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Sword and Pen

Official Newsletter of the International Combat
Martial Arts Federation (ICMAF) and the
Academy of Self-Defense

EDITORIAL

Take The Enemy Off His Guard!

"EXPERIENCE TEACHES US THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER TO PREVENT AN ENEMY FROM POSTING THEMSELVES THAN IT IS TO DISLODGE THEM AFTER THEY HAVE GOT POSSESSION."

- GEORGE WASHINGTON

"**T**HE element of surprise". In eight years of taekwon-do this was never mentioned to us — not even once. Nor was it mentioned save perhaps three times in passing (with practically no real emphasis) in our ju-jutsu training. Ditto for varmannie and kenpo-karate training. In fact, while there were certainly indirect references to the use of the surprise element during instructional periods (ie "Don't telegraph your moves!", "Don't be predictable when you spar!", "Try to get your opponent when his mind is elsewhere", etc.) no one, during the course of the

classical/traditional martial arts training that we had, ever said simply and plainly, and repeatedly:

"CULTIVATE THE ART OF TAKING YOUR ENEMY COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE, WHETHER ON THE ATTACK, OR WHEN OBLIGED TO COUNTERATTACK. THEN CAPITALIZE ON THE ADVANTAGE THAT HAVING GOTTEN THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IN YOUR FAVOR HAS GIVEN YOU — AND KEEP ON ATTACKING WITH FURY AND DETERMINATION UNTIL YOUR ENEMY HAS BEEN DESTROYED! NEVER LET YOUR ENEMY EVEN KNOW THAT IT IS YOUR INTENTION TO FIGHT BACK, IF POSSIBLE. AND WHEN HE LEAST ANTICIPATES IT, GO AFTER HIM WHERE HE IS WEAKEST WITH YOUR STRONGEST NATURAL WEAPONS — DEVASTATE HIM WITHOUT MERCY! — SEEING TO IT THAT HIS ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO FURTHER ENDANGER YOU HAS BEEN TOTALLY NEGATED BEFORE YOU DESIST IN YOUR OWN ONSLAUGHT AGAINST HIM!"

Only when we (thankfully!) got our hands on the works of Applegate and Fairbairn, at or around the age of twelve, and then when we luckily enrolled with Charles Nelson, did we finally receive admonishments to employ the element of surprise whenever possible since, as these realists made clear, we were not playing a game when we found ourself in a dangerous situation requiring that we defend ourself!

We mention the foregoing because if you haven't been POUNDED with the need to master the use of the critical element of surprise in your

(presumed) "martial" studies, we understand. So permit us to fill the gap in your combatives education, and to do so most emphatically, right now.

There are a number of crucial differences between any form of combative sport and actual close combat. One of them, certainly, is the fact that the degree and extent of threat that any enemy poses in real combat cannot possibly be surmised no matter how skilled or knowledgeable the combatant may be. Unlike a contest in which both contestants agree to begin on a given signal (and consequently, the true element of surprise is removed entirely from the engagement) in close combat it must be assumed that one's adversary will either endeavor to take one by complete surprise (from behind, or at a moment of distracted involvement with something beside conflict) or he will attempt to do something (pull a weapon, throw dirt, have an accomplice move in from an unexpected quarter, etc.) so as to totally surprise his adversary in a manner that leaves him little hope of surviving.

One must either master the use of the element of surprise for his own use, and learn how to subvert the application of this element by a potential enemy, or one will fall victim to any thug or opponent who appreciates the value of surprising his opponent, and who uses it skillfully.

Surprise trumps size, strength, armament, numbers. Or at least, it certainly permits an individual who possesses the requisite skills with which to dispatch enemies in battle to trump those factors, should he encounter them. And realism and practicality demands that we all train with the assumption that our enemies will all be physically superior, armed, determined to maim or to kill us, and assisted by accomplices.

In order to defeat such an enemy the element of surprise should be utilized in the extreme. The defender, for example, who trains in combat skills for self-defense, will want to make the employment of the surprise element as much a part of his personal style as he does the cultivation of hand and foot blows.

Here are some suggestions for training that will enable you to cultivate the use of the element of surprise naturally, and with excellent tactical success:—

- Abandon all sparring and competition approaches to training. By conditioning yourself to face off against an opponent, ready yourself while he readies himself, and anticipate that you will be confronting a solitary, unarmed adversary under controlled and agreed upon conditions, you are conditioning yourself to become an excellent competitor, but an inept combatant. It is simply impossible to duplicate hand-to-hand combat in a sporting context, and it is the height of reckless stupidity to try. By increasing the brutality of a sport (ie UFC/Cage fighting/MMA, etc.) you do not change the fact that it still is a sport. And all sports forbid (quite appropriately) that either entrant begin until the other is ready. The combatant always seeks to shock, surprise, and take his enemy off guard; he has no concern for "beginning on an equal footing".
- Train for reality. Reality dictates that an attack will come in one of two ways: a) With your awareness of its onset, or b) Unexpectedly (from behind, etc.). In "a" type situations you can always gain the preemptive surprise advantage by simply assuming what we have dubbed the "Relaxed-Ready Stance". Stand off-angled to any stranger who approaches you, establishing and maintaining proper distance (ie outside

arm's reach) from that stranger. Make no judgments, assessments, or evaluations of anyone who you do not know personally and who approaches you. Have one, fixed, set response: preparedness and wariness: condition yellow, at least; condition orange, if there is the slightest sense, suspicion, feeling, or intuition that there may be trouble. Your hands should be raised to sternum level, relaxed and open. Your eyes remain on the stranger.

In a "b" type situation you can develop the kind of reaction skills, such as we teach in American Combato, that immediately throw you on the offensive and — within the briefest possible interval — enable you to turn into the attacker, actually going after the assailant who had initially caught you unexpectedly. All good combat techniques are predominantly if not exclusively OFFENSIVE. Thus, when caught off guard, the technique of self-defense (actually, as we prefer to call it, the technique of counterattacking) is so vicious, destructive, and catches the attacker himself off guard, that the offense shifts speedily, and it is your attacker who suddenly finds himself under assault.

- Become attack minded.

While taking an unexpected assailant by surprise is possible with a quick, aggressive counterattack, the best way to surprise any enemy is to preempt him. That means what we have been urging since the late 1960's: When you are attacked, attack the attacker! This requires attack mindedness, and it demands a ferocious capacity with aggressive, damaging techniques. Nothing, absolutely nothing, will enable you to better implement the element of surprise than will exploding in the face of a would-be attacker at the very moment his physical onslaught begins, and disabling him before he can carry his onslaught to fruition.

- Emphasize BLOWS as your combative forte.

It takes less time and requires less potentially "telegraphing" physical action to lash out with a simple blow than it takes to employ any kind of hold or throw.

Discard all of the in vogue "groundgrappling/wrestling/competition" foolishness. Cultivate fast eye jabs, chopping attacks, kicks to knees and testicles, and other simple, very basic skills. These blows can be initiated when needed from any normal, natural, nonchalant position. Their impact on target (or even near target!) will surprise and momentarily stun any opponent.

- Follow up! Never, never, never allow yourself to believe in or to train for "one blow stops". A simple fact about the element of surprise is that it can be achieved ONLY ONCE. Therefore, having achieved it by your initial action, press the attack relentlessly! Do not let your enemy get set, and try to eliminate him before he realizes what is happening. Keep on attacking, attacking, attacking, and attacking! Your enemy will then be kept utterly off balance physically and psychologically, and he will be so effectively surprised that it is unlikely he will be able to offer even token resistance to your actions.

- Think dirty! Literally — instill in your mind the mandate to exploit without mercy any opening that you can, in an encounter. Throw sand, dirt, a glass of water, or anything that you can't use as a weapon to inflict injury on your attacker. Cultivate a distaste for anything resembling "fair", "ethical", or "sporting" actions. Violent offenders pick their victims. If, after "reading" you as a soft target you suddenly go at a troublemaker like a rabid dog — with not the slightest concern for the damage you inflict upon him — you can bet he'll be surprised. **BJS**

An Interesting Historical Piece

THE debate concerning "which is more effective, grappling or striking?" is not new.

Sensible combatants have always recognized that blows must comprise the core and foundation of real world hand-to-hand combat techniques, and that selected grappling actions (such as strangulations and chokes, certain throws and takedowns, along with leg scissoring and spinallocks) will be included in all comprehensive close combat/self-defense systems.(although most of these actions, if not all, may be excluded from short-term courses that are taught in wartime or other emergencies.

We thought that our readers would enjoy seeing an excellent article — authored more than 35 years ago — in which this matter was given a rather interesting presentation:—

Taken From Health & Strength Magazine, June 1972

JU-JITSU VS. BOXING and WRESTLING

by Halford E. Jones

"Ever since Gus Lesnevich knocked out the American Judo Champion in the second round of a match set in Chicago during the Second World War years, controversy has raged over the merits of boxing, judo, jiu-jitsu, and wrestling. On that decisive night, the supremacy of boxing was supposedly reasserted in the entire sporting world.

"Black Belt Magazine reported a match between Gene LeBell, judo and wrestling expert, and Milo Savage, a boxer, in which LeBell defeated

Savage with a judo throw followed up by a choke hold which rendered the boxer unconscious in the fourth round.

"What do such matches prove? It is really difficult to say, unless the rules and conditions are conducive and open enough to allow full use of boxing and jiu-jitsu or judo techniques. Usually, the boxer must wear the judogi or 'jacket' which permits of grasping and strangling, while the boxer must contend with the judoka who does not wear gloves, either training gloves or speed gloves, nor shoes. Quite likely, the padded judogi helps stultify the blows of the boxer, who, wearing an unfamiliar jacket, is hampered in movement and so cannot throw adequate punches due to a binding effect on the arms and shoulders.

"Recognized boxing punches are allowed and all contest judo throws and holds, except kicking in the karate manner. However, judo is confined usually to just throws and hold and the atemiwaza or Ate-waza branch is forbidden, partly because few American judo-ists know much about it. This branch, an integral part of the various esoteric jiu-jitsu styles and once part and parcel of the 'Kano' system, now known as Kodokan Judo, is extremely deadly and could render the average boxer, who under ring rules is vulnerable, easily unconscious.

"Gene LeBell has since gone on to research and show certain weaknesses in judo as compared with the sport of wrestling, both professional and amateur. This comparison between sports has often proven fruitful, as between fencing and karate and boxing and karate, where similarities allow for a transfer of skills. But boxing, judo, and wrestling have very few things that are directly transferable and so constitute separate arts and sciences. An attempt to mix them up leads to a hodge-podge of little value.

"But jiu-jitsu was given an opportunity to test itself against wrestling in a historic match between George Bothner and Katsukuma Higashi at the Grand Central Palace in New York City. Described as 'wrestling with death', the agile American wrestler defeated the Japanese expert in three falls despite all of the "wily" Oriental tricks of jiu-jitsu, such as, a kick to the stomach, a chop to the throat, and shoulder throws, but to no avail against catch-as-catch-can wrestling.

"Higashi was no match against combinations like headlocks, half-nelsons, cross-buttocks throws, scissors and hammerlock that Bothner put on him so successfully, though the American admitted it was one of the toughest fights he had ever had.

"Hampered by a heavy judo jacket, Bothner found that he could not grip the silken jacket of the jiu-jitsu expert in this no-holds barred match in which the Japanese received the larger share of the purse. Higashi was training the New York police under the auspices of Theodore Roosevelt, then commissioner of Police.

"Higashi went on to compose with H. Irving Hancock, the book, The Complete Kano Jiu-Jitsu in which we find these curious, but enlightening rules stated: "It is understood and agreed that the jiu-jitsu man, whether he fights a boxer or contests with a wrestler, shall be allowed to use in his defence any of the tricks that belong to the art of jiu-jitsu. It is further understood and agreed that the jiu-jitsu man assumed no responsibility for any injury or injuries caused by any act or thing done during the contest, and that the jiu-jitsu man shall be held free and blameless from any such ill effect or injury that may be received during the contest."

"Modern boxing, is, of course, hampered by rules which permit no fouls or illegal punches or tactics. Judo, likewise, has the same restrictions. But the old time boxing, much of it bareknuckle style, knew no such restrictions nor did true jiu-jitsu. Orthodox wrestlers, particularly of the Graeco-Roman style, also were restricted to certain rules which barred special holds, counters and throws. Today, professional wrestling is closer to the old style bareknuckle days than the so-called "safe" sports.

"A Mr. Barton Wright began bringing Japanese jiu-jitsu experts to England around 1900 for the purposes of exhibition and demonstration and promotion of the art.

"These "jiu-jitsu Japs" appeared in vaudeville and circus arenas and lent a mysterious character to the art by displaying the more fantastic throws, take-downs, defences against knives and guns. Along with the difficult terminology of Japanese, it took a long time to learn judo or jiu-jitsu despite the number of books revealing the tricks which caught popular imagination. The majority of the tricks are isolated techniques and only with the Kodokan system did some kind of training rationale become evident. But unfortunately, this rationale eliminated the more dangerous holds, • throws, strangles, and blows and kicks, which had so much appeal in the early part of this century.

"Some of these manoeuvres became part of the professional wrestling scene, where the 'judo chop,' sleeper hold, and double leg nelson became popular until the advent of karate, which transformed the 'judo' chop into the deadly and lethal 'karate chop! Both karate's and judo's use in the professional wrestling rings have been condemned by various wrestling

publications and editors, but to no avail. The Japanese wrestlers whose knowledge of karate and judo is always tacitly assumed have mixed in some of the colourful Sumo ceremonies, stances, and tactics, which may perhaps remotely resemble some of those in karate and judo, but very tenuously.

"But in the kempo style of jiu-jitsu we find the most deadly tactics, a system of self-defence against sudden attack with the intent to kill and responding in the same lethal manner! Under the old prize ring rules, notably in England, killing was not the aim but nevertheless many injuries occurred. The Pancratium of ancient Greece, Rome, and Persia combined boxing and wrestling in a style that can be traced, according to some experts, to ancient India.

"Sada Kazu Uyenishi, author of The Textbook of Ju-Jutsu, relates how he defeated the strongest man in the British Army and Navy- by allowing one of his pupils, who had practiced for only five months or so, contest the giant figure. The pupil won decisively. He found it comparatively easy to unbalance the majority of European wrestlers with a simple pull on the collar or sleeve to cause a fall."

Comments:—

We think it best to remember that there is no correlation between sport and combat, and unfortunately the "testing means" utilized to demonstrate which approach to combatives is "best" has always been competition events. Far wiser, in our opinion, would be looking at COMBAT — real, honest-to-goodness battlefield and street combat — and see who, in general, has tended to do best when actually attacked; using his skills

NOT against a competitor, but against an attacker (or multiple attackers) who attack — perhaps from behind or from some other unexpected quarter, possibly with a weapon. Clearly, research and experience has proven that blows of the hands, arms, feet, knees, elbows, head, coupled with biting, clawing, jabbing, etc. prevails.

Welcome Fear!

SO often people take up the study of self-defense because they do not want to be afraid. "Be silent and fearless" one well-known taekwondo school in this country advertises. The appeal is understandable. Fear is unpleasant, and many males feel humiliated and ashamed of being afraid and of experiencing the manifestations of fear when they confront a troublemaker. So, when the claim is made that by training in such-and-such one will no longer feel fear, the sale has been made!

The truth is, however, that not only will you not "become fearless" (unless of course you become deluded, go insane, or die), but you **REALLY DO NOT WANT TO BECOME FEARLESS**; not, in any case, once you understand what fear really is, what it does for you, and how lifesaving it can be in a dangerous or difficult situation.

All you need to do first of all is recall any time when you felt real fear — of anything, not necessarily physical assault — and observe that the fear came on you instantly, in a flash. It also produced a definite physical reaction. Your body changed. You were "charged up" suddenly; your entire organism in a tiny fraction of a second became "ready" for something.

Recall also that the fear was involuntary. It charged you up and "readied you" (albeit very uncomfortably) with no need on your part to take conscious steps of any kind.

Then recall that fear quite possibly left you feeling a bit confused. You didn't know whether to plunge ahead or to withdraw. (Had you had some kind of previously set plan or decision in place regarding what you would do if "such a situation" came up, then you perhaps remember going ahead with that plan with vigor and speed.

Fear eliminates any need for deliberately preparing to face a crisis — for "warming up", if you will.

Fear powerizes your entire system — inside and out — because the fear energy (a term we coined years ago, when writing for a popular gun magazine) provides you with three or four times your normal strength, resilience, agility, and speed. And this happens involuntarily.

Fear allows you to carry out whatever planned and practiced response you possess (ie which you have acquired through decision, or through training and practice) without a second's hesitation. Thus you are able, thanks to fear, to undertake the most effective course of action when you are hit by the "FIGHT OR FLIGHT" response. (This is the response that causes you to experience the capacity to plunge ahead or to withdraw from the situation, and — without training and preparation that has produced a specific decision about what you'll do — you might possibly feel confusion and a kind of "stymied" or "stuck" sensation.)

Fear is only harmful to you if and when this phenomenon of "being stuck", or of being frozen and unable to decide right away whether to plunge ahead or to withdraw takes hold of you. **THIS STATE IS CALLED "P A N I C"**. Panic is what blocks you from effective or decisive action, not any fear that you feel! It is your reaction to fear and not fear, that might potentially be a problem for you in any emergency or difficult situation.

Please reread that last paragraph.

Observe that what fear does (ie warm you up, charge you up, increase your strength, resilience, agility, and speed — and in every way greatly facilitate your ability to make the involuntary "fight or flight response" work for you, is **ALL BENEFICIAL AND HIGHLY DESIRABLE!**

You want to be afraid. It feels unpleasant, but like any necessary, powerful, foul-tasting medicine, it is good for you!

What proper combat training must do is:

- Train you in what you need to do when you find yourself immersed in a dangerous situation of physical violence so that you have a predetermined, effective decision already in place regarding what you will do and how you will react when the "fight or flight" reaction to sudden danger manifests, and avoidance is not a possible option. This will eliminate panic. You will not only know what to do . . . you will have decided that you are going to do it, well ahead of time.
- Acquaint you personally and deeply with the nature of the fear reaction, and condition you thoroughly to embrace, welcome, and be grateful

instantly for the onset of fear — realizing what it is doing for you, and understanding how it will serve you in your carrying out of the decision you have made concerning how you will handle a violent emergency.

We do all of this during the course of training people in American Combato, and we urge anyone needing self-defense instruction and pursuing it on his own or through a program that may not be sufficiently attuned to this need, to compensate by addressing the subject himself!

Physiologically, fear eliminates the body's ability to render fine motor moves. Gross (ie "big", major muscle-group type) body movements are enhanced enormously, however. Thus, effective combat/self-defense movements are gross, major muscle group type actions. Low stomping kicks, elbow smashes, head butts, biting, chopping with handaxe blows, heel of the hand smashes, clawing and gouging, kneeing, hammerfist strikes, and front kicks, etc. done with fierce, aggressive followup and determination — particularly in combination sequences — are the ticket. Occasionally a simple, basic throw or a stranglehold might be useful . . . but the heart, soul, and essence of real world unarmed combat is BLOWS. Applegate, Fairbairn, O'Neill, Brown, Begala, Leather, Hipkiss, and virtually every notable real world instructor of the justifiably respected "world war two methods" knew this, taught it, and saw the validity of it demonstrated time and time again in real combat, during wartime. To dispute these facts today merely marks one as being uninformed about what works in real hand-to-hand combat.

By mastering and incessantly training in the types of techniques decribed above, proper use of the involuntary fear response will be boosted and greatly enhanced.

FOCUS — visual and mental — describes what fear does to the individual's psyche. Exactly what is needed to win in serious combat. Something known as the "peripheral optic disfunction phenomenon" occurs (ie tunnel vision, or the tachy-psyche effect). You visually lock on to your enemy. This assists in the proper zeroing in on the enemy's most vital target areas!

Desperation grips one in serious combat, and produces a mindset that excludes one's own awareness of pain or injury (providing one has predetermined to ATTACK and to utilize one's fear energy properly when combat cannot be avoided and when one must stop one's adversary).

All to the good!

The great heavyweight boxing champion Floyd Paterson once wrote that if he didn't feel fear as he entered the ring, he knew he was in trouble. However, when he did feel fear as he entered the ring, he had no doubt that the outcome would be favorable to himself. That's because Paterson, like every great boxer, came to understand and to embrace fear as his ally.

Do the same. It will serve you, too.

When you learn how to utilize fear another great thing happens to you, psychologically. You develop confidence in and you perfect reliance upon that part of your mind that takes over in any emergency: ie your subconscious. Here's an example:

If you drive a car then you doubtless have had the unfortunate experience of having someone suddenly run out or walk in front of your vehicle while you were driving. Perhaps they entered a crosswalk without looking, or possibly they simply ran out into the street. In any case, remember how your foot slammed instantly on the brake pedal as a sudden fear gripped you? You did not make a conscious decision to step on the brake. A long time ago you learned that when a sudden stop was needed you had to quickly step on the brake. After years of driving (and of course, using the brake pedal thousands of times) the process became motor-memorized and reflexive. In the emergency, your SUBCONSCIOUS mind took over, and without the delay of conscious intervention, undertook to carry out the action required to avoid hitting whoever was in the path of your vehicle.

It is exactly the same in quality self-defense training. Simple moves are motor-memorized and committed to reflex by endlessly repetitive practice. Mental conditioning to attack immediately establishes in your psyche the decision to use those skills if you ever must use them. Then, in a sudden emergency, your subconscious mind takes over, and without any delays caused by the interference of conscious deliberation, you GO!

The subconscious mind works in a manner similar to a computer. Stored in the computer's memory is, say, a certain item of information. Tap the right key and the computer kicks out the item of information instantly. When you master skills of combat and drill sufficiently with the proper mindset, those skills become buried permanently in your subconscious mind. Although you may not have been consciously thinking about it a moment prior, if and when you are attacked, your subconscious ("computer memory") kicks out the necessary actions that you require, and you simply do them.

When once you begin to get fear under control (not eliminate it, or try to eliminate it, but get it, and the energy that it provides, under control through the correct process of mental conditioning) you will then be ten times more formidable in any violent encounter than you believed possible.

None of this is magic. None of it is mysterious. None of it is outside your reach or beyond your ability to acquire. Believe us, please!

We learned much of that which we now teach through our studies during the late 1960's, and throughout the 1970's of psychology, psychiatry, mind control, and hypnosis. We have been a licensed hypnotherapist for 20 years now, and we are convinced that hypnosis is one of the most valuable tools for conditioning the mind of the combat arts trainee. The entire method of Class instruction that we developed and utilize is based upon the incorporation of mental conditioning via principles employed in hypnosis to the group training environment.

We caution readers at this juncture that they should use a great deal of discretion before accepting any "combat instructor" as a qualified hypnotherapist (something that we fear many might begin to resent themselves as, after reading this article!). We would add, regrettably, that they might be wise to use a great deal of discretion before accepting anyone purporting to be a "combat instructor", period!

But that is an aside.

We wish simply to point out that hypnosis is an extraordinarily valuable tool (we call it weight training for the mind) and readers might wish to

explore the subject further. Books by LeCron, Caprio, and Arons are a good place to start. Certainly make the effort to learn about hypnosis before entrusting yourself to anyone presenting himself as qualified to work with you as a hypnotist!

Back to our thesis:

Fear is your ally. If you are serious about developing real ability in self-defense and a reliable, practical knowledge of close combat with and without weapons, then this is a subject of enormous importance to you.

Everyone who is sane feels fear. But there are few people who have learned to appreciate fear's great benefit, and the fact that anyone aspiring to practical proficiency in combatives should welcome and embrace fear, while training hard on the proper skills through which fear's energy may be put to its finest and most reliable use.

We sincerely hope that we have helped you through this presentation.

Relax Those Thrusting Fingers!

IN American Combato we utilize two distinct methods of employing the fingertips when striking:

a) The straight fingertips thrust

and

b) The compressed fingertips jab

Both are extremely effective and each should be developed by the unarmed combat trainee.

Right now we wish to offer a valuable tip for those who are working on the straight fingertips thrust. Briefly, this action is delivered simply by extending all of the fingers of the striking hand and thrusting them — in a deliberate, straight attack — to either the enemy's eyes or throat. Those are the only realistic targets for this attack.

While it is likely that some older readers remember their first having observed this action being espoused as standard by the late Bruce Lee (remember his "lead fingertips jab?") in point of actual fact it was probably first formally taught and advocated strongly in a manner similar to the way Lee employed it by Pat (Dermot) O'Neill, the famous WWII hand-to-hand combat master who trained the First Special Service Force in his brand of wartime mayhem. O'Neill utilized a side-on stance and stressed a fast, low kick using the lead leg, and a fast fingertips thrust using the lead hand. (We do not now suggest that Lee copied this from O'Neill. We are only pointing out that the action was developed well ahead of the Bruce Lee era — during WWII — and taught as standard to Canadian and American commandos by a man who only recently has begun to receive acclaim for his part in the Western martial tradition.

We said that the technique of fingertips thrusting is executed "simply by extending all of the fingers of the striking hand and thrusting them — in a deliberate, straight attack — to either the enemy's eyes or throat". When doing so there are two points to keep in mind: 1) Do not press the fingers

together. Instead, simply hold them together. If they are not strongly in contact with each other, that's fine. 2) Relax the fingers for optimum impact power. Tensing them (ie as is done in traditional karate when executing the "nukite" (spearhand) strike we have found to actually WEAKEN the delivery! We are employing this action, remember, against two soft targets: eyes and throat. In testing this against training dummies we have found invariably that students can deliver much more force by holding the fingers extended and loosely together but not tensing them.

This may sound odd, but it is true. We are not concerned with the sort of action taught in karate and in ch'uan fa in which the straightened fingers are driven into the body. And when, sensibly, the extended straight fingertips thrust is driven into the throat or eyes more power is definitely attained (with zero chance of jamming the fingers) by keeping the fingers relatively relaxed, rather than forcibly tensed.

Try it on a BOB or Fighting Man dummy! You'll see!

Freehand (Calisthenic) Exercises

NOTHING can equal the efficiency, quality, and reliability of sensible weight training as the supreme all round physical training medium. However, this certainly does not mean that other forms of exercise entirely lack value or merit.

One of our friends and associates until his passing, John McSweeney, was a great kenpo-karate and self-defense teacher. John is "The Father of Irish Karate". It was McSweeney who brought Ed Parker's early kenpo-karate to Ireland in the early 1960's, and schools that he started there are still

flourishing. He personally developed an excellent system of exercises for all-round body building and for strength and development in martial arts skills. He called his system "Tiger Moves". These excellent exercises, which are based on the stretching actions of jungle cats, are highly recommended for those who train with weights and who, for whatever reason, must travel or otherwise be away from their customary weight training facilities. Tiger Moves require no equipment whatever.

Tiger Moves may of course be practiced instead of using weights, but if weights are available we'd strongly recommend that trainees utilize them when they can do so.

We applaud John McSweeney's accomplishment in creating his series of Tiger Moves. They are seven in number, and are undisputedly valuable fitness builders.

Standard pushups, situps, kneebends, "cat" stretches, neck rotations, squat-and-thrust movements, chinning, running in place, and many isometric exercises (ie exercises in which great force is exerted without movement against an immovable object, such as a wall) are all valuable and beneficial, and their importance when weights are unavailable must never be discounted.

Beginners to combat arts and physical training may well start off for their first two or three months using calisthenic exercises only. Then, if at all possible, they should begin a sensible weight training program. More advanced students should make it their business to learn freehand exercise methods so that, when unable to use weights, they can retain much of their strength as well as their fitness and condition.

Do not kid yourself. Calisthenics are an excellent form of physical training.

The Criminal Mind

IN an incredible interview with a psychiatrist the late "Iceman" (Richard Kuklinski) revealed a fascinating ignorance regarding his own development as a ruthless, unemotional killer. We note also that the psychiatrist during this HBO televised interview hardly revealed any insight himself, when Kuklinski expressed a complete lack of understanding about why he was able to kill, and to feel nothing, afterward, regarding his awful act.

We can answer Kuklinski's question. It only takes a bit of common sense (which, we acknowledge, is not at all that common, any more):

Since Richard Kuklinski grew up under what can only be described as HELLISH conditions (being beaten and otherwise terrorized and abused, watching his younger brother being murdered by one of his parents, and suffering an entire litany of egregious violations to his person, psyche, and dignity from the two people in the world — ie his parents — who had the responsibility to raise, educate, and nurture him), AND since Kuklinski suffered at the hands of bullies and tormentors other than his parents (as if, parental abuses that are all but unimaginable in their degree of evil were not sufficient!) how in hell could he have NOT lost all concern for that which he did to others — and, in fact, for "others", period!

We certainly are not an apologist for Richard Kuklinski. He grew to be an evil man, and the path of evil that he was cutting through human society needed to be brought to a halt — as it eventually was. However, we cannot help but feel great compassion for Kuklinski the little boy. And, we cannot help but feel contempt for all of those "good people" out there who permit themselves behavior that, perhaps not to the degree, but certainly in identical quality, parallels that behavior that produced the adult Richard Kuklinski.

Abuses of human beings, regardless of the degree, have effects. In Kuklinski's case they produced a cold blooded, dangerous, antisocial killer. In other cases (thankfully, few) they have produced other cold blooded killers. However, in general, they produce unpleasant, unkind, somewhat violent, often socially and economically predatory people. They produce the kind of people that lead all of us, when we have sufficient encounters with them, to develop a cynicism and mistrust of others. And, unfortunately, they sometimes nudge people to become victimizers, themselves.

We ourselves were the victim of an enormous number of abuses when we were a child. By the Grace of God we managed to withstand that which we were subjected to, and we grew away from the environment and the human predators responsible for our mistreatment. We studied psychiatry and psychology, and we became immersed in the martial arts and in physical training. That saved us! But it did not leave us entirely unscarred.

We were fortunate in that we chose a path that led us to an understanding of that which had been done to us, and that gave us the determination to

learn how to overcome such influences and then teach others to overcome them.

We learned a lot about humans and about reality.

We learned something very chilling. That is, we create dangerous human predators by the insanity that we all too often take for granted as "acceptable philosophy".

Some people subjected to mistreatment and unconscionable evil when they are small children and adolescents grow to be inhibited, withdrawn, frightened and unactualized radical underachievers. Others grow to be compulsive approval-seekers, always feeling the desperate need to "please" and to "get along with" those who would exploit, use, and damage them. But some grow to be dangerous, hateful, violent, and **ABSOLUTELY UNCARING** predatory beasts!

These are the creatures against whom we must be prepared to defend ourselves physically.

Predatory felons do not have the inhibitions against killing, maiming, or otherwise violating others that we have and that you have. Their capacity for evil is often unlimited. Many (such as numerous "gang bangers") will randomly shoot and kill babies and children, or kill or maim complete strangers during the carrying out of their criminal activities.

Predatory humans do not care. Their goal is simply to gratify their impulses, desires, and drives. They rob, rape, destroy, murder, terrorize,

con, embezzle, lie, extort, and so on — with the same ease that relatively "normal" people brush their teeth in the morning.

It is insane to regard such beasts as "human" and to consider dealing with them when they attack us by any means save the most ruthlessly unscrupulous and savagely merciless — for it is indeed kill or get killed when their paths cross ours!

Far too many people fail to understand this simple truth. Very few so-called "martial arts teachers" have grasped this truth, and it is rare that those who enroll for training in how to defend themselves and those they love hear so much as a hint of this, during their training.

When a predator attacks you he means it. When you undertake to defend yourself YOU had better mean it, also! You had better be capable of being even more ruthless than the worst and most ruthless of those who would prey upon you, if you expect to be equal to the task of self-defense when and if the need for it ever arises.

Use Your Creative Imagination!

ONE of our longtime students, Sgt. David Ewbank, USMC, who is now serving with distinction as a decorated and top priority EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) Expert and Teacher, recently showed us a technique that he developed, using principles of knifework that we had taught him, that is absolutely superb! The technique is Sgt. Ewbank's brainchild exclusively, and when he showed it to us we were proud as hell of him!

Sgt Ewbank is a true combat marine, having served in war with the Marine Corps during Desert Storm.

Dave developed this excellent technique (which we will not describe here) for field service fellow marines and soldiers who will be in full battle dress and on patrol in the Middle East. It utilizes the USMC Ka-Bar Knife, and assumes that the marine or soldier will be obliged to react suddenly at close quarters to a surprise attack when immediate access to his shoulder weapon or pistol would simply not be fast enough.

The technique is simple, fast, and brutally decisive!

The reason we bring this up is only (we confess) partly to boast about our excellent student. Predominantly, we wish to emphasize to all who train in the combat arts the importance of using their innovative capacities as they train to invent moves, create strategies, and work at making the core skills they learn work for them in meeting any and all specific and unique requirements that their personal circumstances or duties may oblige them to confront.

Certainly it is necessary to practice established skills in a disciplined, regular manner, until they become reflexive, automatic, fast, strong, accurate, and naturally a part of you. However, there is no mystery, magic, or secrets in this field, and once you've got the fundamentals, use your head and freely work at adopting those fundamentals to YOU.

Dave is only one of those students of ours who hail from real world backgrounds in the military, law enforcement, intelligence, security, and protective service occupations who take to American Combato like a duck

takes to water. We are always super-delighted when we see that one of our people really "gets it" and so evidences that fact by his creative application of that which we have taught him.

Great job, Dave. Thank you for your service to our Country! Semper Fi!

Take a lesson from one of our students: Think about that which you are learning. Cultivate it. Make it yours. Create applications, adaptations, variations, and permutations of all of that which you learn in your study of close combat and self-defense. There is GOLD in good technical, tactical, strategic, physical, and mental training! Mine that gold. You will end up with a system that is tailored to you in every way, and that you will always have available to you under all conditions.

"Best Books" On Practical Self-Defense And Unarmed Combat

WITH the understanding that there may be a title or so that we have neglected to list, we'd say that the following books are about the finest and most important ever written in English on the subject of close combat and self-defense. A not insignificant number of people have written to us asking for such a list, and so we thought we might do a lot of readers a service by presenting this information here.

We regard these books as crucial supplementary reading for anyone who is training in any martial art for practical use. To and for those who are training in any classical/traditional or sporting/competitive art we caution: These books contain more and superior material to that which you are studying insofar as practical combat application is concerned. And, if you are training in a "combat" program, you may measure its worth by

comparing it to that which is advocated in these works. If you are unable to find and to study with a professionally qualified teacher, then these books can be used for self-teaching, but only if you will study them intensively and work hard at becoming physically capable of DOING the techniques that you learn in these books:—

1. KILL OR GET KILLED, by Rex Applegate
2. ALL-IN FIGHTING (GET TOUGH!), by W.E. Fairbairn
3. COLD STEEL, by John Styers
4. V-5 HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, by the U.S. Naval Institute
5. HANDBOOK OF SELF-DEFENSE IN PICTURES AND TEXT,
by John Martone
6. UNARMED CLOSE COMBAT (LETHAL UNARMED COMBAT),
by Malcolm Harris
7. AMERICAN COMBAT JUDO, by Bernard Cosneck
8. U.S. ARMY FIELD MANUAL 21-150 (COMBATIVES) - 1971
EDITION,
by the U.S. Army
9. DYNAMIC SELF-DEFENSE, by Sam Allred
10. BRUCE TEGNER'S COMPLETE BOOK OF JUKADO,
by Bruce Tegnér
11. BRUCE TEGNER'S COMPLETE BOOK OF SELF-DEFENSE,
by Bruce Tegnér
12. STICK FIGHTING FOR SELF-DEFENSE, by Bruce Tegnér
13. INSTANT SELF-DEFENSE, by Bruce Tegnér
14. MODERN SELF-DEFENSE, by Robert H. Sigward
15. ARWROLOGY, by Gordon Perrigard
16. SELF-DEFENCE COMPLETE, by Pat Butler

We could go on listing dozens of additional titles, but it would not be fruitful for our readers if we did so. The sixteen books listed contain more than is necessary, and in fact if the reader merely acquired the first six titles listed, he would almost certainly have all of the technical information he needed. There is considerable overlap in these titles, since most experts agree on many of the identical core types of skill for real world close combat and emergency self-defense.

Some of the books listed are available in inexpensive reprints through Paladin Press. Others may be found fairly easily by checking on-line booksellers. A few are extremely difficult to locate, because they are long out of print and scarce. In any case, if you wish to build a library of books that make sense on the subject of real world close combat, those are the books to start with.

It's Legal And It's Lethal!

THERE are strict laws throughout the United States regarding the carrying of edged weapons. In the United States, to the best of our knowledge, there are no laws restricting what a private citizen who has not been convicted of a felony can keep in his home, but that which he may carry on his person for self-defense is regulated very carefully. We urge everyone to obey the law.

One edged weapon, which is not literally regarded as a "weapon" per se, is a utility knife. The handle alone (as a yawara stick) can be brutally effective; but to the best of our knowledge any adult may carry a utility knife complete with razor blade, and be legal!

The leverage afforded by this type of cutting instrument is terrifyingly devastating. One could rip apart the face or tear open the neck/carotid artery, or cut out an eye with one of these instruments, if an emergency demanded such drastic action. Especially for an elderly person or a woman who for whatever reason could not carry a handgun, this weapon is excellent.

We would suppose that this item would not be lawful to carry in England, since their laws now prohibit virtually anything with an edge or a point (save pencils and pens) from being carried by citizens. Perhaps simply the handle of a utility knife could be carried, without the blade. This is unfortunate and, in our opinion, downright foolish. But the law is the law, and we advocate adherence to the law.

For places where it would be legal to do so, one might consider carrying a utility knife for personal defense, if a handgun is not feasible.

Unarmed combat blows such as the handaxe chop and the hammerfist blow may be utilized — utility knife firmly in hand — to deliver devastating attacks. Simply hold the knife so that the blade impacts with the target instead of the natural weapon that is normally delivered by using the blow. Then, on impact, bear down with every ounce of strength you possess and rip deeply through the target you've struck.

Unpleasant perhaps. But better than being beaten to death by a violent felon, raped, kidnapped, or otherwise brutalized and possibly killed.

Food for thought.

<http://www.americancombato.com>

ALWAYS wishing our readers the best, we look forward to your visiting our site often. There will be a new SWORD & PEN posted on 1 May 2009, and we ask our readers to please tell others to visit this site and enjoy our Newsletter!

YOURS IN DEFENSE,

Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

— E N D —