

PHOTO BY THOMAS SANDERS

KELLY MCCANN

The award for Self-Defense Instructor of the Year is a relatively recent addition to the *Black Belt* Hall of Fame, one designed to recognize the movers and shakers in a significant new direction the martial arts are taking—namely, reality-based self-defense. That should in no way detract from the accolades due this year's winner because he was making a name for himself in the field long before we created the category in 2006.

The martial artist I'm talking about is Kelly McCann. If you own a copy of the June 2008 issue of *Black Belt*, you no doubt recognize his mug from the cover and know his reputation. If you have the July issue, in which the second half of his interview ran, or if you have any of several subsequent mags, in which more than a few letter writers lauded us for landing McCann, the unsung hero of military self-defense, in a civilian magazine, you have the same head start.

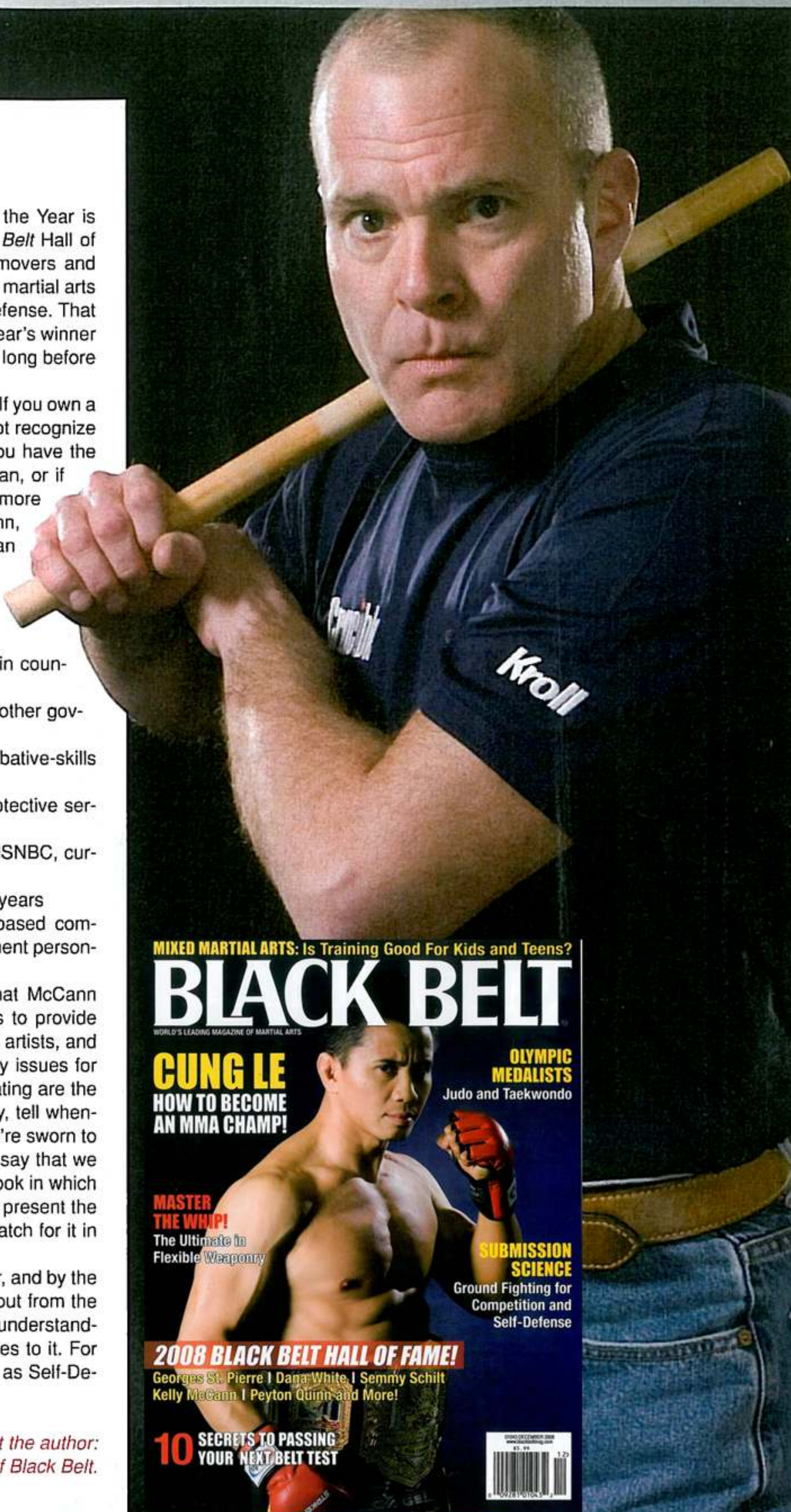
For those who aren't so familiar with this pioneer in the reality-based self-defense genre, here are some highlights from McCann's résumé:

- former U.S. Marine Corps special-missions officer in counterterrorism and counter-narcotics
- consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense and other government agencies
- developer of numerous concealed-weapon, combative-skills and crime-avoidance courses
- subject-matter expert in close-quarters combat, protective services and terrorism
- former military and security analyst for CNN and MSNBC, current contributor to Fox News
- teacher of combatives and special-ops skills for 25 years
- president of Crucible, a Fredericksburg, Virginia-based company that trains military, government and law-enforcement personnel.

With qualifications like those, you might guess that McCann has lived through enough altercations and ambushes to provide him with fodder for plenty of lessons for civilian martial artists, and you'd be right. (See the aforementioned June and July issues for tip-of-the-iceberg proof.) But what's even more fascinating are the stories McCann and his Crucible cohort, Jack Stradley, tell whenever the voice recorder isn't running. Unfortunately, we're sworn to silence regarding most of those missions, but we can say that we managed to coax McCann into writing a combatives book in which he'll render some of his secrets declassified so he can present the public with another dose of hard-core self-defense. Watch for it in 2009.

In any case, it's been determined by you, the reader, and by the staff of *Black Belt* that in 2008, Kelly McCann stands out from the crowd for his efforts to protect the public and further its understanding of real violence and the most appropriate responses to it. For that reason, he's being inducted into our Hall of Fame as Self-Defense Instructor of the Year. ✂

About the author:
Robert W. Young is the executive editor of *Black Belt*.



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