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Sword and Pen

Official Newsletter of the International Combat
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Academy of Self-Defense

EDITORIAL

Learn Before Catastrophe Strikes

WE always appreciate receiving inquiries from people interested in learning self-defense. We invariably respond with all possible haste and we try to answer whatever questions these individuals may have, immediately. (We do draw a line. We will not continue an ongoing process of answering lists of questions in a series of successive e-mails by someone who clearly intends only to keep asking more questions, and who cannot get off his duff and get started in training).

Let there be no mistake about this: *everyone should have a basic ability to defend himself.* There was a time in America's history when it was *assumed* that every able-bodied man could use his fists, and handle whatever weapons of the day were commonly available and in use. It was *expected* that a man already knew how to handle firearms, for example, when he enlisted in the army, and — later on in our history — that he was good with a sidearm if he went into law enforcement. “Training” was received, such as formal or informal training could have been said to exist back then, *as a boy*. Just as it was assumed that a grown woman could **COOK**, in the late 18th, throughout the 19th, and well into the 20th centuries, it was assumed that a man could **FIGHT**.

It is well worth noting, also, that when it was in fact “assumed that a man could fight” because most men could (and **did**, if the situation demanded it), American society was infinitely more rational, benevolent, safe, and secure than it is today. That entity euphemistically referred to by its apologists today as a “*metromale*” is merely the byproduct of a sick, decaying, decrepit culture in which the appropriately clear lines separating the sexes has been blurred by the onset

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

of crackpotism, weakness, and a refusal on the part of so many biological *males* to assume the responsibility of becoming **MEN**.

One characteristic of manhood is **decisiveness**. Entirely aside from decisiveness being one of the cardinal principles of close combat and self-defense, it is integral to the character of a strong, responsible, adult man.

Perhaps in part due to the influence of the atmosphere prevailing in our society today upon them, we find that many essentially decent people lack the decisiveness to simply get started in close combat training, and to stick with it until they have acquired the skill level that they wish to possess. We, and teachers of our acquaintance, have noted that many males will telephone or e-mail for information about training that *they themselves* say they need or very badly wish to take, but once having been give information they simply fizzle out — apparently lacking whatever it takes to ***follow through and get the training that they want***. Time goes by, and more often than not these well-intentioned people end up either never getting down to the task of training, or they repeat the same meaningless “inquire-and-do-nothing” cycle.

Or, they get maimed or killed; or see their loved ones suffer such a fate *because when a real crisis finally hits, **they do not have the ability to cope***.

It is not at all uncommon for us to have people come for training *after* some horrible incident has affected them. By great good fortune these individuals are not disabled as a result of their victimization and, as they put it, they “*don’t want to let such a thing ever happen to them again*”. **Too bad it happened as it did the first time. Wouldn’t it have been better if, when the crisis that had come upon them struck, they had been prepared to handle it?**

Even a few months of the right kind of serious training will stack the odds heavily in an individual’s favor, should he be physically attacked. Quite literally, having had a few months of quality combat and self-defense training could *easily* mean the difference between living and dying for a person — or worse: having a loved one maimed or killed because he didn’t have the know-how and physical ability to ***stop*** the violent felon.

Putting off getting started, or “getting started after the summer”, etc. is — and sounds — lame. Even to the one who mouths such excuses for not getting started, it often causes self-embarrassment. Such a one **knows perfectly well that he is simply too indecisive, lazy, or irresponsible to take action NOW, and learn how to defend himself**.

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

No one can possibly predict when or where trouble will come. When it *does* come, however, it will be too late to acquire the mental conditioning, tactical preparedness, and physical/technical skill that is needed to deal with it. **Why not get started now?**

Anyone visiting this site almost certainly has an interest in real world self-defense. Most, we'd guess, have a desire to *learn* real world self-defense; and practically no one who is sane — visitor to this site or not — would deny that learning how to defend oneself is a valuable and worthwhile skill.

Valuable and important skills do not come from “making plans to learn them one day”, or from “thinking about it” or from “considering the matter for a while”. One becomes skilled and able by *getting down to the task of doing what needs to be done in order to learn that which one wishes to possess the ability to do*.

Anyone who has “always wanted to learn self-defense” should consider how self-defeating is that desire, *without action being taken on behalf of its realization*. Have **you** “always wanted to learn self-defense”? For how long? Think you'll ever actually **DO** it? Had you undertone to act when you first thought learning how to defend yourself was a good idea, you'd quite possibly be a black belt by now! But you're still “thinking about it”.

What the hell are you waiting for? Do you need stab wounds or a prolonged hospital stay, or a month of recovery time from a beating before you'll appreciate how in fact ***IT REALLY COULD HAPPEN TO YOU?***

We're not doing a sales pitch here. Our visitors are all over the world . . . and we fully appreciate that many of them would not find training with us to be feasible. But there are ways to train either on your own or with other teachers. There are some *excellent* teachers scattered throughout the world, and if you'll use the knowledge that you gain from reading this and our other site (www.seattlecombatives.com) you should be able to select a good teacher — if there is one in your area. If there truly are no worthwhile teachers with whom you can study where you live, and if coming to us is impracticable, then check our other web site where we list and review worthwhile books for self-study.

BUT DO SOMETHING AND DO IT NOW!

Naturally, we'd welcome the opportunity to train you, ourself; but one of our missions is to ***get decent people everywhere to understand, appreciate the need for, and get started training in, real world, serious, practical self-defense***. If a trip to Seattle or to Prescott for an intensive course of private lessons (or, if you live in those cities — or near to them — enrolling in our

regular program) is possible, **please make arrangements to do it**, instead of simply to talk about it, or continue to waste time “thinking about it”. **SUPPOSE A CRITICAL SITUATION EXPLODES IN YOUR FACE AND YOU’RE STILL “THINKING ABOUT” LEARNING HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF?**

Violence and violation are coming to someone every moment of every day, somewhere in the world. The next victim *could be you*.

The time to prepare for an emergency is when there is no present emergency.

For your sake, and for the sake of those you love and who are dependent upon you, do not wait for a catastrophe to strike before you reach the realization that getting down to the task of learning self-defense is a critical thing for every civilized human being. And that *does* mean **YOU**.

Bradley J. Steiner

For Your Essential Weight Training: How Heavy is “Heavy”?

THE single most important and valuable supplementary exercise for a student of close combat and self-defense is ***WEIGHT TRAINING***. Not the recent (i.e. post-1975 or so) version of steroid-assisted self-destruction and size-mania known as “bodybuilding”, but sensible, all round, strength/health, fitness, and performance-enhancing *progressive resistance exercise* using plate loaded barbells and dumbbells, cables, and Nautilus machines. This form of physical training is without peer for cultivating every necessary and desirable physical attribute in the combatives aficionado.

We have ***always*** been a vigorous advocate of weight training in the martial arts; and in fact we authored the first instructional article on weight training *for* the martial arts practitioner (in the now out of print *Strength And Health* magazine, published by the York Barbell Company) to appear in the United States — possibly, in the world. This was in the late 1960’s.

If you are training for self-defense it only makes sense that you would strive to become and to remain as strong as possible. That ridiculous myth (fostered more by Westerners than by Asian martial arts teachers) that you do not need strength to be effective in hand-to-hand combat is, thankfully, believed by far fewer today than it was during the 1950’s and 1960’s when the

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

Asian arts were coming into their own, in the United States, Canada, and Europe. But an unfortunate few remain who labor under the delusion that their “secret skills” and special, secret “unbeatable methods” will enable them to prevail in deadly combat despite the fact that they are physically underpar and likely to be much weaker than their attackers.

Strength is built by the proper use of progressive resistance exercise. This means **WEIGHT TRAINING**; lifting barbells and dumbbells and doing so in a systematic manner, so that as your body becomes stronger it is challenged by heavier and still heavier weight resistance in the exercises that you do, until you reach your genetic potential. Then, weight training is used to *maintain* that which you have developed.

Simple enough. But thanks to the fact that the field of physical training (just like the field of martial arts) is inundated with commercializing liars and cheats, that simplicity has become overcomplicated, elaborate, and has been distorted to mislead the gullible and the wishful thinking.

Look at the matter of *training poundages*, and the importance of training **HEAVY**, for example. The concept is simple and practical enough, and when understood and properly applied will benefit anyone who trains. However, many individuals are misled and misinformed in regard to this matter, and as a result they fail to train correctly, and they either quit in disgust as a result, or they achieve only a fraction of the results that they could otherwise acquire, if they simply did things right.

Strength is critical in hand-to-hand combat. It is not necessarily either the most important or the deciding factor in a physical encounter (although there are instances when in fact it could prove to be either one of those things), but it is **always** important. It should not be difficult to see that, all other factors being equal, the **stronger** individual in any physical battle will inevitably prevail.

You get strong by **working hard against heavy weight resistance in the key physical training exercises.**

But what *is* “heavy”? When we look at the key exercises (i.e. **squat, standing press, bent over rowing, bench press, curls, and dead lift**) just how much weight per se need we strive to lift or to workout with, in order to be training *heavy enough*? Need we work up to 500 pounds in squatting? Do we have to be able to press 300 pounds? Dead lift 600 pounds? — Or *what*, precisely? For, simply telling a combatives trainee that “he’s got to train heavily with weights” is not specific enough. ***What is “heavy”?***

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

First of all, you need not concern yourself, as a hand-to-hand combat trainee, with weight **LIFTING**, per se. “Weight lifting”, as opposed to “weight training” is all about limit lifts. I.e. How much weight can you hoist **ONCE** in correct form, in either the “power lifts” (**squat, bench press, and dead lift**), or in the Olympic lifts (**two hands snatch, and two hands clean and jerk**). To be sure, there are some powerhouses who can lift *immense* poundages as either power or Olympic style lifters, and that’s just fine — for them. For *you*, as an individual who trains hard in close combat and self-defense, you are concerned with **WEIGHT TRAINING**. That is, *exercising with progressive resistance in the important exercises, and developing all round strength, fitness, conditioning, health, and physical hardihood*. It is not possible for anyone who lacks the necessary genetics to excel in power or Olympic lifting, and *each of those two activities is much too enervating to train in for your maximum best, when you are also training for excellence in the art of hand-to-hand combat*. Yes, there may be an occasional superman who might be able to do it; but we do not base principles and guiding concepts on that which one person in a million or more *might* be able to manage.

You want to **TRAIN** with weights. You are *not* training to be a weight “lifter”.

In weight training your concern will be to utilize heavy resistance **for repetitions of the exercise movements that you train with.**

Here is a generally workable guide to sets and repetition goals for the combatives trainee to use when working on the key exercises:

Squat = 3 sets of 6 to 10 repetitions

Standing press (military or behind the neck) = 3 sets of 5 to 8 repetitions

Bent-over rowing = 3 sets of 6 to 10 repetitions

Bench press = 3 sets of 6 to 8 repetitions

Curls = 3 sets of 6 to 8 repetitions

Dead lift = 3 sets of 5 to 8 repetitions

These recommendations are not etched in stone. Trainees will experiment as they develop, and will — as they gain experience — begin to modify all that they do in light of what they learn about themselves and how their unique physiology and psychology most effectively reacts when training on particular set and repetition schemes. Certainly, complete beginners need but a

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

single set per exercise for their first month or two, and many trainees will find — even when advanced — that **TWO** sets is what they progress best on. Some may prefer to utilize four sets on occasion (although decades of experience with our own and with others' training has demonstrated that **three sets** works best for most trainees, most often).

There is nothing wrong with rarely and occasionally “testing” yourself to see how much you are able to lift for a single effort. But remember that this is not what you should be training for in general, and if you simply forget about maximum lifts and simply **WORKOUT HARD AND HEAVY** you'll do fine.

So, again, what is “heavy”?

“Heavy” is that amount of weight that forces YOU to work hard, and that taxes YOU to your maximum when you train on your exercises, for the scheduled number of repetitions and sets in your personal program.

It makes not the slightest bit of difference how much actual “poundage” is on *your* bar, versus how much weight *others* might be capable of training with, and that which they load onto their bar when they workout. It only matters that YOU are properly challenged, and that your muscles get a good workout. Everyone else that you know might find it *easy* to use, say, 300 pounds in the squat exercise. Good for them. If **100** pounds makes YOU work hard, and if it is an actual challenge to your existing strength for the scheduled repetitions that you are doing, **then 100 pounds is “heavy”, and that’s “heavy squatting” for YOU.**

So the first rule about “heavy” weight training is this: *That which constitutes “heavy resistance” is entirely subjective. If it’s truly heavy for you, then it’s heavy, as far as you are concerned.*

People vary in their hereditary potential for strength development, just as they vary considerably in the degree of strength that they possess when they commence a progressive resistance physical training program. Thus, some people will find that, **even when they have attained their ultimate maximum level of development** (assuming that they possess the tenacity and discipline to train to that level) there will be others *who do not train at all, perhaps*, who are stronger than they are! That's life. It's true in the intellectual sphere, as well. Albert Einstein, before ever attending college or university, possessed an incalculably more brilliant mind than most individuals who had acquired a doctorate.

Measure your progress **BY YOUR DEGREE OF PROGRESS**. It makes not the slightest difference in the world “how the other guy is doing”; what matters is: **How are you doing?**

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

Measure “heavy” according to your personal strength level — at first, when you commence training, and then as you continue to train and to develop over the months and years. Yes, you should constantly strive to handle more and more weight during the building up years (usually about two to three years, for most people) of your weight training career. But the precise amount of weight that you employ in your exercises matters only insofar as YOU experience it as being an adequate amount of resistance. If you are genuinely working hard, and if you are training correctly on a sensible routine consisting of quality exercises and a reasonably mapped out schedule of sets, repetitions and workout frequency, you’re doing just fine!

As a very general guide for you as an individual, the following exercise poundages (i.e. poundages to be employed for the approximate number of sets and repetitions previously alluded to) should be of some help. Don’t regard them as etched in stone; but do consider them a viable general guide:

CURLS: Using approximately 50% of your bodyweight is good

STANDING PRESSES: 60% of your bodyweight, or a bit more (perhaps 65%) is excellent

SQUAT: Training with your bodyweight is good; some will be able to train with 10-20% over their bodyweight, which is excellent

BENCH PRESS: About 85% of your bodyweight is very good

BENT-OVER ROWING: About 85% of your bodyweight is excellent

DEAD LIFT: 25% over your bodyweight is good in this exercise

Note: We are well aware of the poundages lifted in the past (and in the present) by some “bodybuilding stars”. Anyone who uses steroids should be immediately dismissed from all consideration, since he is NUTS in our opinion, and at the very least must be regarded as cheating and as doing something detrimental to his health (something that is anathema to the whole concept and *raison d’etre* of physical training).. And as for those who gain naturally, easily, and well, and whose genetics permit them to soar ahead of others and make the poundages that we recommend appear to be “wimpy” by comparison with that which they can train with . . . well, we have already explained the matter of genetics and heredity, and we feel that sensible people will not be bothered by the fact that some people are simply born stronger than themselves.

Follow our guidelines. You need the strength and conditioning that will result, and you'll see and feel the rewards starting to come within the first month of your workouts!

The student of unarmed, close, and hand-to-hand combat who is not following a weight training program is not following an adequate training regimen.

The Result Of Proper Mental Conditioning For Combat

INDIVIDUAL combat is 90% mental and 10% physical. Techniques and the speed and accuracy and strength with which they are executed is important; but these things simply do not work without *MINDSET*, and the proper degree of psychological/emotional readiness and willingness to apply them *immediately*, and with *relentless fury*, until the enemy has been rendered harmless.

Remember that all of the physical skills of individual combat depend upon the *voluntary muscles* for execution. This means that without the *mental command to act*, nothing happens. And the reliable conditioning of the mind of the individual so that in a crisis he will in fact *ISSUE* that command, is the great goal of much of that aspect of “mental conditioning for combat” that we teach and advocate.

Assuming that the process *takes*; assuming that we are successful in effectively conditioning the student's mind (and with every student who applies himself to our training properly and in earnest we are successful) what exactly happens? What is it that now occurs in that student's psyche when the moment of truth arrives, and when self-defensive action is required of him?

Very simply put, we believe that the essence of what flashes through the properly conditioned mind at the time of crisis when an imminent attack is perceived, is ***“THIS IS WHAT I ANTICIPATED MIGHT HAPPEN SOME DAY, AND I KNOW WHAT TO DO AND WILL NOW DO IT!”***

We are obviously unable to describe the *exact* and the *specific* self-talk that flashes through the individual's mind (if in fact there is any ascertainable “self-talk” per se) when, confronting an imminent attack, that individual goes without hesitation into counteraggressive action. And we are further fairly certain that what transpires mentally is more of a *momentary explosion of an awfully difficult to describe IMPULSE TO ATTACK — that manifests as an inner COMMAND.* However, the sentence that we presented likely sums up the *essence* of that which

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

manifests in the conditioned mind of a combatives pupil, if and when he has been trained correctly to do battle in self-defense.

Since the properly conditioned mind *ANTICIPATES* that violence may one day come to him, it is logical that he would not be so astonished by its appearance that he would freeze; or even that he would take much more than perhaps half a second to act.

Since the properly conditioned mind is *CONFIDENT* that its possessor can in fact undertake successful (not necessarily “guaranteed” to be 100% perfect, but tactically correct and potentially successful) action, it is logical that “*I know what to do*” would characterize an aspect of the flash of self-talk or realization that the conditioned mind would experience.

Since the properly conditioned mind is *DECISIVELY AGGRESSIVE* it is logical that the individual who possesses such a mindset will in fact issue forth the unequivocal emergency command to “*Go!*” — i.e. to right now *DO* that which all of his physical training and technical work has drilled into his motor memory.

It took us decades to develop the art of *conditioning the combative student’s mind ALONG WITH HIS BODY*, during the course of his training with us. We make no claims of perfection — but we certainly make the claim of being *SUCCESSFUL*; for we have been and are, and when a serious, properly disciplined, attentive individual undertakes his training with us, he may be sure that, in due course, he will be mentally, tactically, physically, and technically ready to defend himself.

Of what does our approach consist?

We have decades of experience in both physical training and hypnosis, as well as in all aspects of armed and unarmed close combat and self-defense. We have studied psychology and elements of psychiatry in depth. By drawing upon all of that, and researches into combat that others in all walks of life have experienced and report, we have drastically revised the method of conducting class sessions in group training in martial arts, and we have incorporated unique ways of jarring and adjusting the prosaic psyche of the (at first!) noncombatant into a battle-ready mode — when and if necessary.

Far from making the student aggressive, belligerent, or “eager to fight”, in every single instance we have made our students ***COMMITTED TO BEING NON-AGGRESSIVE AND TO BEING NONVIOLENT — EXCEPT WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR LAWFUL AND MORAL DEFENSE PURPOSES.***

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

If we sound proud of our record, we are. But this is something of a digression.

What we wish to describe here for the benefit of our visitors is a kind of touchstone or acid test to determine what marks the end result of correct mental conditioning for combat.

Surely the person who learns and practices the best genuine combat skills, who acquires the tactical know-how, who builds his body and keeps it strong and well conditioned, and who **ESTABLISHES THE PROPER COMBAT MIND SET**, will stand an excellent chance of prevailing in a dangerous emergency.

With discipline, time, and persistence, **YOU** can be such a person.

Lessons From The Cinema?

RARELY (*very rarely*) does one find anything resembling authentic close combat skills demonstrated in the movies or on television. Theatrical martial arts, remember, is a whole field of study unto itself. To “look good” combat techniques need generally to impress the audience with the acrobatic skills of the user. People like to see scenes such as those which the late Bruce Lee gave us, and that are routinely presented by other outstanding martial arts practitioners, like Chuck Norris, and so forth. These terrific masters of their art do not employ the same techniques on screen that they would rely upon in a life-threatening emergency, to be sure; but audiences love that which they see. For Hollywood, that’s all that matters.

Still, there are times when something very authentic and combatively valid *does* get into a motion picture. There are times — admittedly very few — when we can look to a performance on screen and say, “*That’s it! That’s how to go after an enemy in hand-to-hand battle! That’s the real thing*”

If you’d like to see some impressive “*on screen hand-to-hand combat*” then check out the scene in the motion picture *Casino* in which that colossal actor Joe Pesci goes after a fellow in a scene at a bar, using a pen. Pesci plays a gangster (and does so with absolute brilliance!) and is undertaking his action in, shall we say, a most questionable context from the vantage point of the law. Still, speaking solely and exclusively about **WHAT** he does and about **HOW** he does it, he demonstrates in that one scene more authenticity and potentially valuable instruction for those who are looking for instruction regarding “how it should be done” in hand-to-hand combat, than every fight scene ever filmed in all the Bruce Lee movies, in our opinion.

Pesci **ATTACKS**, and he does so by **SURPRISE**. He uses the most readily available **OBJECT AT HAND AS A WEAPON**, and he **FOLLOWS UP AND FOLLOWS THROUGH** without

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

mercy. He goes after his adversary's ***MOST VULNERABLE TARGET AREA***, and he ***GETS IN CLOSE***, despite the fact that he is smaller than his foe. He does not “warn” his adversary, nor does he commence his attack with a less-than-decisive action; rather, he ***EXPLODES FROM APPARENTLY NOWHERE***, and he ***DRIVES IN WITH A FIRST STRIKE THAT IS DEVASTATING***.

Fabulous scene. Could have actually happened. Demonstrates sound principles of hand-to-hand combat.

Watch the scene in *The Patriot*, where Mel Gibson attacks a British redcoat and kills him with a tomahawk. No flash, no sizzle, no fancy crap. Gibson ferociously and (almost hysterically) whips and pounds and slams his tomahawk into his enemy. ***That is the way it's done “for real”!*** Fighting for one's life in hand-to-hand battle with a deadly enemy is a frenzied, furious, desperate affair — beautiful moves, “art”, proper “form”, and all elaborate nonsense is tossed aside.

Burt Reynolds did a couple of great action movies quite some time ago. *Malone* is one of them, but unfortunately we forgot the name of the other. Coached by the late, magnificent “combat karate” master John Kuhl (a truly tough, knowledgeable, and practical-minded hand-to-hand expert, whose original system was USA Goju, under the late Peter Urban) Reynolds used some impressive low kicks, heelpalm blows, ear boxing, etc. — the proven stuff of actual gut fighting. — to dispatch his opponents. Knowing the street and the real world, Kuhl drastically modified all of the classical/traditional material that he had learned, and taught very good, reliable unarmed battle skills. It might be interesting for the reader to know that Kuhl also worked as Burt Reynolds' bodyguard.

From the standpoint of observing “how it might be done to you, the defender” you cannot do better than to watch the bar scene in *Goodfellas* where three hoods (again, Pesci is one of them!) stomp a mobster to death. Very eye-opening — especially if you believe that a gang that jumps you, after knocking you to the ground, is going to have one of their members go for a “mount” in order to make you submit!

First Blood, starring Sylvester Stallone, presented some excellent and authentic unarmed close combat in the first part of Rambo's escape scene, when — early in the movie — he breaks free and fights his way out of his jail cell, against several cops — one of whom comes at him with a nightstick. ***The combatives shown inside the cell are quite formidable, real, and doable***. He manages to down two or three more officers on his way out of the station house, and he even uses an old technique involving dropping to the ground and applying an ankle hook and knee kick (**not** a good way to use this particular skill, tactically). This last described action is not

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

recommended as an attack to be initiated *when you are on your feet*, even if it is illustrated and described in the 1943 edition of the U.S. Army's Field Manual 21-150 - "Unarmed Defense For The American Soldier". **Never** voluntarily go to the ground. *Never*.

It is perhaps interesting to note that *none* of the actors in those "realistic fight scenes" is a trained "martial artist".

There is one movie, *Gung Ho!*, which is a semi-documentary about the U.S. Marines' raid on Japanese held Makin Island during WWII. There is a bit of realistic hand-to-hand *enacted* in some of the close combat scenes, but there are also clips during the early part of this movie that were taken from the actual USMC Fleet Marine Force training films which demonstrated hand-to-hand combat *at the time*, to *actual* U.S. Marines that were going to the Pacific. We see eye gouging, spitting, and throwing dirt. **GREAT STUFF!**

Finally, because it says so much to the astute viewer and listener, even though what it says is not in direct reference to hand-to-hand combat per se, we must allude to that old motion picture, *The Shootist*, starring the late, great John Wayne.

More wisdom regarding real world handgun combat was expressed in a brief scene in that movie (which also applies to unarmed and all forms of hand-to-hand fighting) than most people are ever exposed to in any of the "training" that they obtain in most of the popular "shooting schools".

During a conversation with the boy that hero-worships Wayne (Wayne playing a retired gunfighter with an awesome reputation), the boy asks Wayne simply, *What is it that makes him such a fearsome and effective gunfighter?*

Wayne's reply is classic. He tells the boy frankly that there are men who are faster than himself, and there are men who can shoot more accurately. **HOWEVER**, Wayne states simply, "**I WON'T HESITATE.**"

While we cannot say that it is wise to watch motion pictures in order to gain knowledge of fighting skills or combat mindset, we can say that, perhaps unfortunately, there is more **real combat wisdom** to be gleaned from those scenes in the movies that we have referenced than you are ever likely to obtain from the overwhelming number of "martial arts DVD's" out there — in our opinion.

Check out the movies we mentioned. See for yourself.

Pick Your Weapon

WEAPONRY has always been integral to martial arts. So-called “martial arts” in which weaponry is *not* taught, are more properly regarded as martial sports, or as derivative systems of martial-related training that come from arts which also, in their origins, taught weaponry.

Classical/traditional arts have their weapons, and those weapons are perfectly legitimate and of great value in their particular and specific training context. However, nine foot poles, swords, throwing darts, weighted chains, and/or antiquated farm implements that were employed by disarmed Okinawan peasants are not appropriate studies for the modern student of self-defense and close combat. Not only are such weapons not at all likely to be encountered, but *if they were*, they could be rather easily trumped by *modern* weapons — i.e. a .45 automatic in skilled hands beats a sword or a wooden pole, etc. Additionally, the modern student of self-defense and close combat would be quite unrealistic to equip himself with nunchucks, sai, a tonfa, or a samurai sword for self, family, and home defense, when a Remington 870 and boxes of 12 gauge 00, 000, or #4 Buck can be purchased, and while top quality revolvers and semiautomatic pistols are obtainable.

Even when classical/traditional weaponry is made commercially available as *seemingly* “modern weapons” (the popular “tanto” knife is a great example) those who know close combat opt for modern, more suitable arms. The tanto was designed to penetrate wooden armor. If you anticipate encountering a wooden-armored samurai whose purpose is to kill you in hand-to-hand combat, then *maybe* a tanto could help you. We, personally, would still want the .45 automatic or the 12 gauge shotgun, but it is *conceivable* that your tanto could be employed successfully against a grappling samurai warrior.

Be real. If you train for self-defense and close combat, train with modern weapons — for the same reason that you train with relatively modern skills, and utilize the latest modes of mental and physical readiness training to prepare yourself. The age of the *shaolin warrior*, the *warrior monk*, the *samurai*, and all of the other great but antiquated warriors whose classical/traditional arts are so enthusiastically studied today, **HAS PAST**. Check your calendar: it is **2010**.

For your reference we shall list those weapons that we teach and that we advocate for modern use — by private citizens who train in combat arts, and for professionals in the military and intelligence fields, as well as the police, who require realistic, armed readiness in the course of doing their work.

1. HANDGUNS

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

Any modern combative system that does not teach students the use of the handgun as a combat weapon is incomplete and remiss. We favor the Browning-designed 1911 .45 pistol and the Smith and Wesson line of .357's — but there are a lot of other fine handguns from which to make a selection. We'd recommend nothing less than a .38 Special, and nothing "hotter" than a .45 — simply because those are readily managed in close combat, and are reliable in trained hands.

2. SHOTGUNS

The "ultimate home defense weapon" in our opinion, and a damn sight better for many military uses than a submachinegun or a battle rifle. Our hands down preference is for the Remington 870, 12 gauge.

3. FIGHTING KNIVES

The finest — i.e. the Randalls, Eks, Loveless, Applegate-Fairbairns, and so on — are highly desirable, but not necessary. Commercially available NATO-issued Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knives are excellent and as serviceable as they were in the 1940's. The old, proven USMC KaBar is also a good choice. And there are others. Gerber's Mark II (*original* design) is fabulous, and quite affordable.

4. THE AMERICAN (LA GANA) TOMAHAWK

Sadly, Peter LaGana, the designer of the fighting tomahawk that bears his name, has passed away. He was a USMC hand-to-hand combat instructor during the Vietnam War. He designed what is a fine fighting tomahawk, and this is one of the weapons that we teach at Black Belt level. More of a soldier's weapon than anything else, we still can see an application for the tomahawk in home defense.

5. THE STICK

The walking stick is one of the most effective and *under appreciated* self-defense weapons. Also, the baton (or baton-length short stick), and the yawara hand stick rate as excellent weapons for the modern student of close combat.

6. UNCONVENTIONAL (IMPROVISED) WEAPONS

Virtually anything at hand can be used in an emergency as some kind of weapon, and the modern student of close combat and self-defense should be trained to appreciate and to exploit this fact. Even something as seemingly harmless as a cup of water or a handkerchief can serve — when thrown in an enemy's face — as a means of distraction. Box cutters, utility knives, screwdrivers, hammers, kitchen utensils, pens, pencils, rulers, notebooks, even folded newspapers (an old SOE/OSS technique, from WWII) can be utilized to *KILL* in an emergency,

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

when the individual knows how to do it. The modern student of close combat and self-defense should know how to do it.

We hope that the foregoing will cause some serious thinking to percolate in the minds of those concerned about total preparation for self-defense.

Dealing With Bullies

IN a past edition of *SWORD & PEN* we discussed bullying. We also placed a tribute to a young girl who was the victim of a disgusting collection of human filth at her school and was driven to suicide by this pack of scum, at the head of a past edition. This collection of debris drove the poor girl to take her own life, and we can only hope and pray that every single one of those responsible for adding to that girl's torment will be struck down by a disease that will see each confined to an iron lung for the rest of a long, long life — a life lived in agony. The degree of suffering — of **HELL** — that such bullies deserve is without limit, as far as we are concerned.

Recently, we checked the internet for information and resources on the subject of “bullying” — purely out of curiosity. While there is a ton of material on line, we were shocked at what utterly worthless, useless **CRAP** it amounts to.

So-called “experts” discuss how to deal with bullies and bullying. “Never fight back” is one of the common threads that runs throughout this welter of mindless and incompetent hyperbole. Teachers, counselors, psychologists, ad nauseum, all vomit out their nonsense advice (which is pointlessly elaborate and complex, and irrelevantly beside the point, insofar as those who are actually suffering the bullying are concerned).

What a bully needs to put an end to his behavior is a beating that both cripples him permanently and that terrifies him into a state of trembling, head down, withdrawn and silent passivity. In some instances, when the bullying is life-threatening, there is absolutely nothing inappropriate about a response that ends the bully's life.

What's the big deal about this?

No one seems to be able to say it, and fewer still seem willing or able to do it. But how can a rational person deny that this is the right and just reaction to that sort of unconscionable terrorism that children and adults alike are so often victimized by?

Bullies can be stopped by **HURTING THEM**, and hurting them very, very, very badly. Like all wild animals, bullies do comprehend **PAIN** immediately, and they do not wish to be hurt,

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

themselves. So . . . the solution to the evil that they foist so gleefully upon those whom they torment is to crush their very souls with the most viciously merciless and ferocious counterattack imaginable; a counterattack that leaves them in literal agony or unconscious, never again to be or to live as whole human beings, for however long their worthless lives may continue.

The bully whose spine is ruined, or whose eyes are blinded, or whose skull is fractured with such severity that he is unable to function normally again due to brain damage will **NEVER** be able to bully anyone, ever again. Simple. Final. Just. *Is this justified? **Bullies have done as much — and WORSE — to their victims.***

And all bully wannabe's who may be tempted to indulge their despicable urges at the expense of the innocent will be given much cause for reflection after witnessing scum of their ilk suffer thusly; and the proper treatment of one bully may well, then, be the means by which other potential bullies are prompted to exert the effort necessary to control their desire to torment others.

Bullying occurs between adults no less than it occurs between children. The simple, plain truth is that there **is no excuse or justification for refusing to come down mercilessly and savagely upon ANY bullies — young or old.**

If you are a parent we'd suggest enrolling your child for **judo** and **boxing** instruction. This combined training will give any youngster the physical and psychological tools with which to stand up to any bully and fight back, and **WIN**. Telling your child that fighting back is no better than being the one who starts a fight is, in our opinion, child abuse. That school administrators and teachers tell this drivel to kids is understandable. These incompetent lice are simply touting the politically correct lie. *Let these bureaucratic dummies know, in no uncertain terms that **YOUR CHILD HAS YOUR PERMISSION TO DEFEND HIMSELF, and if he is persecuted for doing so, you will sue the school and the morons who participate in pounding the kids with the notion that they ought to submit to being punching bags.***

If you are past childhood and are concerned about troublemakers (i.e. adult bullies) who might torment *you*, then get started in a good combatives training program. Enroll with us, or with some other qualified professional, **and make up your mind that anyone who intends you harm will pay a terrible price if he raises a hand against you.** No one deserves to be someone else's victim; however only the individual himself can decide — finally — that he *will not accept victimization.*

The war against the bully begins with **INDIGNATION** and **WRATH**. It is our fervent hope that, should bullying come to *you*, the matter ends with your application, via sound physical techniques that have been well-directed by *your* explosive indignation and wrath and that see the bully neutralized, and unable to ply his trade of terror ever again.

Never Grapple When Dressed For Battle!

WE have received many e-mails and even letters from marines and soldiers and specialist (i.e. SWAT) police officers that express their utter contempt for the “ground grappling” and competition material that had comprised their training in “hand-to-hand combat” (so called!) and/or “defensive tactics”. Being a part of the organizations that have mandated their being instructed thusly, these individuals have asked for anonymity (which I shall always be delighted to respect — so if you wish to contact us with information of a sensitive nature, *please feel free*). Yet they have plainly asked that we keep urging **AGAINST** this in-vogue approach to training, since — as they say, and as we have been saying since the thing took off as a new fad in this Country — **IT IS ENTIRELY UNREALISTIC AND WHOLLY INAPPROPRIATE TO THE DEMANDS OF ACTUAL CLOSE COMBAT AND DEFENSIVE PREDICAMENTS.**

One theme that has been 100% consistent in the communications that we have received is outrage at the fact that, entirely aside from such ground-grappling material being absurd *even when a given situation enables them to employ it* (since there are **far better ways** to drop one’s foe in an encounter), these warriors **CANNOT POSSIBLY EVEN TRY TO EMPLOY SUCH SKILLS WHEN IN BATTLE DRESS!**

A soldier, marine, or SWAT officer goes into action encumbered by a *lot* of heavy gear. The equipment weighs *a lot*, is bulky, and places him in the position of a turtle on its back (using the analogy provided by one U.S. marine combat veteran who wrote to us) when and if he “goes deliberately to the ground” in a “wrestling match”. Police SWAT officers (actually, even many patrol officers, as well) carry plenty of encumbering equipment, also. These men cannot roll around on the ground and grapple for a pin or a mount with a violent suspect. Their possession of a sidearm that may be snatched by the felon is also a bit of a problem!

We have no interest in converting true believers in the MMA, cage fighting, UFC stuff to our way of thinking. These people have every right to do whatever they wish, and if they wish to participate in these events, and to insist that *this* is “real combat”, so be it. However, we do **not** agree, and neither do many actually *experienced* military, police, and intelligence people who **DO IT FOR REAL.**

Our Monograph on the subject is available if anyone wishes to have the entire phenomenon of ground-grappling's unsuitability for self-defense presented. We thought that our visitors might be interested, however, in this very excellent point regarding the matter of battle dress and its resulting bar to the use of that which is (we feel, ridiculously) now taught in some military and law enforcement training circles. It has been raised, and is ***being*** raised, by real world hand-to-hand fighters.

MORE Evidence Of What Happens (And Of What REALLY WORKS) In The Real World

(The following incident was brought to our attention by one of our upper level Black Belts, Greg Anderson. We are happy to pass it — and the message that, following the description of the event, enumerates what the incident teaches — along to our visitors.)

JUST married, 29 year old Nicole Emerson and her bridegroom — coming straight from their wedding ceremony — decided to stop off for a drink in what is normally an upper class establishment in Louisville, Kentucky.

Upon entering the place three sewer animals begin directing suggestive and insulting remarks to the newlyweds. Wisely ignoring the lice, the couple proceed to order their drinks.

The scum continues to push and to prod and to harass the couple verbally, finally driving Nicole's husband as far as he could be pushed. He arises from his seat and proceeds to confront the group of troublemakers. Acting like the pack of mindless hyena they are, the three creatures proceed to jump the husband. They smash him to the floor and proceed — gang style — to beat the man.

Perceiving (**correctly**) the potentially deadly attack on her husband, 110 pound Nicole springs into action immediately. Seizing a bottle she proceeds to attack the predators and to repeatedly beat the miserable cowards across their heads and faces. When the smoke clears, two of the dirtbags are hospitalized (one, we were delighted to hear, requiring upwards of **70** stitches! **GO GIRL!**), and the third was simply neutralized — unfortunately not severely enough to require hospitalization or a body bag, but sufficiently to cause him to cease his attack on Nicole's husband.

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

Little Nicole, distraught and horrified after the near-murder of her husband, is subsequently arrested and, according to the news report on **WLKY.COM**, potentially faces *three second degree assault* charges.

WARNING!: STAY AWAY FROM LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY. THAT CITY HAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH IT POLICE OFFICERS' JUDGMENT AND — PERHAPS — THEIR UNDERLYING ETHICS AND CHARACTER, AS WELL! It seems to us that acting in defense of the life and limb of one's spouse when one's spouse is attacked by three men justifies the use of deadly force, since three assailants against one is a deadly attack. Need we add that grabbing a bottle to assist one's actions against the three attackers only makes good, common sense — unless one has a firearm to use! *Most especially* when one is a 110 pound female, it is all too obvious that resorting to any kind of weapon in defense against even a single grown male assailant is not only “justified” — it is a virtual necessity!

Now let us consider some **LESSONS** regarding real world violence and handling it, that may be extrapolated from an analysis of that awful incident:

- **It is wise *not* to go into bars**

Not that you do not have a perfect “right” to go wherever you please; common sense tells us that the kinds of characters that one is likely to encounter where liquor is served are more likely to be unsavory than those one encounters in a public library, a nice restaurant, etc.

- **Whenever it is possible to do so, it is wisest to leave any place where troublesome individuals seem to be congregating**

Once again, we do not say that one should “have to leave a place where one has every right to be” just because some human garbage happens to be there, too. However, it is **SMART** to do so — so as to avoid trouble. Thus, while we appreciate that the husband in the incident described was certainly justified in being angry, we'd have advised the couple to *leave*, rather than to confront the lice that were bothering them.

- **In the real world you may well find yourself being targeted by violent types, *regardless* of your own behavior or intentions**

Good people do not provoke trouble. And too many good people believe that that is sufficient to keep trouble out of their lives. “I don't go to those places”, or “I don't get into fights”, etc. are statements that certainly express common sense and good judgment on the part of the speaker, but they in no way indicate that the speaker will not suffer an extralegal attack! Do not deceive yourself. Trouble can come to you regardless of how sensibly you live, and how much you avoid behaving in a provocative manner.

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

- **Never respond to mere *verbal* provocation**

This can be difficult, but it is good advice. If, instead of responding to some foul-mouth piece of garbage you **go to condition orange**, and attempt to leave the area, you will either — a) avoid a violent incident, or b) be prepared, and enjoy the complete element of surprise when you act in self-defense, *should taking such action become necessary despite your attempt to avoid trouble*. Also, you more firmly establish your “mantle of innocence” in the eyes of the law if you physically retreat without a verbal response, and find that you must defend yourself against one or more who **COME AFTER YOU**.

- **Violent troublemakers always resort to foul and unfair tactics (the very FIRST of which is initiating violence in the first place!), and they generally attack in *numbers* when going after a lone individual**

When you are attacked you are at **WAR**. Show no mercy, compassion, restraint, forbearance, or reluctance to **DO ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP YOUR ATTACKER(S)!** It is not a sport or a game, and it is to the battle skills that one would employ against an enemy in hand-to-hand military combat in *war*, that one must resort. Never give an attacker a break. Never hold back. Go after your enemy(ies) like a wild animal.

- **Effective defense requires immediate and aggressive action**

Here you can see — in the real life incident described — that even a diminutive woman who *does not hesitate* and who attacks with *ruthless fury*, can defeat the odds!

- **Use a weapon if at all possible against your attacker, or use anything at hand as a weapon — and to hell with whether the attacker is or is not armed, himself**

There is no reason to abide by any rules or ethical principles whenever you must defend yourself against unavoidable, potentially life-threatening attack. Take every advantage that you can, and attack without mercy. Use sporting techniques and competition or antiquated classical methodology and you are sunk. Can you imagine the result of the incident described if Nicole (or even her husband!) had attempted a “defense” by grappling and pinning the attackers in submission holds?

- **Be ruthless! Go for the enemy’s weakest target areas and do so with your most powerful and destructive weapons — natural, manufactured, or improvised!**

Nicole smashed the dirtbags viciously across their faces and heads with the bottle that she grabbed, and thank goodness she did so! Had she attempted to hit them across their arms or their legs, etc. in an effort to “try a lesser degree of force, and see if that will suffice” it is probable that her husband would have been killed. Wisely, correctly, and intuitively, she smashed for their vulnerable facial and head targets — and despite the enormous numeric

Sword and Pen – June 2010 Issue

advantage of the assailants, and the obvious superiority of their individual strength levels (superior to Nicole's) *the little girl was successful!*

• **Size and strength are not always decisive factors, since even in a worst case scenario, a sufficiently vicious, ruthless, aggressive, and unhesitant individual can prevail**

Yes — size, strength, and numbers do always factor in, in any combative engagement. *But none of those factors are invariably decisive.* No situation is completely hopeless unless you give up.

• **Multiple attackers can be defeated by a single individual. Period.**

Clearly the ridiculous idea of utilizing *sporting* or *competition* methods when engaged in close combat must be dismissed from consideration. But **COMBAT** techniques, tactics, and attitude constitute a different story! Use *them*, and use them in an unhesitant, spirited, relentless manner, and you can shift the odds in even the most desperate situation.

• **Keep on attacking, and attacking, and attacking, until the enemy has been neutralized**

Note that little Nicole kept her onslaught going. She gave no opportunity to those three potential murderers to get set, to retaliate, or to continue focusing on their murderous attack on her husband. Intuitively, through sheer desperation, this little girl hit upon the all-important principle of *unrelenting attack*, until the emergency has been resolved.— and she succeeded in saving her husband's life.

We hope that what we have just presented is of value to **YOU**, and that — should any violent emergency come your way — it contributes to your ability to save your life and the lives of all whom you hold dear.

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We thank you for visiting this month, and hope you'll now go to **www.seattlecombatives.com**, as there is a lot of new material there for your edification and guidance in close combat and self-defense.

We'd appreciate your telling others about our two web sites, and encourage them to visit us regularly. We post new material monthly, and the wealth of information that may be accessed from all previous postings is there for every visitors' benefit.

Until next month, then, **STAY COMBAT READY!**

Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

AmericanCombato.com & SeattleCombatives.com

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