredo Zagales

SUMMARY

It seems like it has been just one life time that ago I walked into that YMCA and found a Judo class in session. I was only 11, going on 12 years old, and began a life in the Martial Arts that took me away from my country boy background. While my first few years were hit and miss, at times skipping months between practices, the interest that my first Judo sensei tendered to me and instilled within me has lasted for nearly six decades. The sensei after that until I joined the U.S. Air Force are but a wisp of memory now; however, meeting Mas Yamashita in boot camp revived my interest in Judo and that time it was for real. We partnered up for the next two years and practiced Judo at a variety of dojos in and out of the USA. He left in late 1961 or early 1962 and after a few letter exchanges I lost complete contact with him.

Judo in Austin, Texas was nearly a 24/7 activity for 18 months until I had to move away. We were at some dojo almost daily and even on weekends when most people had a different life.

The time spent in Austin, Texas will never be forgotten and would take too many words to express on paper all the fond memories of that time in my life. So, this will be the place to finish my personal Judo career and write some brief history of how Judo was introduced to the U.S. Air Force.

Writing an autobiography has proven to be very difficult and being objective is even more difficult. Personal bias and faulty memory often results in creative thinking, especially those memories of bad times, so my attempts here have been to be as honest and factual as can be. Looking at my time in Judo all I can say is that most of the time was for recreation and fun, with occasional periods of competing without much success. After returning the USA from Okinawa my Judo skills diminished and training time was almost zero, so my tournament days would only be for fun and just a chance of winning. Recreational Judo has always been my forte and for that I will forever be thankful to the people who taught me and became my friends.

Publications and Meetings

1. American Judoman, November 1965, P 10, "Mertens Conducts First Junior Clinic at Bergstrom AFB.
2. Official Judo Bulletin, Spring 1966, P. 25, JBBF Black Belt Promotions.
3. The Executive Directors Newsletter, June 1974, p.5.
4. The Executive Directors Newsletter, USJA VIP, p. 10, February 1975, p.5, Rick's Rambles, USJA
5. American Judoman, May-June, 1975, p.9, "Grass Roots and More in South Florida," Jeff Beish.
6. The Executive Directors Newsletter, Coaches Manual, June 1975, p.9, Rick's Rambles, USJA.
7. American Judoman, p. 19, July-August 1975, "Coaches Manual Committee," Jim Nichols, Names Jeff Beish on committee.
8. The Executive Directors Newsletter, August 1975, p.5, Rick's Rambles, USJA.
9. American Judoman, January-February 1976, p.11,16 , "You Can Build Champions Too!" By: Terry Kozell, mentions Beish article
10. Attended USJA Board Meeting in Bossier City, Louisiana January 1976.
11. American Judo, January-February 1977, p. 11, Open Letter to the USJA, Jeff Beish.

Chronological History of Senior Judo

Prior to joining the U.S. Air Force I practiced Judo at YMCA in Charlotte, North Carolina May 1952 through April 1953. Then during the summer from 1953 until May 1955 I practiced Judo with the Jr. High School wrestling coach. After that I practiced Judo intermittently through late-1955 until May 1959 at the Boy's Club in Knoxville, TN.

Date: 01 March - 06 April 1960

Location: Lackland AFB, Texas

Dojo: Lackland Judo Club (ATC Judo Association)

Sensei: Masato J. Yamashita (Shodan), SSGT Linan (Nidan)

Promotions: Rokyū 15 March 1960

Remarks: One of the drill instructors was a black belt in Judo and introduced me to several Judoka. We did light workouts. Masato J. Yamashita was in the same squadron in basic training and we became friends. Boot camp was not the place for serious Judo workouts or making friends.

Date: 07 April - 22 November 1960

Location: Chanute AFB, Illinois

Dojo: Chanute Judo Club (ATC Judo Association)

Sensei: Masato J. Yamashita (Shodan)

Promotions: Yonkyū 01 May 1960, Sankyū 01 JUN 1960 (AJA #60-3).

Remarks: We both were then transferred to Flight Simulator School at Chanute AFB, IL where we both joined the base Judo club. We practiced at the club and together when time permitted and participated in club Ko Haku shiai. We finished up the remaining basic training and began flight simulator (training devices) school. Rick Mertens in for clinic, date unknown.

Date: 28 December 1960 - 30 July 1962

Location: Naha AB, Okinawa,

Dojos: Naha AB Judo Club (PACAF/AFJA), [Ryukyu Police Dojo](#), University of the Ryukyu Judo Institute, and Kodokan Judo Institute, , Tokyo, Japan

Sensei: Masato J. Yamashita (Nidan), Uehara (Sandan), James Hatch (Nidan), Barnard Wrye (Shodan), Sumiyuki Kotani (Hachidan, later 10th Dan), Seichi Sirai (Hachidan), and Eiichi Miyazato (Godan)

Shiai:

1. Naha City Judo Championships (February 1961)
2. Naha Promotions Tournament (February 1961)
3. 313th. Air Division Championships (March 1961)
4. 5th. Air Force Judo Championships (March 1961)
5. PACAF Judo Championships (March 1961)
6. Air Force Judo Championships (March 1961)
7. Naha Police Dojo Tournament (June 1961)
8. All Okinawa Judo Championships (July 1961)
9. Naha Police Dojo Tournament (August 1961)
10. Okinawa Promotions Shiai (August 1961)
11. Air Force/Okinawa Friendship Weekly Shiai (numerous dates)
12. 313th. Air Division Judo Champ (February 1962)
13. 5th. Air Force Judo Champ (February 1962)
14. PACAF Judo Championships (February 1962)
15. Judo Tourney at Futema (July 07, 1962)

Awards: All Okinawan Sportsmanship Award (July 1961)

Special Training: Kodokan Judo Institute, Tokyo, Japan: Attended Judo training on various dates during 1961 and 1962. During my stay at the Kodokan for a week or two while visiting Japan or participating in Judo tournaments I would spend time at the Kodokan for training or to watch. I also trained and lived at the old Kodokan, and trained at the Tokyo Police training center. In March of 1962 I spent three weeks at the Kodokan while at the 5th. Air Force Judo Championships and attended training sessions with Kotani Sensei and his foreign students. I was made Ikkyu there in 1961.

Special Training: SAC/ARDC Combative Measures 5-week course at Kodokan (August 1961).

Special Training: Nagamine Karate Dojo. Matsubayashi-ryu (Shorin) Karate training there. Nagamine was the Master of this school and 10th Dan.

Special Training: Miyazato Judo and Goju-ryu karate Dojo. Special Judo and Karate training there. Miyazato was a 9th Dan in Goju-ryu.

Promotions: Nikyu (skipped), Ikkyu 15 JAN 1961 (PACAF/AFJA/JBBF K-1603).

Promotions: Shodan, 01 May 1962 Nagamine Karate Dojo.

REMARKS: Working conditions made it possible for me to participate in numerous Judo activities, tournaments, and training programs. Judo practice was nearly every day. I joined the PACAF Judo Association and the Air Force Judo Association.

Date: Late-1961 - mid-1962

Location: Kadena AB, Okinawa,

Dojos: Kadena AB Judo Club (PACAF/AFJA)

Sensei: Richard Whitcher (Sandan), Bob Coffey (Nidan), Preston Pugh (Nidan)

REMARKS: Worked out at Kadena Judo Dojo during tournament training sessions and a few times during 1961 and 62.

Date: 03 August 1962 - 31 January 1965

Location: Westover AFB, MA

Dojo: Westover Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Sam Williams (Yodan), Ronald Hubbard (Sandan), James Jarvis (Sandan).

Remarks: I was TDY most of the time while stationed at Westover and practiced Judo there when time permitted and three other Air Force bases while TDY: Turner AFB, GA, McCoy AFB, FL, and Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

Dates: January 1963, July 1963, December 1963, March 1964, June 1964, October 1964.

Location: Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

Dojo: Kittyhawk Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Preston Pugh (Nidan), John Powell (Sandan)

Remarks: When the Kittyhawk Judo Club was first formed in the stage in the auditorium of the "Civilian Club" on one of the bases. Preston Pugh and I were friends from Okinawa. The club started with mats on the stage area and moved later out to the main floor.

Dates: October 1963, April 1964, August 1964

Location: Turner AFB, GA

Dojo: Turner AFB Judo Club

Sensei: John Sinclair (Nidan).

Remarks: Judo activity was only once or twice a week. John also had Judo club at YMCA in Albany.

Dates: 28 February 1965 - 26 September 1966

Location: Bergstrom AFB, and Austin, Texas

Dojos: Bergstrom Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF), Austin Judo Club (JBBF)

Sensei: Harold "Robby" Robinson (Nidan), Roy "Pop" Moore (Yodan), Wayne Atkins (Nidan)

Responsibilities: Assistant Instructor

Shiai:

1. 2nd. Air Force Judo Champ (March 1965)
2. Austin Texas Judo Champinionships (April 1965)
3. Bergstrom Judo Champinionships (July 1965)
4. Bergstrom Black Belt Tournament (May 1966)

Awards: 1965 Largest Judo Club in the AFJA, 1966 Largest Judo Club in the AFJA.

Promotions: Certified Shodan 28 SEP 1965 (AFJA/JBBF 1-1988).

Remarks: On TDY I practiced at Dyess AFB, Texas, Columbus AFB, MS, and Carswell AFB, Texas. Largest club in AFJA 1965-1966. Clinic at Carswell AFB, TX with Kotani Sensei (mid-May 1965).

Date: 19 September 1965 - 30 November 1965

Location: Columbus AFB, MS

Dojo: Columbus AFB Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Bill Villafane (Shodan), Alton Beck (Ikkyu).

Remarks: I was TDY there and helped the club register in the AFJA.

Dates: June 1965, July 1965, January 1966, October 1966 - February 1968

Location: Carswell AFB, Texas

Dojos: Carswell Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF), Carswell Youth Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Gerry Reid (Yodan), Ace Sukigari (Sandan), Jay Cooper (Shodan).

Responsibilities: Assistant Instructor for Gerry Reid then as Head Instructor.

Awards:

1967 Membership Certification - United States Judo Federation (USJF).

1967 AFJA Class "A" Judo Club

1968 AFJA Class "B" Judo Club

Remarks: Due to TDY trips was unable to organize Judo clubs properly and attendance fell off.

Dates: March 1965, September 1966, August 1967, January 1968.

Location: Barksdale AFB, LA

Dojo: Barksdale Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Rick Mertens (Sandan), George Emert (Nidan), John Preston (Sandan)

Remarks: Occasionally worked out with Rick's club while TDY there. Visited U. of LA with George Emert once and worked out with his students there.

Date: May 1966

Location: Dyess AFB, Texas

Dojo: Dyess Judo Club (AFJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Name forgotten, one was a competitor in my weight class in SAC tournaments.

Remarks: Was there only once and Judo practice was only once or twice a week.

Date: various dates in 1968 - 1969

Location: Binghamton, NY

Dojo: Binghamton YMCA (USJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Hidi Oshishi (Sandan).

Remarks: Hidi was a karate teacher in Binghamton; however, practiced Judo and had a club. Judo practice was not frequent but when I was there between assignments I would visit with Hidi or work out at the Y.M.C.A. with my son.

Date: November 1968 - September 1969

Location: Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

Dojo: Kittyhawk Judo Club (AFJA/USJA)

Sensei: John Powell (Sandan), Johnny Barton (Nidan), Ernie Curry (Shodan), Joan Millay (Shodan), Bonny Corte (Shodan), Dave Thorne (Shodan), Dana Rogers (Shodan).

Responsibilities: Head Instructor for juniors.

Awards: 1968 Largest Judo Club in the AFJA, 1969 Largest Judo Club in the AFJA, Appreciation Award for Service.

Remarks: I returned to the Dayton area while working at Wright Field. Judo club was very active and I took over the junior class from Dana Rogers and Johnny Barton. Several noted Judoka were members of this club and the U.S. Olympic Team worked out at least twice while I lived in the area. My assistant was a young Air Force Lieutenant (name forgotten).

Date: March 1971-June 1972

Location: Frieberg, Germany and Bremgarten AB, Germany

Sensei: (name forgotten)

Remarks: Worked out only a few times during my stay in Germany with several black belts at a dojo in Frieberg. I would do practice by myself at the simulator shop frequently.

Date: July 1972 - January 1973

Location: Binghamton, NY

Dojo: Binghamton YMCA (USJA/JBBF)

Sensei: Hidi Oshishi (Sandan).

Remarks: Hidi was a karate teacher in Binghamton; however, practiced Judo and had a club. Judo practice was not frequent but when I was there between assignments I would visit with Hidi or work out at the Y.M.C.A. with my son.

Date: February 1973 - March 1975

Location: Miami, FL

Dojo: Kolligian Judo Club (USJA)

Sensei: Henry Kolligian (Sandan), Rick Mertens (Godan), Phil Porter (Rokudan)

Responsibilities: Assistant Instructor for Kolligian in various Judo clubs around Dade County

Promotions: Nidan 28 MAR 1974 USJA ND-LM-139

Remarks: Assisted Henry in several clubs around the Dade County area.

Date: February 1973 - January 1977

Location: Miami, FL

Dojo: Sylvania Judo Club (USJA)

Sensei: Jeff Beish (Sandan), assisted by Alberto Sanchez (Shodan)

Promotions: Sandan 18 NOV 1975 USJA SD-LM-139

Awards:

1974 USJA Class "B" Judo Club

1974 USJA Class "A" Judo Club

1975 USJA Class "A" Judo Club

1975 USJA Bronze Star Judo Club

1976 USJA Class "B" Judo Club

Remarks: Established Judo Club in Community School system. Had big response there and turned club over the Alberto after a few years.

Date: February 1973 - January 1978

Location: Miami, FL

Dojo: Silver Bluff Judo Club (USJA)

Sensei: Jeff Beish (Sandan), assisted by Pedro Flietas (Ikkyu)

Awards:

1974 USJA Class "B" Judo Club

1974 USJA Class "A" Judo Club

1975 USJA Class "B" Judo Club

1975 USJA Class "A" Judo Club

1976 USJA Class "C" Judo Club

1976 USJA Class "B" Judo Club

Remarks: Established Judo Club in Community School system. Had big response there and turned club over the Pedro Flietas after a few years.

Date: September 1976 - January 1977

Location: Miami, FL

Dojo: Homestead Judo Club (USJA)

Sensei: Len Vieira (Sandan) and Jeff Beish (Sandan)

Remarks: This was the last Judo club I established and was very slow to get started. The officials at the base did not seem to care if we had a Judo club there or not. I was paid \$9 per hour to teach Judo. After only four months I gave up and retired from formally practicing Judo.

Date: August 1988 - 1995

Location: Miami, FL

Dojo: Pensacola Judo Club (USJA)

Remarks: Just affiliated with this club and did not practice Judo during this time.

Date: 1994 - 1995

Location: Miami, FL

Dojos: Armed Forces Judo Korea (USJA)

Sensei: Robby Robinson (Rokudan)

Promotions: Yodan 01 APR 1994 USJA YD-SLM-139 7257, Godan USMAA 03 July 1995.

Remarks: Just affiliated with this club and did not practice Judo during this time.

Date: August 1996-2001

Location: Dale City, VA

Dojo: Armed Forces Judo Germany (USJA)

Remarks: Just affiliated with this club and did not practice Judo during this time. Went to Secret Service gym at USNO a few times to teach self defense techniques to agents. Not much workout time though.

Date: August 2001 - Present

Location: Lake Placid, FL

Dojo: Pensacola Judo Club (USJA), Armed Services Judo-Jujitsu Academy (ASJJA)

Promotions: Club promotion to Rokudan 01 January 2006 Armed Services Judo (ASJJA), Shichidan, 01 August 2007 ASJJA.

Remarks: Just affiliated with this club and did not practice Judo during this time.