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Sword and Pen

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

EDITORIAL

For Heaven's Sake – Get Started!

If “you’ve always wanted to learn serious self-defense” and enjoy the confidence and poise that goes with knowing and feeling that you can handle yourself in any difficult or dangerous emergency, and that you can defend those you love if you ever need to do so, then what the hell are you waiting for?

You’ve got several options, friend: You can telephone or e-mail either yourself or Mark Bryans and set up an appointment to discuss your goals and needs in close combat and personal defense training. If you live in the greater Seattle area, then you’d contact us. If you live in the northern Arizona area, then you’d contact Mark Bryans. We offer group classes, private lessons, and a professional background and credentialing that surpasses any on earth. If you do not live in those areas, you should be aware that we both teach specialized intensive courses for out-of-towners.

Whether you live in New York City, Omaha, Nebraska, Miami, Florida, or Europe(!), we can make arrangements to teach you. Naturally you'll need to come in to our locations and remain with us for a few days to a week, but is that so terribly difficult? You'll be taking home with you enough material to train and to develop yourself for years. In a week we can teach you more real world, practical skills than most advanced black belts in any of the classical/traditional systems ever acquire. Our experience in training people from other cities, states, and countries is extensive. We have been doing it for more than 25 years, and most of those who have taken our basic course have come back to take advanced training from us. This includes individuals who already had black belt level rank and military certification as hand-to-hand teachers prior to coming to us!

We know our business. After 45 years of teaching, you'd expect that we would. We knew and trained under Charles Nelson, Rex Applegate, Robert Sigward, and other greats in our field. Our articles and books have become official references for military, intelligence, and law enforcement professionals worldwide. You certainly would be wise to select any school or instructor carefully. If you choose a local school, please check it out carefully and make sure that they're genuinely qualified professionals in the field of close combat and self-defense.

OR . . . you can commence training on your own. You won't receive the benefits of all of the post-WWII upgrades, innovations, and advancements that American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)TM offers, but you can still train in that body of doctrine that most heavily influenced our approach. It will take you longer, and you'll need to be willing to make and correct a lot of mistakes on the way. But you can do it if you really want to. Get hold of the following books: Kill or Get Killed, Get Tough!, Cold Steel, Hand-to-

Hand Combat (U.S. Navy), and American Combat Judo (all available in quality reprints from Paladin Press). Obtain a good heavy bag or training dummy (like the Fighting Man Dummy, or the BOBXL), and purchase a basic set of weights. Get started training — hard, and regularly — and keep studying, reviewing, and pondering those classic books. That won't entirely replace formal training in our modern System, but it will save you a ton of money on widely advertised and aggressively marketed garbage, and it will be a thousand times more relevant and effective for you than going the route of classical/traditional or sporting/competitive approaches to training. (Note: These latter types of training are excellent, but not for someone exclusively interested in close combat and viable self-defense. Do not evaluate any local “dojo” insofar as its merits for training you in serious combat is concerned, by the ranking or background of its teachers in classical/traditional or sporting/competitive methods. You need professionals in combat/defense work).

We urge self-teaching if that is all you can or will do, because it is feasible, and because you must get started doing something if you truly hope to acquire anything more than a wish and a hope for ability, skill, and confidence.

Please — whether you come to us or not — get started now.

We have never liked the idea of “New Year’s Resolutions”, but we acknowledge that it is a popular phenomenon. Okay. If that’s what works for you, so be it. Make a New Year’s resolution that you will start that training that you know you need, that you have always wanted, and that will change your life and your outlook for the best, and forever!

We have always emphasized that it is too late to learn anything about self-defense when you are attacked. Violent crime and insane outbursts of random violence are epidemic in America today. Are you prepared to deal with this kind of trouble if it comes to you and to your family? Don't procrastinate any longer. Stop telling yourself you "can't afford" training. (The truth is, the way things are today, you cannot afford not to take training!). Don't tell yourself that you "don't have the time". Make the time. It's a lot more convenient than needing to take the time for a hospital stay and rehabilitative therapy after you've been attacked — assuming you're lucky enough to live through an attack. Never mind the fact that you're "not a violent person" and that you "never look for trouble" or go to "those kinds of seedy places". Nonviolent people are the ones who are constantly getting beaten, mugged, raped, and killed. You needn't "look" for trouble. Troublemakers are looking for you! And violence comes to the best neighborhoods and to the most respectable shops, malls, schools, parks, recreational facilities, and business establishments in the world.

Friend, you **NEED** an effective, working ability with the skills and mindset of self-defense. Your loved ones need you, and if you and they are to be optimally safe and secure you need to make a determined, serious personal investment in learning the techniques, tactics, and mindset of close combat and personal defense. There's no other solution to violence that cannot be avoided besides overwhelming retaliatory violence. Perhaps an unfortunate fact; but a **FACT**, nonetheless. Your education is not complete unless you possess a working knowledge of serious, practical, real world self-defense. Don't wait for some godawful encounter before you learn this truth.

Please . . . get started on a planned, determined course of training in close combat and self-defense. Now. Today. Take the first step.

Bradley J. Steiner

The Great Error Of “Humane” And “Non-Injurious” Self-Defense Programs

WITHOUT going into details, we will say that we have had a not inconsiderable amount of association with individuals in the intelligence field. And while motion pictures and television in general offer an overly romanticized and glamorized view of what secret intelligence work is actually like, there is one aspect of clandestine services work (which is a facet of intelligence) that really is pretty accurately described: the dangerous aspect of it which, when it is present, is very dangerous, indeed.

The game of espionage and counterespionage is played for keeps; and anyone who has been involved with it to any degree knows this very well. It's a life or death thing for those who operate as spies or agents-in-place for any intelligence organization — and there's simply no way around this fact. All attempts to whitewash the dangers and the risks do no service to those involved. Such foolishness only makes their already extremely dangerous work even more dangerous, by failing to acknowledge their absolute need for meticulous attention to good tradecraft.

It's exactly the same thing in self-defense and close combat. These are simply not activities unfraught with real peril. When an individual must physically defend himself or others, and/or when — in whatever context it may occur — one must engage a deadly enemy in hand-to-hand combat, the predicament is very dangerous, the risk of injury and death is great, and there is no good purpose served by whitewashing these facts, and by pretending that some “lesser means” than utterly decisive and destructive ones, will enable one to prevail.

As a professional we receive the industry journals in the martial arts field. We do not subscribe to them. They are simply sent to us. And while we find little in these publications that is relevant to that which we do, we have noted for years now that another “fad” has emerged in the martial arts. It goes under the name of “Non Injurious Self-Defense” or “Humane Self-Defense”. It has two major selling points — both of which are, as we shall shortly demonstrate, indirect arguments for all sensible people who are concerned about personal defense, to avoid anything resembling their doctrine. The selling points are:

1. This form of self-defense avoids needless cruelty and violence. It enables a decent human being to protect himself, when necessary, without stooping to the barbaric level of the violent offender.

—and—

2. This method of personal defense provides the optimum degree of legal protection for the defender who employs it, since he never resorts to excessive force, and is therefore always safe from prosecution by the law, after the fact.

However well-intentioned the “humane” approach and rhetoric may be, it amounts to the worst possible disservice that martial arts training can provide to those who come to training seeking a means of realistic self-protection. The fact that the sales pitch has enormous appeal to a lot of people means nothing. Those who need to learn self-defense and hand-to-hand combat for personal or professional reasons are not necessarily in a position — prior to receiving both good training and real world experience — to know what they require in order to be prepared for the real thing. The teachers ought to know, however. And in our opinion it is prima facie evidence that they do not know, if and to the extent they advocate the “non injurious” stuff.

Here are the unpleasant facts:

First: It really isn't possible to be fully prepared to defend yourself if you lack the preparedness, willingness, and ability to stoop to the lowest level imaginable, to ferociously engage your attacker(s) with merciless, destructive intent and skills. Who do you think attacks people, anyway? We are not concerned here with misguided thinkers who have made a slight error in judgment and who have unintentionally encroached upon your “space”! We are speaking, when we speak of self-defense, of dangerous, cruel, violent, predatory individuals who are deliberately acting in an aggressively harmful manner (almost always, for reasons that are entirely unknown to you) and whose capacity and intentions remain a mystery. These creatures cannot be accurately assessed and evaluated as to their motives and their ultimate ability to injure, maim, and kill. All that you know — or that anyone can possibly know — at the time of a violent criminal attack, is that you are being violently set upon, and that YOU

JUST MIGHT BE MAIMED OR KILLED AS A RESULT OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU.

The notion that, for whatever reason, one has some kind of “moral obligation” not to fight ferociously and foul — not to savage and devastate a violent felon or other attacking beast — is stupid. One is hardly morally superior to an attacker if one refuses to resort to whatever foul measures may be employed at the time of the attack to stop the bastard who is doing the attacking. One is a stupid fool.

It is the very fact that an individual is decent and innocent that virtually mandates that he utilize any and every vicious and unfair measure at his disposal in order to stop some malicious offender who attacks him. Decent people belong in human society. Predatory, violent felons do not. Whatever injury they suffer at the hands of their intended victims is more than well deserved. To hell with them.

Whether we are speaking of a bully in grade school or a home invader; the choice to prey is made by the offender. Whatever — **WHATEVER** — the victim does to stop the filthy monster is a reflection on the initiator of violence, never on the defender.

Those who stand outside the situation that is faced by a violent predator and who proceed to pontificate about what “ought” to be done or not done, according to some specious set of imbecilic “rules”, in order for the victim(!) to remain morally unsullied when he undertakes the desperate act of self-defense, deserve to be thrown into a similar predicament as the victim whom they so arrogantly admonish. The victim is **RIGHT** and the

predator is **WRONG**. Whatever the victim does to defend himself is morally justifiable.

The simple, unvarnished truth is that there is not and there cannot be any kind of “unnecessary cruelty” or “excessive violence” in self-defense. Anyone who raises a hand unjustifiably against someone whom he intends to victimize has by definition of his action undertaken cruel, excessive, and extraordinarily violent conduct. **HE HAS TO BE STOPPED.**

Second, there is no guarantee of “legal protection” whenever force is applied — no matter how righteous or justifiable the context, and regardless of how “humane” the applicant of the self-defense skills endeavors to be. The law has persecuted innocent people before, and it will doubtless do so again. Atrocious felonies often go unpunished (and are, like to hear it or not, all too often committed by law enforcers), while minor misdemeanants are hobbled by the system. Clarence Darrow was quite correct when he observed that “There is no justice, inside or out of court.”

The Rational Pacifist

NOTE: We wrote an editorial for the December 2008 issue of our monthly periodical, “CQ” (Close Quarters: The Professional Journal of Ungentlemanly Warfare©) which, when we completed it, pleased us. We felt, in that editorial, that we had succeeded in making some very necessary points regarding violence, nonviolence, pacifism, and related concepts. Upon reflection, we decided to reprint an abbreviated version of that editorial here, in *Sword & Pen*. We hope that our readers will consider the message contained in the following, and take it to heart:—

Pacifism

“WE just might surprise some of our readers when we say that we are a staunch pacifist — and what is more, we advocate pacifism. Now before you . . . decide that we have gone insane . . . we must add the following to the proclamation that we are a pacifist:

We do not define ‘pacifism’ as the term is commonly employed.

“Our definition of pacifism is: A personal philosophy that advocates the omission of violence and intimidation from human relationships and from society’s acceptable norms of conduct, and that forbids the initiation of force by any individual or by any entity, except in defense against aggression. . . .

“According to the way in which the term ‘pacifism’ is utilized by those who claim to be pacifists, pacifism advocates not merely the absolute refusal to initiate force in human relationships (certainly a good thing), but also (we believe, insanely) advocates nonviolence per se, regardless of the context in which violence may be used. Thus, a conventional ‘pacifist’ would quite literally do nothing if he were to be physically attacked, or if someone he loved were physically attacked, and he were present at the scene.

“Our view is . . . different. According to the way in which we define and adhere to a pacifistic lifestyle, we agree that the initiation of force is abhorrent and wrong — except when employed . . . preemptively against a

clear and present imminent threat of physical violation. We absolutely refuse to either initiate force in order to gain anything to which we have no objective right, and/or we absolutely refuse to ever engage in any form of mutual combat (ie in plain English, we refuse to get into fights — to be provoked into them, or to agree purely for reasons of ‘personal impulse gratification’ or ‘satisfaction’ to engage in them). We define self-defense as action taken in response to another’s unavoidable aggressive action, and we advocate self-defense and the use of any and every degree of violence — armed and unarmed . . . in unavoidable self protection or in the defense of other innocent persons. . . .

“. . . this idea of a person who is ready, willing, and able to do battle being . . . ‘non violent’ or pacifistic . . . is incomprehensible to some. This is unfortunate, but it is the result of the brainwashing that has been hammering our culture for the last 60 years. Today, those institutions of imprisonment which we euphemistically refer to as the ‘public schools’ very literally have policies forbidding children to fight back against bullies, and defend themselves. The purpose of this evil? **TO PROGRAM PEOPLE AS YOUNG AS POSSIBLE IN THE IDEA THAT THEY MUST TURN TO, CONTACT, CALL UPON, AND RELY ON OUTSIDE AUTHORITIES, AND NEVER UNDERTAKE INDEPENDENT ACTION — EVEN WHEN THEIR PHYSICAL SAFETY, PERSONAL DIGNITY, AND PRIVATE PROPERTY IS THREATENED!**

“Do not deceive yourself. [Those] . . . who run . . . any public . . . school probably are too brainwashed, politically correct, babbitized, and useless to perceive the ultimate cause that they are serving, themselves. However, **YOU** ought to understand it. And you ought to resent it. And you need to

oppose it. To suggest to a child . . . that he has no right to defend himself is akin to suggesting that he has no right to see a physician if he feels sick, or to eat a meal if he is hungry. This is evil. It is not a ‘well intentioned mistake’. Official policies are set down by people who have had the ‘benefit’(?) of legal counsel, and who have pondered both the immediate results and the long-term implications of that which their policies are destined to achieve, once implemented. The . . . debris who populate the ranks of the ‘teachers’ and school administration clowns in the public schools simply (as the Nazi servants so emphatically protested during the Nuremberg trials) ‘follow orders’.

“No one who tells a child not to defend himself loves or cares about that child. Nor does such a bastard ‘hate violence’. Rather . . . [he] . . . has no concern in the world about who harms who, so long as he . . . is **NOT PERSONALLY BOTHERED, INCONVENIENCED, OR VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENCE**, himself.

“Look at gun control.

“Those who advocate gun control are not in the least concerned about violent crime, stopping dangerous criminals, safety, or any of the other things that they proclaim. They are after power . . .

“All rational pacifists ought to be unswervingly in favor of firearms . . . in the private sector. ‘Let those who love peace prepare for war.’ They should be against any form or version of ‘gun control’, and they should recognize and constantly seek to educate others about the fact that firearms in the hands of private citizens is one of the greatest assurances that violent crime will be held to the barest minimum in human society.

Far from “provoking” violence, armed individual preparedness is the most powerful force DISCOURAGING violence. Criminal offenders do not commit their crimes in hopes that they themselves will be injured or killed; and violent criminals have no desire to take their chances with an armed, angry, properly skilled citizen who is unafraid to shoot back., and who is supported in his unrestrained use of deadly force by his fellow citizens and the legal system, when he undertakes it in legitimate self-defense.

“If you hate violence, SUPPORT EVERY INDIVIDUAL’S PERFECT RIGHT TO KEEP AND TO BEAR ARMS, AND TO DEFEND HIMSELF AS PREDATORS MAKE IT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO DO!

“While the power lusting . . . throughout history who have sought to disarm private citizens will never acknowledge the fact, it is nevertheless true and provable that the only way to disarm the people is by employing or threatening to employ armed force against them, and by subsequently retaining the prerogative (and the means) of so doing, after the people have been divested of their privately owned weapons.

“As a true lover of peace the rational pacifist will be the greatest proponent of defensive preparation and of the unhesitant, decisive employment of overwhelming force whenever any entity — be it a solitary thug, or a . . . tyrant — poses the threat of force . . .

“The individual who flatly refuses to sanction or to employ any force, ever — regardless of the need for force in defense of the innocent — ought not to be able to hide behind the ‘honorable’ title of pacifist. Such a one is not

in any sense or meaning of the term a true lover of peace. [He] . . . is a cowardly facilitator of evil, whose proclamation that regardless of how egregious any predator's act, he (the so-called 'pacifist') will not raise a finger to oppose it, makes him more contemptible than the predator, himself.

“[We are] . . . a proud proponent of pacifism. We advocate nonviolence, peaceful settlement of all disputes, and respectful disengagement from contact and dealings whenever mutually beneficial terms cannot be agreed upon between individuals. However, whenever confronted by any entity . . . [that proceeds] . . . to initiate force or the threat of force in order to injure, terrify, coerce, exploit, enslave, rob, or in any conceivable manner violate the God-given Rights of Man*, we advocate that whatever degree of force may be necessary in defense against such entity be employed with determination, total ferocity, and righteous indignation. To use violence in legitimate self-defense is good, and it is moral. It is the only use of violence that the true pacifist — being a person of peace — sanctions . . .”

Bradley J. Steiner

• THESE ARE: LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. FOR ANY WHO FIND THIS CONCEPT AMAZING, PLEASE REFER TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS. IT WAS THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF OUR NATION WHO RECOGNIZED AND WHO SOUGHT TO INSURE FOR ALL TIME, THAT OUR COUNTRY WOULD REGARD THE BASIC RIGHTS OF MAN AS AXIOMATIC, AND THAT OUR PRIVATE CITIZENS WOULD FOREVER ENJOY, DEFEND, AND IF NECESSARY FIGHT FOR, THOSE SIMPLE, GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS.

Note:— The complete version of the foregoing editorial appeared in the December 2008 issue of Close Quarters.

Combative Sports — Don't Underestimate Them

THE kind of training that we offer is not generally suitable for young children. However, we certainly have a suggestion for anyone who has children and who wants to get them started properly in a study of martial arts: Enroll your child for judo, wrestling, or boxing instruction. Ideally, we would recommend a combination of Kodokan Judo and Western Boxing as the “perfect” foundational course for a youngster who is interested in serious martial arts training. Once a youngster reaches the age of eighteen or so, he may then profitably be enrolled for training in American Combato. What is more, with some years of hard judo (or wrestling) and boxing under his belt he will have an advantage in coming to our System with an already disciplined and serious attitude, and with a high degree of experience in efficient use of his body to achieve the application of efficient interpersonal combative actions.

And what about those adults who wish to learn effective close combat and personal defense, but do not have access to a quality school or teacher where they live? Well, certainly it is possible for these individuals to self-teach, via the study of such books as Cold Steel, Get Tough!, Kill or Get Killed, etc. This is particularly true if these people have had a couple of years of training in classical/traditional systems, and it is also true of

complete neophytes — but the process is definitely harder and presents more of a challenge. What we suggest to those who cannot attend our training is that, if possible, they get some intensive background training (say, four to eight months or so) in Kodokan Judo or Western Wrestling, and four to eight months of Western Boxing. Training three or four times a week — hard — in each of those martial sports will provide a marvelous foundation upon which to build dangerous combat skills, which can easily be self-taught from the aforementioned and other books.

“What about ‘self-defense’ arts,” you might ask, “such as kenpo-karate, hapkido, ju-jitsu, and so on? Wouldn’t months of training in those methods be superior to the fighting sports?”

No, in our opinion, it would not be.

If, as we’ve said, you already have a few years of classical/traditional training in one of those systems, okay. But if you have no experience at all, and if you are starting from scratch you are far better off, in our opinion, to go the “judo and boxing” route. The reasons why —

- Any one of the three methods that we advocate is a superior physical hardener to the so-called “combat systems” of traditional orientation.
- Neither judo nor wrestling nor boxing encourages an escape into mysticism, fantasy, and arrant bullshit. Hard training, realism, and a practical application of sound principles of body mechanics typifies each of those systems.

- None of those methods wastes your time instructing you in utterly worthless, completely impractical, “artistic” so-called “defenses” against different attacks, thus programming you in such a way that any future training in serious combat that you undertake will have to undo all of the ineffective stuff that you were hammered with, before it can properly condition you to employ real counterattacking skills.
- Those who teach judo, wrestling, and boxing tend to be a lot more professionally competent and sane than most of those who teach classical/traditional martial arts.
- You will be unable to work hard at wrestling, boxing, or judo without coming to the conviction that strength and sheer physical acumen is no less important than skill — something that, unfortunately, many of the hallucinators who think themselves purveyors of “Asian secrets of unbeatable combat”, in some cases still insist upon teaching their students.
- You will get used to being hit, thrown down, and grabbed and jostled hard when you do either judo or wrestling and boxing, in a relatively safe manner, and without forming bad habits that will later impede your actual combative acumen. This is great preconditioning for combat training.
- There is never any pretense in judo, wrestling, or boxing, that the engagements in which you participate with practice partners are parallels of actual hand-to-hand combat, or/and that that which you are doing is thereby being “proven effective for actual combat”.
- You will learn the weaknesses of competitive sport for hand-to-hand combat, since you will have participated in such sports.

We'd stay far away from the UFC/Cage fighting/MMA venue. In our opinion — based upon what we have seen, heard, and read — these activities promote hideously inappropriate bad attitudes and the most misleading and incorrect assessment of what does and does not work in real combat. Youngsters ought certainly to be steered clear of these unfortunate events.

While you cannot train for both combat and sport in the same system, there may be considerable benefits to be gained, if you cannot immediately either enroll for or self-teach combat skills, in spending a few months gaining some experience in sporting/competitive martial activities.

Individual Style Within A Specific System

WHILE there is a contingent of latecomers to this field of Western combat/defense studies (whose rhetoric during the last two decades — on line and elsewhere — is, as many have pointed out to us, uncomfortably imitative of that which we have been espousing since around 1970) proclaiming that “This is not a ‘martial art’!”, we demur. We insist that “this” (ie all-combat, Western approaches to organized martial skills and tactical principles that exist solely for the purpose of self-defense and close combat) is indeed “martial art” — and that it is “MARTIAL ART” in the truest and most authentic meaning of the term! That is, it is art that is “of or pertaining to war”.

Like the methods of each of our Associate Teachers in ICMAF, our own System, American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)TM, is a comprehensive,

organized, fully established methodology. Its curriculum is extensive and specific. It is organized and taught according to a definite program of study — logically and systematically. And, as a complete system, takes quite a number of years to learn. Once learned, the system may be practiced, polished, refined, and developed — but never actually be perfected, despite a lifetime of training, by the serious, dedicated student. And that is what an “art” is.

Of course the matter of speedily acquiring a powerful and reliable method of self-defense and close combat is relatively simple in our System, or in other quality combative methods. Anyone developing a genuine level of ability in the first few levels of instruction (i.e at white, yellow, and green belt in American Combato) will possess greater formidability and knowledge of a practical nature than the majority of black belt experts in classical/traditional or sporting/competitive arts possess, insofar as combative competence is concerned. We have had students in some instances become confident and able to defend themselves after two or three months of serious training. But we are not now speaking merely of “being able to defend oneself”. And we aren’t per se speaking only or necessarily about our System.

A crucial concept whenever training in our own or in another martial art is that of cultivating an individual style. People who train in the classical/traditional and in the sporting/competitive arts understand this concept completely — and embrace it — at the advanced and even at the semi-advanced levels. But, unfortunately, many who enroll for “practical” training (or, at least, who think that they are enrolling for such training!) have been told that they either — a) Need merely learn a handful of techniques, often within the span of “ten, easy lessons” or so, use those

techniques exactly as they have taught to do, and they will have all that they require, or b) Must master the specifics and precise actions set down in the given “combat art”, and after strict and precise mastery at their “black belt level” will possess the approved actions and methods that will see them through any emergency.

The truth is that combat skills, just like competition or classical skills, must be adopted, adjusted by, tailored to, and used with the unique physiological and even psychological propensities of the individual constantly in mind. Tools must be subordinate to the user; the individual must never be subordinate to the tools. Once the mechanics of using the tools are acquired, then the personal style of the user must dominate how they are applied.

It is often possible to instruct an intelligent and physically fit man whose attitude is enthusiastic in a sufficient number of techniques with which he can defend himself, in a matter of only a few hours. However, the likelihood of “only a few hours” being necessary before those techniques have been properly mastered and adopted to the unique requirements of the individual is nil. It takes time, training, and experience. It takes work. And that does not mean mere “mindless, repetitive practice” — it means thoughtful, intelligent adaptation, as well. There is, for example, a generally correct methodology for executing the chinjab smash, the handaxe chop, and the low side kick. However, no two people will ever be seen to apply these actions in exactly the same way. Everyone’s uniqueness of build, size, weight, height, attitude, inherent strength or athleticism, style of movement, etc. will always influence their unique renderings of technique, every time. And it behooves everyone who trains to find his best personal style of action and to accommodate it, as he

develops over the weeks, months, and years. (Note: The Western boxer remains the best example of this. There are but four basic punches in boxing, and the core method of boxing per se can generally be taught to most attentive, fit young men within a couple of weeks, if he attends lessons four to six days each week. However, no two boxers in history ever boxed in the same manner, and the way in which every boxer adopts and adjusts the basic blows [and footwork, and ring strategy, etc.] to suit himself is always unique.) Combat arts must necessarily entail the study of considerably more skills, tactics, and techniques than any sport — because more things can occur, and much more must be contended with in the chaos of combat than in any sport — but the combatant, no less than the competitive sports champion, must cultivate his own personal, best style.

Advanced students of close combat and self-defense will invent and develop their own, unique techniques, as well as cultivate those that have been taught to them over the years. Unless they do this — indeed, unless they feel fully free to do it — the students have not achieved full mastery of combative actions that effective and comprehensive battle skills training is intended (or ought to be intended) to enable them to achieve.

With the sole exception of those who have either dropped out of our training program prematurely, or those few pathetic malcontents who, after training with us for a while, permitted their psychological disorders and/or their egocentric sensibilities to cause them to turn against us, **EVERY SINGLE STUDENT WHO HAS TAKEN THE TRAINING THAT WE HAVE (OR THAT MARK BRYANS HAS) GIVEN HIM SERIOUSLY, APPLIED HIMSELF TO ITS MASTERY, PROPERLY, AND ACCEPTED THE PROVEN PRINCIPLES THAT WE HAVE IMPARTED TO HIM WITH A RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE, HAS**

BECOME BETTER ABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF THAN HE EVER DREAMED, HOPED, OR THOUGHT POSSIBLE, AND DID SO — ULTIMATELY — BY CULTIVATING AND ESTABLISHING HIS OWN, UNIQUE, EFFECTIVE, PERSONAL STYLE.

Yes, the art of close combat and self-defense is a simple and direct one. However, that only means that the skills, tactics, strategies, and concepts are simple. They are easily learned. But this must not be taken to imply that they may be “mastered overnight” or that there is not a definite art to the mastering. Just like learning to play the piano or learning to dance is simple, yet few people in any generation ever become accomplished musicians or dancers, this applies to the ART of personal combat as well. And, do not permit yourself to be conned by those whose limited perception of what “close combat” fully and properly entails; it is an ART! IT IS A MARTIAL ART.

Those who feel themselves to be “profound” by their insistence that “what they are doing is not ‘martial art’” may indeed be correct — albeit in a sense that they do not intend their listeners to grasp (ie that they are teaching scraps, bits and pieces, and poorly organized extracts of mish-mashed skills, etc., which involve no “art”, rhyme, or reason, at all, when judged in the in the final analysis!). However, combat systems are systems — they art fully, properly, and appropriately designated “martial arts” because they are exactly that. And the student who approaches the study of any art — martial or otherwise — must take the mechanics contained therein and make them his own. It is by doing this and only by doing this, that true proficiency and “martial artistry” may be said to be accomplished.

Work hard at what you do in order to build and to perfect your own personal style.

POSTSCRIPT:— The correct observation that the so-called “WWII systems” were not, per se, taught as “martial arts systems” at all, does not gainsay the fact that **THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THOSE EXCELLENT, ABBREVIATED WARTIME COURSES WERE IN FACT DERIVED FROM MARTIAL ARTS.** Thus, while such wartime masters as Fairbairn, Sykes, Applegate, O’Neill, Brown, Begala, Feldenkrais, Hipkiss, Biddle, etc. did indeed have “martial arts” to offer, they encapsulated elements of those arts in abbreviated courses so as to meet the demands of the wartime emergency, and speedily train large numbers of individuals. Too abbreviated in some instances (most notably, the instance of Moshe Feldenkrais, for example) to properly be regarded as “systems” per se, these methods quickly imparted excellent **MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS.** Anyone who denies this simply is misinformed. Those modern **SYSTEMS** (not only ours — American Combato™ — but those of others, such as our friend, the late John McSweeney, or John Perkins, Jim Harrison, Florendo Visitacion, Charles Nelson, etc.) that build upon but are not restricted to that which the WWII systems gave us, offer full complete, comprehensive **MARTIAL ARTS.**

We have taken this time to correct the popularly touted “error” for the benefit of serious students, teachers, and researchers of the combat arts and self-defense.

A Very Valuable Lesson From A Truly Wonderful Teacher

OUR affection for our late Teacher Charles (“Charlie”) Nelson, like our affection for another of our former teachers, Rex Applegate, is a constant. Not a day goes by when we do not feel a sense of sincere gratitude for the contributions that these men made to our own development and — ultimately — to the creation, development, and continuing efforts to polish and to perfect, American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)TM.

We learned a lot more than “techniques” from our non-classical/nontraditional mentors. From Charlie we learned something — in the late 1950’s — that we continue to do to this day, and that we advocate others do, too, for their ongoing benefit in developing effective self-defense doctrine: That is — we scour newspapers and magazines for articles and reports on real world violence and on actual physical defense emergencies that atypical citizens, police officers, and members of our military services become embroiled in. We gratefully solicit and scrutinize articles from others — from other cities, states, and countries, too. We have, additionally, gone on to benefit from studying the numerous police incident reports that law enforcement officers whom we have had the privilege of teaching, have so kindly shared with us. Many of our students who are and who have been active duty Army Special Forces, Rangers, Marines, etc. have also shared valuable insight about close combat with us, as a direct result of their own and of their fellows’ field service experiences.

THIS IS THE REAL WORLD! Never mind what nonsense and drivel appears in the “martial arts newsstand or gun magazines” or in some of the

on-line forums, web sites, and outrageous promotional offerings. Look at what the FACTS have to teach you, friend. Then accommodate them.

Charlie would always have a handful of newspaper articles to show us whenever we appeared at his Studio for a lesson. “Here, see,” he would say, and then proceed to analyze the news report of some violent attack that some poor citizen had suffered. Charlie would study exactly how the scumbag(s) had preyed upon the victim, and then he would offer his analysis of what that victim could have done, had he known and employed the principles of self-defense that Charlie taught.

Over the decades that we have been not only picking the brains of those military, law enforcement, security, intelligence, and protective services (“bodyguard”) people who have been and who continue to be our students, as well as studying piles of real world news clippings from all over the nation and the planet, we have observed that —

- Real world attacks virtually never “go to the ground”; and when, rarely, one does, it is certainly not an intended occurrence! — either by the assailant or by the victim — but rather occurs because of ineptitude. (And proper methods of handling such a predicament when and if it should happen to occur **DO NOT RELATE EVEN PERIPHERALLY TO THAT WHICH HAS BECOME POPULAR IN THE COMPETITION “MARTIAL ARTS” TODAY!**)
- Blows are the premier and pristine actions/techniques that overwhelmingly bring a decisive conclusion (one way or the other) to real world encounters. By “blows” we mean to include gouges, biting, seizing,

clawing, and every kind of percussory, mutilation, and impact skill — the fouler, more disgustingly “dirty” and vicious, the better.

- Violent attacks have increasingly (notably since the 1980’s, up to the present) involved — a) Attackers who are armed, and b) Multiple attackers.
- Mindset and attitude — fighting spirit, mental conditioning, attack mindedness, indignation, ferocity, determination, will, intestinal fortitude, outrage, total commitment, (call it what you will!), etc. — is, at the barest minimum, 50% of that which is required in order to prevail in real combat.
- Offense wins. The person who is “on the defense” is the one who is losing. The person who is “attacking” is the one who is winning. Period. “Defensive” skills, mindset, attitude, and tactics constitute a prescription for getting beaten, maimed, or killed in any violent encounter.
- Victims who fight back hard rarely fail to rout their attacker(s) — this, even when the attacking party or parties possess greater numbers, greater strength, age advantage, better armament, and when the intended victims have had ZERO “training” in combat skills, or experience in actual military or other battle type circumstances. The elderly (especially sick, elderly women!) appear to have about the best track record for beating and routing violent human scum; a far more impressive record (and we are NOT joking about this) than “black belts” in the classical/traditional or sporting/competitive “martial arts”.

- Relatively few “techniques” are required in order to dispatch a violent opponent; however those techniques are invariably ones that cannot be practiced in any competitive venue.
- Highly accomplished “martial artists” of the conventional kind appear, statistically, to be no more capable of defending themselves in the real world than are untrained citizens who possess the requisite mental set (acquired by whatever means), and the simple willingness to GO AFTER THEIR ATTACKER in any way that their capacity permits, at the time of the attack, and to relentless continue their violent resistance until the threat has been eliminated.
- Weapons trump hands and feet. Every decent person should embrace the study of modern weaponry, and — where and when legally permissible — be armed with a viable, modern weapon to assist in unavoidable defense of himself, and his loved ones. (However, one ought ideally to have a substantial physical capacity to use unarmed combat, as well as a weapon. Self-defense involves and entails whatever will protect you. It is neither an exclusively “unarmed” nor “armed” undertaking — and should never be seen as being either).
- Violent offenders ENJOY victimizing people. The terror and the devastation that they inflict upon those whom they seek to torment is a great source of satisfaction and pleasure for them. One of the most self-sabotaging and suicidal errors that anyone can make is to adopt an attitude of compassion, “understanding”, forbearance, and restraint toward dangerous, violent human predators. This is akin to insisting that man-eating sharks can be made into aquarium pets — only it’s even more stupid than that!

That which we have just enumerated is the result of approximately half a century of unceasing effort to study, research, train in, learn, teach in person, and disseminate through writing, **WHATEVER IS TRUE ABOUT REAL WORLD SELF-DEFENSE.**

Perhaps some of our points do not rub one or another individual too well, since these points contradict the popular rhetoric or some widespread commercial doctrine. We make no apologies for presenting that which we have found to be true. Readers are of course free to disregard or to disagree with us; but that would be, alas, to their own detriment. We are not now and have never been, in any “popularity contest”.

We certainly recommend that readers begin their own acquisition of news clippings and reports regarding what really goes on in violent attacks, self-defense encounters, and hand-to-hand combat situations. Their subsequent “worship” of many of the popular and self-promoting “authorities” may well diminish significantly, if they do. However, their personal readiness will increase enormously, if and when they adjust their training and mindset in accordance with demonstrable facts. Certainly, the students and teachers who establish a firm commitment to reality will have become inoculated against the ton of bullshit that is out there.

We thank you, Charlie Nelson. You taught us a lot; and we are now grateful for this opportunity to pass it on to others.

Get Tough For The Tough Times Ahead

2009 does not appear to be a very optimistic year. Socioeconomic conditions are grave — throughout the world. The cities are packed with angry, impulse-dominated, uncivilized, violent savages. The “system” does nothing to eliminate these vermin. It has never been so evident as it is today that the private citizen — the thinking private citizen — is pretty much on his own, insofar as providing for his and his family’s security and protection is concerned. Government has neither the means nor the apparent desire to offer much help. In Seattle, Washington, for example, word has it that police will not respond to property crime calls unless the cash value of whatever property has been stolen or destroyed exceeds \$10,000. Insane? Outrageous? Just plain wrong? Of course it is.

Ask yourself how hard and long you have to work in order to accumulate \$10,000. What is the purpose of having well-paid, supremely well taken care of (their overtime and benefits packages — paid by YOU and by ME — are phenomenal; and their basic pay — paid by YOU and by ME — is a hell of a lot greater than my income, and probably than yours, too. So what the f— is this?

The injustice, and the times are, as Thomas Paine wrote, of the kind “. . . that try men’s souls”.

What to do?

GET TOUGH! And by that we mean become mentally and physically strong, hard, and competent. Disengage from the idiocy around you and

hunker down — with you and yours — and establish a tough, no-nonsense policy of independence, self-reliance, and readiness.

Good, tough training in the combat arts, coupled with serious physical training and the cultivation of a no-nonsense realist's philosophy — amidst the lunacy that surrounds us — will of course not “guarantee” that some unforeseen, catastrophic circumstance or situation will not overwhelm you. However — tough training in the combat arts, coupled with serious physical training and the cultivation of a no-nonsense realist's philosophy . . . will stack the odds in your favor.

So get cracking. It's later than you think. Tough times demand that you be tough in order to survive them.

Wishing All Of You The Happiest New Year!

PLEASE tell a few friends about this FREE monthly Newsletter, and tell them to visit our web site — www.americancombato.com

We hope that all good things come to you and yours in 2009, despite whatever hardships befall this world in the year ahead.

We'll be back next month, so please visit us again!

Cordially,
Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

— E N D —