

Executive Protection Pioneers:



Team KDI innovatively leading the way with a new breed of security professionals

There are certain unmistakable facts that we, as professionals in the protective industry are faced with: the world has changed drastically in recent years; dangers are abundant, and threats are surfacing from every possible angle and backdrop. The modus operandi and the extents to which aggressors go to are unprecedented. They are consistently becoming more unpredictable: weapons are far more advanced; political, ideological and geographical differences have influenced International relations; and sadly, the willingness to cause harm on a mass scale has never been more prevalent. Furthermore, the training quality levels in the security industry worldwide have been drastically lowered. The reason for this, I believe, is multi-fold. It is a result of the immense saturation in our field after 9/11: more people are clamouring to the call for greater security in failing economies, many who are in search of a successful job in an industry that by some reports, has grown by 150% since 9/11, and the increased multitude of online courses available which churn out hundreds of “*security agents*”. This has culminated in a steady decline in standards in an industry that requires a studious, practical skill set.

There is a solution: development in the nature of EP and the EP agent. There must be constant and fluid adaptation within the security body as a whole, with a consensus on the approach to training and specifically what constitutes valid, effective and quality training. Moreover, there needs to be a consensus on recruiting, defining and assessing the most competent agents and companies in the international field. In order to secure the longevity of quality EP work, it is vital that additional guidance is provided to the mass of potential principles that exist across the globe. Civilians, corporate executives, and VIP’s must all be enlightened to the fact that not all bodyguards are the alike. They do not necessarily share the same attributes regarding training, calibre, merit, experience, ethics, or integrity. I would dare say that many principles have the misguided perception that a bodyguard is a 6’8”, 350lb male whose training emphasis consists of hitting the gym and appearing to be capable of catching bullets with ease. It is unfortunately common for VIP’s and potential principles to be unaware of the depth of precision that must be exercised in order to provide absolute, unmitigated security. Imagine if you will, the analogy of a bodyguard as a matador and not as a large hefty aggressive bull, as is often perceived by individuals outside our industry. In order to avoid certain injury or death, the matador expressively exercises poise and tactics, utilizing his training in every aspect of his manoeuvring in the midst of the arena. Integral to this performance is a series of both mental and physical exercises which include closely monitoring and anticipating the behaviour and tendencies of the bull in its surroundings. We, as bodyguards perform in an arena that is clearly far greater than that of the matador, and the influencing variables are much greater and complex. However, the model applies; our actions have serious implications and consequences. Our assessment of any given situation allows us to fail only once. We cannot afford to be right some of the time; we must be right all of the time.

What is clearly required is elite training for the acquisition of a unique skill-set. Changes within the unique arena must be monitored, skill-sets must be continually maintained, and all of the key elements must be applied to evade and eliminate the threat. All elements combine to provide crucial success of any mission.

As protectors of human life our perishable skills should never be neglected, and with endless patience, we should constantly seek for opportunities to hone and define our skills. Pride can be lethal in our industry; one can always learn more, and one can always benefit from shared knowledge and experience. We must study how others have reacted in the past to challenges similar to those we face in the present. With an insatiable appetite for information and a thirst for perfection, security professionals have to continually develop sound and practical methods for the application of our craft. When improving and developing my own skills, refining my abilities, and acquiring quality training experience, I seek out only the best. I have been fortunate enough to train at some of the most well-known academies in the world and work with several of the top international agents while pursuing the best of the best in the industry. This practice has served to forge connections that have achieved only successful missions. I recognize exceptionalism when I see it, and KDI is practising true exceptionalism by harnessing cumulative strengths and gaining recognition as a pioneering institution.



Karl de la Guerra and Team KDI

With the endorsement of IBSSA President, Prof. George Popper of the globally esteemed International Bodyguard and Security Services Association, a coalition of fine instructors, influential professionals and an outstanding curriculum has come together in Charlotte, NC.USA. At the helm of the pioneering institution, Team KDI is Karl de la Guerra, a man of towering intellect matched only by his force of character. Along with a dedicated military and law enforcement career, his resume also boasts over 30 combined years of experience in international security, international security management, and counter terrorism. In 1979, De la Guerra envisioned a future in which collaboration between like-minded entrepreneurs and brave seasoned advocates could merge to create an unstoppable force. The intended purpose of this force was to forge a niche club, where honour, integrity, and trust were the binding elements. As a veteran member and only American Master Instructor of the IBSSA, De la Guerra has long understood the integral significance of networking in the professional arena. Furthermore, the culmination of that networking into a strong web of reputable links (*all with the common aspiration of bringing about the most effective instruction and provision of safety and security worldwide*) has been the driving force in De la Guerra's daily life for nearly four decades.



His combined passion for duty, diligence, and dedication lead to his instrumental delivery of the Knights Hospitaller, Sovereign Order of Cyprus to the United States. His October 2010 investiture into Knighthood in this almost 1000 year old institution of chivalry not only speaks to his charitable demeanour and his drive to positively affect the world, but also to his innate instinct to serve and protect. “*Sir Karl is true to the foundation of Knighthood. We are emissaries ensuring safety, recognizing the needs of society and aiding everywhere possible*”, says Sir Dan Starks, Team KDI member, fellow Knight of the Order of Cyprus, founder of the Starks Training Institute, leading Self-defence expert, and host of the Emmy Award winning television program “Don’t Be a Victim.”

Founding board member and gallant promoter of the KDI model, Andrea Lee notes that *“Karl’s ever-widening circle of influence is all collectively serving the purpose of what is at the forefront of his focus each day; to be able to provide protection wherever it is needed, at a moment’s notice.”* This reputable marketing and public relations strategist has been contributive since the inception of Karl de la Guerra’s vision and identifies *“Karl as a talented, competent, experienced man, who just happens to be one of the best security specialists in the business.”*

The KDI coalition is, in and of itself, an alliance for combined action and it is growing rapidly. Currently, Team KDI comprises contacts from the East to the West coast of the United States, as well as international affiliations in many countries. Team members include law enforcement, SWAT members, tactical medical personnel, Marine Corps, high level government and immigration contacts, military special operations Instructors, and canine detection experts. Moreover, several covert surveillance specialists from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, security specialists in Southern Africa, Dutch military, legal and banking experts, and media and self-defence aficionados complete this sphere.

When De la Guerra entered the law enforcement service 35 years ago, he realized the value in establishing ties that bind in a world where integrity and professionalism were becoming scarce. His brainchild was codified almost 2 years ago with the integration of these ties into what is today Team KDI, a consortium of independent companies.

“I hate the idea of a world where the ideas are solely my own,” says Karl, speaking about his faith in teamwork. *“It is unimaginable to reach all avenues as individuals, but as a team there is no limit to what we can accomplish.”*



KDI Training and IBSSA in the USA

As all security professionals are aware, finding the right EP training facility in order to maintain one’s skill and discipline is more difficult than some may believe. This is due to many factors; time constraints, geographical location, logistics, and finances. Having the opportunity and need to research this myself, I can attest that attending KDI is a sound choice.

I have had the privilege of witnessing the proficiency and intensity of instruction which Karl de la Guerra and his team provide, and I have truly discovered benefits in all aspects of the training. The camaraderie one builds with fellow students and the networking opportunities that exist are invaluable.

It is fundamental to note that this is not just another training facility or a stationary school for bodyguards; this is a distinct group of professionals who are currently operational in their respective fields of expertise; each at the top of their game. Suffice it to say that it is so much more effective to be taught by those who are passionate about what they do each day and who remain up-to-date on the most recent information, techniques, and equipment while concurrently pursuing amelioration of their own skills.

Practice makes perfect, but it also makes permanent. This is why I cannot stress enough the importance of learning the correct practice early on.



As the US branch of the IBSSA in North Carolina, Team KDI is breaking new ground. They provide a curriculum that is diverse and they are jointly spearheading the creation of an elite executive protection agent: one who is

capable of avoiding hostility, pre-empting attack, preparing for the worst, considering all possible variables and consequences, defending lives and assets utilizing the ingrained techniques of rigorous training, and recovering from almost any assault should it occur, as a team. *“As an executive protection team you must be trained to mitigate any situation, either natural or man-made for up to 20 minutes prior to the arrival of first responders,”* states Karl de la Guerra.

Team KDI has begun revitalizing and re-inspiring concepts in an industry where the foundation is the agent; where mental and psychological preparedness, along with physical aptitude, comprise the KDI protection specialist, both the graduate and the member. Instructors within Team KDI are all fervent believers in the philosophy of training in the environment in which one will utilize the training. This is vital both physiologically and mentally. The fact is that one always resorts to one’s training when placed in a dangerous situation. What good would it do to train in the forested outdoors when the area of protection consists of an office in a metropolitan building? How effective could an agent be when faced with an altercation in a highly populated mall, when the only training received has been theoretical? The need for preparedness against a plethora of possible outcomes in a dangerous world has never been more necessary. It is far better to possess the skill and never need, it than to need it and not possess it. It is this hands-on reality- driven teaching methodology that sets KDI apart from conventional training academies and other firms. All protective security personnel can benefit from the model of training offered at KDI. Everything is created around a need: it is a custom, demand driven teaching method. Team KDI can and will train to the unique needs of a specific workplace as well as create a simulated environment to mirror that workplace at their facility in NC. *“Team KDI understands the driving need to protect those you are responsible for.”* This is truly unique and diverse.



The KDI/IBSSA International Tactics and Aviation Training Centre located on the grounds of Queen City Helicopter in Gastonia, North Carolina boasts a first-class and real- world setting on an extensive plot which features tactical buildings and wooded areas. The course outline has a multi-discipline focus with the intent to provide the student with all the tools necessary to exercise the task at hand. A security or bodyguard background is not required to attend training at KDI; course levels for the novice as well as the operational expert are offered.

Course Offerings include:

- International Corporate Executive Protection: This course has various levels, from an 8 hour basic introduction to EP to an annual 70 hour Advanced course offered in collaboration with the York County Sheriff’s Department and SWAT Team in South Carolina.
- Tactical Carbine and Counter Home Invasion
- Private Sector, Law Enforcement or Military Based Tactical Operations
- Emergency/Trauma pre-hospital Medicine
- International Law and Legal Briefings
- Law enforcement Tactics and Operations



- Private Investigator Tactics and Operations



- Cyber-crime Threats and Counter Measures
- The International Business of Executive Protection
- Helicopter Operations and Air Base Ground Defence: PSCCO
- Protective Services Dive Master Course: PSDMC

Rocco Novelli of Queen City Helicopters promotes the importance of having “*state-of-the-art facilities, offering quality service and projecting the image of safety to distinguish one’s school from any other.*” Their cooperation with KDI has enjoyed much success in the past two years. They have particularly focused on the course creation and development realm; specifically the PSCCO course, which is the only one of its kind offered to EP agents. This is a unique qualification for securing the environment of the airbase and its surrounds. Furthermore, the necessity of protecting a principle/other agents in water as effectively as on land, has led Team KDI and veteran IBSSA member of the Press Department and law enforcement Correspondent, Mr. Attila Kutas to create The PSDMC qualification. As a Dive Master and Emergency First Response Instructor Mr. Kutas has aided Team KDI in the development of



integral course material which no other EP training School offers.



Following the methodology of real-world scenario-based training, Airsoft weapons are employed to simulate action and reaction within force-on-force training. Since 2013, KDI has worked closely with Robert Sorrels of RED Tactical Airsoft in Pineville, North Carolina, who facilitates state-of-the-art Airsoft products. “*The use of Airsoft for training purposes is largely preferred over paintball and Simunition due to the honour and integrity needed to call oneself out when hit,*” says Sorrels. This is fundamental in gauging the real situational response of agents to team members as well as to principles in the midst of a hostile encounter.

Not only does Team KDI teach these courses, but they offer each as a service within the company resume. Mr. Lester “Chip” Johnson; Homeland Security authority, Cyber Forensics specialist and Team KDI member, is the eyes and ears of this consortium. Hailed as one of the leading technical security experts in the nation, he offers unique skills to Team KDI. He is a steadfast believer in the necessity of this full range, full service company the increasingly dangerous world of physical and cyber warfare.

On both fronts, whether operating or teaching, Karl de la Guerra is a dedicated team player and he applies a delegation methodology to all of his ventures. Past students and current colleagues have commented that his ability to see, discern, and fill the gap within an operation is distinct. “*He has the foresight to draw on one’s particular strengths, realizing their unique potential and the eventual value to the team effort as a whole,*” Say the members of the York County SWAT team. The basic ability to lead is not enough. There needs to be an opportunity to display that ability in order to influence those in your midst. This is what the leader Karl de la Guerra knows and practices.

It is evident that training or working with KDI is a multi-sensory, multi-dimensional experience, truly one that cannot be found elsewhere. The Team KDI graduate is a patient, diligent scholar, both of his art and of the environment in which he practices his craft. He harnesses and engages his best qualities in a combined effort. Teamwork is paramount to success.

As protectors of human lives we must never cease the process of our intellectual growth. It's what you learn once you know it all that truly counts. *"I consider De La Guerra's effort to remain a constant scholar inspiring"* says Daniel Figueroa, KDI Assistant Instructor. Team KDI's distinct combination of guidance and tutelage equals a mentorship that will empower students to seek out, knock on and open doors to successful careers in the EP world.

Taking strides with Team KDI and The Consortium

The combination of entrepreneurs, each at the top of their respective professions, each occupying a leading role in industry collectively pooling their resources, is the genius behind the business of Team KDI. These individuals are all on the pulse of innovation in the USA and the world today.



The KDI infrastructure has many divisions that occupy the Team's efforts: a media component with a television show through One in Custody Productions, a weekly Radio broadcast aptly titled *"Bodyguard Lifestyle"*, P.S. Training and Protective Day Services. In 2014 alone, Team KDI has secured contracts of involvement with the Olympic Games in Brazil, as well as a number of executive protection deals with leading corporate entities in the United States.

Along with his collaboration with the IBSSA and the Knights of the Order of Cyprus Karl de la Guerra is purposefully practising the ancient code of discipline and integrity in a modern twenty first century setting. *"If it is not legal, ethical or moral, KDI is not involved."*-De la Guerra

Team KDI is a live, growing asset within the security world, challenging the business model of today. The truth is, there is no condensing this Institution in life or in print. If KDI is recognized for anything in the protective security arena it must be for two things: an exceptional training academy with a curriculum second to none, and a resource for international corporate security. KDI's motto of Experience Trust and Respect are not only words, but a code by which Karl and his team live and work by.

About the Author



I am Jonathan Wallace II, an Executive Protection Specialist and owner of Native Executive Security (NES). We are an International Executive Protection company with bases in the USA, Europe and Southern Africa.

I am an astute scholar of military and American history and know the value in the phrase *"to develop as a decision maker one must surround oneself with decision makers."*- Gen. Dwight. D. Eisenhower



Thus, I am proud to have made a personal and professional connection with Karl de la Guerra and the Team of KDI. As an instructor of legal theory and personal protection myself, I aspire to Karl's practice of concise relevance with every lesson. I look forward to witnessing and participating in the growth and synergy of this enterprise for the future.