

# Sword and Pen

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

## EDITORIAL

### The Realistic Possibilities

**O**NE of our Black Belt students recently brought in a copy of a popular mainstream martial arts magazine. "Just look at what's inside!" he said, smiling as he handed it to us. We did.

It has been more than 30 years since we regularly picked up any mainstream martial arts magazine at the newsstands, and so we were more than mildly shocked when we read advertisements inside the issue that our Black Belt had handed us, like the following:

"Become invincible!"  
"Learn What the Government Doesn't  
Want You to Know!"  
"Secrets of Close Combat"  
"Forbidden Fighting Methods"  
. . . etc.

There was of course a healthy (or would it be better termed "unhealthy"?) dose of ads for "mysterious this" and "hidden that". And of course the plethora of crap enjoining the reader to send away for this or that course, book, or DVD which promises to initiate him into those special skills that will enable "him, too!" to become a scowling, foul-mannered, infantile, shaven-headed, tattooed, knuckle-dragging "challenge fighter" ("Yeah!") and learn how to "kick ass" in one or another of those disgracefully orchestrated brawling contests that have, sadly, replaced legitimate, respectable, and worthwhile genuine martial arts competition, in too many circles, in this Country and in Europe.

While we would never advocate forbidding challenge (ie UFC, MMA, "Cage", and other similar types of) events, we definitely disagree with their approach and with the attitudes that they foster, and we powerfully urge that such stuff not be confused with close combat or self-defense. If those kinds of activities constitute your particular cup of tea, by all means participate. But so long as we have a first amendment right to speak out and express our opinion, we will urge as loudly and as clearly as we possibly can: "Stay away from that particular venue in present day martial arts. It is neither a healthy sport nor a viable combat method. It is a bloodsport — it is brawling — and it breeds skills and character that are useful only within its own sphere of activity."

But back to the other thing; the ads for "secrets" and "forbidden" skills — and the promise of teaching "invincibility", etc.

Come on! Obviously this stuff sells. One does not take out expensive display advertisements for that which does not bring in money. So, an

awful lot of people are permitting themselves to be duped. They are buying into that which perhaps sounds great, but that anyone with a double-digit IQ or better ought immediately to be able to see through and perceive as nonsense.

You cannot become invincible. There is no teacher, method, system, style, school, or anything anywhere that can guarantee you success in close combat. There are good methods. There are skills that certainly are preferable to other skills. There are extremely reliable techniques that have been proven in war (we teach them all!), and there are tactics, levels of mental conditioning, and physical actions that stack the deck very heavily in favor of the one who has mastered and who uses them. But "invincible"? Forget it. There is no such thing for human beings.

The simple truth is that ANYONE, regardless of his knowledge, technical expertise, physical prowess, strength, mindset, and tactical sophistication, can be defeated in real combat. Anyone promising to take the RISK out of defending yourself or out of engaging an enemy in lethal battle in a war zone by teaching you "his secret method" is lying to you. Or — if he really believes that which he is promising — he is insane.

You can become highly dangerous and proficient in reliable skills, and you can increase the odds of your being successful in an engagement by learning quality techniques, becoming very fit, and establishing the proper mindset. But you can NEVER become "invincible". Never.

Now how about this matter of the "government not wanting you to know" certain close combat methods? Certainly there are training facilities where government operatives in the military, intelligence, and security or

enforcement fields receive training in tradecraft that is — insofar as possible — kept confidential, even secret. However, this does not apply to hand-to-hand combat training! For heaven's sake, are you (or is anyone!) really so out of touch with common sense and reality that you believe that our or any other government gives a rat's ass whether or not you become an expert in "deadly hand-to-hand combat"? Tradecraft skills that are kept secret pertain to activities, data access, technological and weaponry advances, activities, missions, and functions that are — for very good reasons — not for public release. But the fact that you might learn how to properly execute a chinjab and handaxe blows does not keep the Directorate of Operations at CIA working through the night striving to come up with plans that prevent this from happening.

CIA, FBI, MOSSAD, MI6, KGB/SVRR, Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces, British SAS, etc. etc. etc. have no access to anything involving any aspect of hand-to-hand combat — armed or unarmed — that YOU do not have access to!

And in fact, we can tell you, as someone who knows firsthand: that which is in some instances taught to these "hush hush" operatives and shadow warriors is **DRASTICALLY INFERIOR** to that which some high quality teachers and schools in this field are teaching, today in the private sector.

But our main point is this: Any advertisement, any "teacher", any group, organization, association, or whatever the hell you care to name, that makes the claim of offering a curriculum revelatory of "secrets that only government agents have hitherto been made privy to" or that claims to be teaching skills that "the government doesn't want you to know" is full of something we'd rather not specifically name by using the customary

vernacular by which the substance is generally designated, in popular speech.

How about the "secrets of close combat"? There must be some, right? And isn't it possible that they are for sale through whatever advertisement some courageous entrepreneur has chosen to take in a martial arts publication?

Let us save you the money and the time. Here are the "secrets":—

1. There are no secrets. You must learn this one first.
2. Real close combat is savage and brutal. Anything goes, it's dangerous. There is no guarantee of victory, and it is unrelated to any form of competitive sport.
3. Blows, smashes, grasping, gouging, kicking, kneeing, and biting are the frontline skills that must be relied upon. Even effective grappling/throwing skills take a distant back seat to those core fundamentals.
4. **ATTACK**, not "defense" must be one's overriding obsession when it comes to actual, real, anything goes hand-to-hand battle. (Defense can and should be one's motive, outside a military context; but **ATTACK** — ie offense — is one's only and most reliable means).
5. Never fight bare-handed, unless you must — even if the enemy is unarmed. Use anything at hand and use it ferociously — whether it is an actual or an improvised weapon.

6. Expect your enemy to be armed. Anticipate his lethal intent; do not evaluate the degree of danger that you are in based upon his initial action, necessarily. GO ALL OUT! And do it right away!
  
7. There are relatively few truly "vital" vital points. Key among them are the EYES, THROAT, TESTICLES, KNEES, and NECK. Ferocious, powerful attacks that relentlessly assault one or more of those areas stand the greatest chance of stopping the enemy. "Pain compliance", control grips and holds, and pressure-point fighting are all suicidal methods; they are absurd, and utterly worthless in serious combat.
  
8. KEEP ON ATTACKING, and do not relent until your enemy is completely helpless — unable and unwilling to endanger you or whoever you are protecting, any longer.
  
9. Expect to get hurt.
  
10. Be prepared for multiple adversaries.
  
11. Always train with the idea that your enemy will be your superior in every way, and that it is his intention to cripple or to kill you. Plan to defeat him with good tactics, desperation, lethality, and by using every ounce of your strength, speed, and technical know-how when you act.
  
12. Strive to deceive your enemy, whenever possible. Do the unexpected!
  
13. LUCK always plays a part in determining who wins and who loses any battle.

14. Strive never to be taken off guard. You always want to be able to preempt. If you ever are taken off-guard, **BECOME THE ATTACKER IMMEDIATELY**. So long as you are "defensive" you are losing. When you go on the offense, you are **WINNING!**

15. Master — really **MASTER** — a handful of the most deadly and destructive techniques. Become so good at them — ie so fast, powerful, accurate, and able to employ them by surprise in any context and with savage fury — that you know and feel that you can employ them against anyone.

There's no charge for that information. That material, like **SWORD & PEN**, is free.

There are the "secrets". Well, at least that comprises most of whatever the hell anyone might consider the "secrets" of close combat, if he is still so ridiculous as to believe that there are any secrets to the matter, at all.

And that — see "Secret#1" — is our point. **THERE ARE NO SECRETS!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Are there any "forbidden" fighting methods? (Are you serious?)

Conscientious parents might "forbid" their young children to study certain types of techniques, until or unless their children become old enough and responsible enough to properly control themselves and to never misuse those techniques. And we seem to recall that nations once (a long time ago) agreed that the use of poison gas on the battlefield would be

"forbidden". Aside from this we know of no "forbidden" anything in the field of the combat arts, save of course in the different sporting venues.

Combative sports legitimately and correctly all forbid a great number of things. That is as it should be.

Frankly, the notion of "forbidden techniques" is just plain stupid. Who the hell could "forbid" techniques? Why would they if they could? And whom would they "forbid" them to?

Let's bring this to a halt at this point, okay. We'd like to finish this editorial without resorting to obscenities. There are no "forbidden techniques". Got it?

The plain truth is that there are no secrets, no mysteries, nothing at all "hidden", when it comes to close combat with and without weapons, and self-defense. If you permit yourself to be conned by false claims, on the internet or anywhere else, about some unbelievable and "until-now unavailable and hidden" methods that this or that "expert" is going to reveal to you in his DVD's or manuals, you are a fool. And if, heaven forbid, the moment comes when you or those you love depend upon your actions to stop one or more dangerous violent felons, all of the nonsense that has been conveyed to you about such "invincibility" and "unstoppable" powers that you think you have been made privy to, will be revealed at last as the CRAP it actually is.

Realistic training — where and when you are able to find a teacher who provides it — will place in your hands some seriously formidable tools; tools which, if and only if properly developed, will enable you to enjoy a



serious advantage in almost any violent emergency. However, there can never be any guarantees, and there is always risk. Good training will place inside your head the tactical and psychological conditioning and the strategic knowledge that will permit you to be confident if you ever need to engage an enemy in actual battle. But no good teacher will encourage false confidence, and whenever you hear, read, or see anything that speaks or touts of superhuman capabilities, guarantees, sure things, or any other such nonsense, RUN! What will be at stake if you buy into the nonsense is your life and well being.

The great communicative device of the internet has enabled all sorts of individuals to purvey their ideas and their wares; and this is good. But it is important that in examining all that is presented, you not do so with the gullibility of the carnival or sideshow sucker! Just as you must not believe whatever malicious gossip people spit out about others "on the worldwide web", so you need to be circumspect and discretionary in examining that which they have to offer in the various arts of personal combat and defense.

"All that glitters is not gold" is a truism. Applied to the self-defense and close combat arts we might modify it to read: "All that purports to be worthwhile instruction and training in the combat disciplines is not necessarily effective."

If you train correctly and learn good techniques then you will likely end up well able to defend yourself in the overwhelming majority of situations that might demand you do so. But realism demands that you accept the risks involved, and that you frankly confront the inevitable uncertainties that are integral to all chaotic circumstances of battle.

We who do offer authentic instruction do not want to deceive you. So please — don't deceive yourself.

Bradley J. Steiner

### **Are Big Muscles Helpful?**

WHILE we regard anyone who challenges the merits of progressive resistance (ie weight) training being valuable for the combatives student as being seriously misinformed, we do not feel the same way about those who question the purpose and the value of developing a "magazine cover body" — or the oversized, bulging muscles so often (and so unfortunately) automatically linked with the term "bodybuilding" today.

If you are asking "What's the difference?" then you are the victim of the kind of ignorance that those who have ruined the field of mainstream bodybuilding love to capitalize upon.

Anyone who trains correctly with weights will increase the girth (ie the size) of his muscles. However, it is not the sole objective of weight training or of "bodybuilding" to focus almost entirely on the development of huge, bulging muscles. The muscular development is a byproduct of proper training, but strength, condition, agility, and good health coupled with a sense of well being and self-confidence constitute the primary and most important training objectives.

This is even more important to understand when one takes up weight training as a supplementary activity to one's training in close combat and self-defense. The last thing that any combat arts student should hold as his training objective is the acquisition of bloated, bulging muscles. Rather, he should follow a good all round routine, developing every major muscle group, and working on general, overall strength building and physical conditioning.

One thing that many people do not realize is that the incredible outside proportions and "superman" type physiques can only be developed by those whose hereditary potential allows for such development. Everyone cannot build a "Mr. Universe" body!

Here is what you need to know about "big muscles":—

If you train correctly, and if you follow a reasonably good diet, get enough rest and sleep, and avoid such suicidal activities as smoking, using steroids (or any other unlawful, controlled substance), heavy drinking, etc. then you will, within two to three years, acquire muscles that are as "big" as they need to be. You will have achieved your hereditary and genetic potential for size. Striving to merely bloat the muscles beyond the level of development that they naturally attain after proper all round sensible progressive resistance exercise has brought them to their natural "maximum" is unrealistic, unnecessary, perhaps downright stupid, and — often — dangerous. You (we all!) have been set by nature with our own unique genetic potential for size, strength, and athletic/physical performance abilities. Strive mightily to achieve that. Then, once you have done so, be satisfied and grateful, and keep training regularly to maintain what you worked so hard to build.

What is truly "helpful" is not big muscles, per se, but STRONG muscles, and well conditioned muscles that enable you to utilize their potential for power-output in a fast, coordinated, skilled manner. Strong muscles do tend to be big — at least bigger than when they were weak — but the primary concern when training sensibly should not be on the attainment of mere size. Build powerful muscles. Emphasize the hardest work on the major muscle groups (legs and back) in order to bring about the finest all round gains.

Sensible men do not train solely for appearance. Train the way sensible men do train, and your appearance will be fine. Today, there appear to be very few "sensible men" in the bodybuilding/physical training field. Nevertheless, they are the ones to emulate and to turn to for worthwhile advice.

### **Is Pulling One's Blows When Training An Invitation To Disaster?**

"IF you practice pulling your blows you will pull them in a real attack, and you'll get clobbered!"

Ever hear that argument? We have. Dozens of times. But we learned, a long time ago, that it is ridiculous, fallacious, and unfounded. We learned firsthand from personal experience when teaching in the South Bronx. This was before we founded American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)<sup>TM</sup>, when our personal reliance was on basic ju-jutsu, taekwondo, and (thankfully!) on that which we had been taught by Charlie Nelson.

As we approached the elevated train station for our subway ride home some lunatic stepped suddenly out of a doorway and toward us — with a knife in his hand — and attacked. With no time to think, feel, or plan, we simply brought our hands up in a reflexive act to protect ourself, and we delivered a basic front kick to the lunatic's groin (doubtless with fifty times the force we normally had employed when doing that kick in training, as the adrenaline was surging through us at the time!). The lunatic dropped the knife as he fell and we skeedaddled up the stairs and through the turnstile. We only noticed that our hand had been cut after we sat down in the train; and only then did we feel the pain of the injury (and a hell of a lot of unpleasant shakiness, as well).

So? So this:

We had never practiced making any deliberate contact whatever against anyone with our kicks (or any other blows) — ever. In ju-jitsu we pulled all blows. In taekwondo three step sparring and freestyle we pulled our blows. And Charlie Nelson never taught any blows when we studied with him that didn't need to be pulled — or else!

What about contact? We hit striking boards, heavy bags, occasionally (in taekwondo) double-end bags, and (purely due to our own stupidity) in our personal case, trees, walls, and heavy wooden doors. (Yeah, we know. And we do not engage in such idiocy today; nor do we advocate it).

Despite training in skills and sparring with NO CONTACT (save the occasional, unintended contact that is just about unavoidable in freestyle) we had not the slightest problem slamming a fullforce kick into the

testicles of an assailant when the situation arose in which doing so was necessary.

On numerous occasions students whom we personally have trained, or who were trained by Mark Bryans, successfully — and rather spectacularly, in fact, in certain cases — defended themselves perfectly well — and we use no forceful contact ever to or near the targets against which we train to attack.

What we have found is this:

Those who water down their training (ie using clenched fist punching, high kicking, etc.) so as to have contact, invariably condition themselves to not use the proper and more effective combat actions that real emergencies demand, when and if real emergencies arise.

Even in those cases where so-called "anything goes" UFC or MMA matches are participated in, the entrants ARE subject to rules, terms, conditions, and cautions, that result in the event or the match being little more than what appears to us to be reckless brawling. Since the "good stuff" is forbidden, it is not internalized, committed to motor memory, and mastered at the reflexive level. Thus, in a real street attack, such a competitor will win only if he is a better reckless brawler than his adversary, AND if in fact his adversary is not uninhibited about using real hand-to-hand actions immediately against the competitor.

No contact training can of course be pointless and ineffective, too. If one consistently works as competitive sparring type techniques, rather than eye, throat, knee, testicle, ear, sternum, solar plexus, kidney, spine, and

nose attacks, using the most destructive types of blows and the most efficient natural weapons, then no contact work with live partners will stand him in excellent stead. He can get all of the contact he wishes and needs by smashing into posts, boards, dummies, and heavy bags. The student, for example, who controls his action and makes no contact, but practices speedily and accurately to attack his partner's eyes powerfully, can enjoy all of the full force contact work he may need on a BOB or SPAR-PRO or FIGHTING MAN type dummy. This type of contact work — because it reinforces the proper technique, as opposed to providing a watered down substitute technique that "enables contact to be made", as is and as must be done in sport — bolsters, supports and enhances one's genuine combative acumen.

You're not a toughguy if you dish out and receive needless injuries and punishment in regulated brawls. You're simply being reckless and, in our view, quite foolish. But if you like it, be our guest.

If you are serious about combat training, however, and if you recognize that injuries prove that the teaching and the training is very, very poor and unnecessarily dangerous when participants batter each other and leave the training or competitive environment bruised and in pain, then rest assured you do not need to do that in order to acquire viable defense and combat skills.

Train sensibly. If your techniques are really effective and will truly "do the job", then it follows that you can neither employ them forcefully against a partner, or use them freestyle in a competitive arena. Train with speed and accuracy and power — but also with care and with restraint, whenever you

work with others. Save the full contact to vital points and vulnerable target areas for use on insentient dummies.

A great ju-jutsu instructor in the Bronx, New York some years back — Phillip Scrima — made so much sense when he told students: "Train carefully. You can get hurt more in the dojo than you can in the street if you're careless."

Amen.

Please. Remember what this art of self-defense and close combat is all about. Hit a dummy; don't be a dummy.

### **Can You Really Learn Self-Defense From Books?**

WE remember when we were in a classical/traditional ju-jutsu class as a boy. Back then (1950's-60's) we were, as we still are today, an avid collector of the practical and realistic titles on the subject of self-defense. And while today some of these titles (ie Kill or Get Killed, Get Tough!, Cold Steel, Scientific Self-Defence, Hands Off!, American Combat Judo, Handbook of Self-Defense, Arwrology, some of the excellent Bruce Tegnér titles, Hand-to-Hand Combat (US Navy), My Method of Self-Defence, How to Fight Tough, etc. and so on) command prices between \$250. and \$1,000. in their original editions, we had no thought of "collectibles" when we bought them. We simply wanted to learn.

"You can't learn self-defense from a book!" our instructors would say. (There were two exceptions. Charles Nelson — who happened to be the finest instructor we had during our childhood, and Rex Applegate, years



later, from whom we learned a great deal personally, as an adult. Surprise of surprises!: both Nelson and Applegate believed wholeheartedly in the FACT that, indeed, "you can learn a ton of good stuff from quality books on the subject of close combat and self-defense". Of course you CAN. In fact, one of the very best sources for the "real McCoy" is Kill or Get Killed, authored by Rex Applegate, and still — nearly 66 years following its original date of publication (ie 1943)!!!! — a worldwide bestseller among those who are professionals in our field.

Now obviously, the ideal way to learn is from a quality teacher who possesses professional capabilities in the art(s) that he is teaching. No disputation about that. You cannot beat having an established, knowledgeable pro, whose track record has long since made it clear that he knows his stuff , teach you. However —

- There are not too many "established, knowledgeable pro's" that are teaching. (Don't go by the spectacular claims and impressive web sites from people with classical/traditional backgrounds who have within the last 10-20 years or so, jumped on the "practical bandwagon", or by those with recent backgrounds — ie people in their 20's, 30's, or 40's, most usually — in the "WWII methods" who spout the buzzwords and who lace all of their promotional material with references to Fairbairn, Applegate, and O'Neill. For every two dozen glitzy web sites with fantastic claims of teaching "no nonsense, real world" self-defense that is "based on the WWII methods", there may be ONE (invariably, much less dramatic, and with a lot fewer claims and promises) that is offering the Real Deal). You are FAR better off learning and training completely on your own, than you would be permitting the ridiculous and the fantastic to clutter up your

mind, while the fakes who instill it teach you muddled, lukewarm, mish-mashed garbage that in fact is not one fiftieth as effective as they claim!)

- There are a lot of excellent and well run classical/traditional schools, and a lot of genuinely competent classical/traditional teachers. If no worthwhile and competent teacher is available to you, then it is worthwhile to attend and to train at such schools, and under such instructors — even if these schools and teachers are not offering a full and exclusive "combat" and "practical self-defense" program. These are usually Kodokan Judo, strict Japanese, Okinawan, or Korean Karate schools, and some Ju-Jitsu and Ch'uan Fa ("Kung Fu") schools and teachers. You're not going to learn a great deal about realistic close combat and self-defense in these schools, but they will help you achieve fitness, teach you some fundamental skills that are useful, and NOT inundate you with absurd and ludicrous expectations about what can and cannot be done in a dangerous encounter. While attending these schools you can benefit enormously by supplementing that which you do through reading and studying good books on close combat.

Here is a truth: You cannot acquire practical skill and confidence merely by "reading" a book on close combat and personal defense. You must train in and practice the skills and techniques that the book describes. This ought to be evident, but we mention it here because we wish to be absolutely clear on where we stand. You can't develop the ability to battle with an enemy hand-to-hand or protect yourself in a street attack by simply reading a good book on the subject of personal combat. You most assuredly can develop the ability by studying a good book, and then working hard and regularly in training sessions and workouts, so that you physically master what the book teaches.

If you are genuinely serious about learning close combat and if you are genuinely willing to train hard and workout regularly in order to acquire the skills, then YES, you can learn from books! Try, if at all possible, to get some personal instruction. Even as little as a half dozen or so lessons in the real stuff that is taught to you by a real pro will give you enormous benefits. What's more, with such personal training as a foundation, you will have a greater capability of learning from the books that you acquire and study.

We came across a couple of interesting letters that were contributed as commentaries on one of the better "learn it yourself" self-defense books, advertised on an internet site: the late Bruce Tegnér's classic, Bruce Tegnér's Complete Book of Self-Defense. While we would first and foremost recommend Kill or Get Killed, Get Tough!, and Cold Steel as "first to be acquired", we agree wholeheartedly that Tegnér's works on practical defense deserve to be in every student's library. Please read those two commentaries (below). They very plainly and logically provide sensible endorsements for self-teaching through books. (And NO, we are not reproducing these commentaries because one of them recommends us. We simply like the idea of reading sensibly written recommendations for training, and we feel our readers can benefit from these two, also):—

Quoted from an AMAZON.COM ad for Bruce Tegnér's Complete Book of Self-Defense .....

"13 of 13 people found the following review helpful:

Another great primer for self-taught self-defense, September 19, 2000

By A Customer

"In response to the review that had an agenda to discourage people from picking up a book to learn the basics of self-defense...I'd just like to say that one of my best friends was attacked one day while walking from the grocery store by three of his enemies from school (how they became his enemies is another story) and one of these individuals was armed with a switch-blade and used it without reserve in his attack. My buddy not only escaped with his life but inflicted injuries on all three of the assailants leaving them more hurt than he was. Afterwards the police were informed but the assailants were never caught. Nonetheless my friend attributes his successful defense to what he taught himself from books which included Bruce Lee's Fighting Method and one of Bruce Tegner's guides (I believe it was Bruce Tegner's Kung Fu and Tai Chi).

"So while I understand why many people like to think they're giving good advice when they express platitudes such as "you must not learn defense from a book!", they're not speaking from the truth but rather, in my opinion, from a very deep denial that SOME ONE ELSE can actually spend less money and time teaching themselves something that took them (the ones spending years in a martial arts class) years and expenses to obtain. Now, I am not knocking martial arts classes. I've simply been shown that they are by no means the only way of learning defense.

"Bruce Tegner's Complete Book of Self-Defense is a rather impressive guide. The text is just as enlightening as the photos...Tegner has a very distinct way of writing that you can tell comes from the heart. He details an accessible and intelligent method for self-defense which is very inspiring. Tegner himself suggests studying his methods with a partner. Unfortunately he does not express his view on someone using the concept

of an imaginary opponent in case they do not have a partner to practice with.

"The only reason I do not give it 5 stars instead of 4 is because he left out many useful things that have appeared in one of his pervious books, Defense Tactics for Law Enforcement. In that book he covers many areas that should have been listed in this book such as how to disarm someone with a gun as well as a more detailed account on how to deal with multiple assaliants (in this book he gives some vague advice which is very good, but lacking).

"All in all, I would read this along with Defense Tactics for Law Enfrocement. That book fills in the gaps left out by this one."

A N D .....

"7 of 8 people found the following review helpful:

A good solid introduction to self defense, April 14, 1999

By A Customer

"I bought this book when it was first published as a teen also studying shotokan karate.I have to admit that I find the methods in this book to be more practical than the karate I took.I don't agree with everything Tegner wrote, but if you are looking to learn practical self defense without spending years in a martial arts class, then this book could really help you.I would recommend that you also read Rex Applegate, Fairbairn or Brad Steiner to add some real dirty methods to your overall training.But overall, a good book as a foundation."

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We hope that those nicely written letters (we quoted them exactly — to include any minor spelling or grammatical errors) help to inspire and encourage any of our readers who cannot avail themselves of quality personal instruction. Good books are a better choice than poor teachers!

You can learn from books. (And, by the way, the next time some prominent classical martial artist claims that you cannot learn from books, ask him why so many "name teachers" keep producing books — and very expensive ones, at that. Or — perhaps — why he [the classical martial artist, himself] bothers to author books, if in fact he has written any, if he believes that they are a "waste of time"? His reply should be interesting!)

### **Modern U.S. Military Hand-To-Hand Training Is Not Too Good**

THERE are few institutions that we respect, admire, and appreciate as much as the Armed Forces of the United States of America. We bow our head in reverent appreciation to everyone who has served and who now serves in the Armed Forces, and we know the debt that all of us who call ourselves Americans owe to these heroes. God Bless Them. Let no one dare say that our following comments are in the least intended as being derogatory of the courageous individuals upon whom the liberty of our people and our nation has depended, and who have faithfully and unflinchingly been responsible for the preservation, protection, defense, and safeguarding of our blessed Republic, since the days of the American Revolution.

Despite our love and deep, heartfelt appreciation for our Nation's uniformed protectors, we must offer commentary now on something that we feel amounts to a shortchanging of those who serve so bravely and well in the service of our Country.

Recently, one of our students returned on leave after graduating the U.S. Marine Corp's Basic (ie "Boot") Training program, at the Corps' facility in San Diego, California. Marine training is of course identical at their other training depot, at Parris Island, South Carolina. There is no disputation about the fact that marine basic training is the hardest and most severely disciplined of all the armed services. Quite rightly, those who have successfully become marines have been proud of their accomplishment, and deeply proud of the distinguished Corps that they serve.

Having studied the WWII USMC Raider program in hand-to-hand combat as well as the Corps' subsequent programs (through the Vietnam era war in SE Asia) we are alarmed at how recruits are being instructed today in hand-to-hand combat. While much ado is being made publicly about the USMC martial arts program (in which, for some reason, colored belts are now awarded), that which our student showed us he had been taught in Boot Camp was awful. It consisted of complex control type wrist and arm holds, and needlessly elaborate defenses. Not only could our recent student graduate of the program NOT effectively execute the actions that he had been taught, he reported that other recruits found their ability to employ the moves similarly ineffective.

One of our black belts is a former Vietnam era marine. He was shocked at the idiocy that the new generation of warriors is being instructed in — hand-to-hand combat wise — also. When, for example, our black belt

student was trained, prior to his deployment and service in Vietnam, he was taught to KILL (which is of course the proper instruction for any warrior — marine or otherwise).

Properly, the Corps abandoned the "LINE" system. However, that mess has been replaced by irrelevant nonsense, and it seems that our toughest and bravest — whose lives may be on the line shortly, in their mission overseas to defend the principles upon which the country they serve is based, are being shortchanged in their hand-to-hand combat course!

Fighting men (soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen) should be taught the lethal blows and deadly counters of no-nonsense commando style personal combat. Our student, of course, has learned some of that from us; but he had achieved only yellow belt ranking before enlisting in the Marine Corps, and his practice has been diverted into silliness by the training that has been foisted upon him in San Diego, which has caused us concern for his safety when and if he ever goes into combat and needs to engage a foe in close combat.

Fighting men need to be introduced early on — in basic training — to the fundamentals of serious, and reliable hand-to-hand combat! Their training should be, as it was in WWII, centered about killing skills. That is, after all, what war is about.

Our recommendation to anyone serving in the military is: Find a good instructor of close combat if at all possible, and train as much as possible with him. Get hold of KILL OR GET KILLED, GET TOUGH!, COLD STEEL, and the U.S. Naval Institute's wartime classic HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT and study those books hard\*! WORK on the skills that they



advocate! Forget "control" holds, wrist and armlocks, and wrestling around on the ground. Cultivate the attitude that was inculcated in a generation of warriors who defeated the Axis powers, and destroyed an enemy that had nearly conquered the world. Do not be misled and diverted into "martial artsy gobbledygook".

\*REPRINTS AVAILABLE FROM PALADIN PRESS.

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The only thing standing between a fighting man and death when he faces an enemy in close combat is his mental and physical readiness, his weapon, and the skill that he possesses with his hands and with his weapon. We'd like our fighting men to have everything that it takes to prevail — with and without their weapons. They once had it. We want to see them have it again!

### **Stickwork**

THE stick is a marvelous weapon. Back in the 80's we wrote an installment of our (then) monthly feature article in a major firearms publication entirely devoted to the stick — the walking stick — as a weapon of self-defense. The article was well received, and in it we were concerned to emphasize all of the great virtues of the walking stick as a self-defense weapon. Among these virtues are —

### **Legality**

The walking stick is, even in such oppressive environments as Red China and Russia, completely legal. It would be difficult to imagine

"outlawing" the walking stick, since it is a utilitarian item that many people need and carry for medical reasons.

### **Handiness**

Unlike a firearm or a fighting knife that is carried in a holster, or a folding knife that is carried in a pocket, a walking stick is carried, properly, in the hand at all times. This makes it immediately usable against anyone whose attack is perceived to be in its formative stage.

### **Effectiveness**

While the stick is not normally employed with lethal intent, it certainly can — in trained hands — speedily enable its possessor to drop the most dangerous individual, lethally, in a life or death encounter. The stick allows the user to inflict crippling or/and extremely painful and debilitating injuries, and to do so rather simply, and with only marginal physical strength.

### **Confidence**

"Speak softly and carry a big stick." Teddy Roosevelt's advice, taken literally, makes excellent sense. For with a stout walking stick in hand, and the ability to use it well as a weapon, anyone may be confident of his ability to handle trouble, and may thus "speak softly", indeed.

### **Deterrence**

A man who is in possession of a walking stick, and who does not appear to actually need it in order to assist him in locomotion, sends a clear and unmistakable message to any potential physical attacker: "Not this particular individual! This one's got a weapon!"

## **Tactical Advantages**

If you do carry a concealed firearm legally, then you also might give some serious thought to carrying a walking stick. The stick may be the means by which you secure the opportunity to access your pistol, or — it may enable you to stop an assailant without having to access your pistol, at all.

## **Versatility**

The stick can punish, damage, or kill. It extends the reach of its user, and it bolsters all unarmed combatives. It never runs out of ammo, makes noise, jams, or is awkward to keep near at hand — conspicuously. The stick delivers hard, destructive jabs as well as smashing blows. When using certain techniques it can cut and slash, and it does not represent a danger to the user or to innocent people in the vicinity, when it is correctly employed. It would be very unlikely that a normal walking stick would be banned for carrying onto an airline.

## **Carryover Value**

Learn how to use the stick in combat, and you will almost never be in a position where some stick, or stick-like implement, cannot be found, made, or improvised.

## **Combat Stickwork Vs. Popular "Stickfighting" in the Martial Arts**

Many people are engaged in training in such arts as Filipino "escrima" or "kali", and Japanese "jo jutsu" and "bo jutsu". While all of these classical/traditional stick arts are beautiful and worthwhile studying, they are not necessarily the best choice when it comes to practical combat and

personal self-defense needs. As martial arts (emphasis upon the "arts") no one can fault traditional methods. But as martial arts (emphasis upon the "martial") there is a lot of room for improvement.

Get hold of a copy of Fairbairn's GET TOUGH!. Study the description Fairbairn gives of his excellent stick technique. Now THAT'S how we use a stick in combat. Or, pick up COLD STEEL, by John Styers. His well illustrated instruction in the Marine Corps' "Kengla Technique" also provides a glimpse of how — in real, honest-to-goodness hand-to-hand combat — we use a stick against an enemy.

For combat the stick is used with extreme aggression, and it capitalizes upon the element of surprise. There is no twirling, and there is no two-stick style. Nor is there competition. One ATTACKS.

Both the Fairbairn and the Kengla techniques are taught in their complete forms in American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)<sup>TM</sup>, and we include dozens of other excellent techniques and stick tactics — all combat-worthy. At Black Belt, 1st degree, we teach a syllabus of thirty(30) super-destructive stickwork maneuvers. But you don't need to study with us to acquire all that you might have need for in an emergency. Just remember: Keep it simple. Attack by surprise. Use every ounce of ferocity and determination you can generate. Move in! Keep on attacking! Go for the enemy's most vulnerable, vital points. And, for heaven's sake do not forget to first acquire basic unarmed combat skill. The stick, like any other hand held weapon, should be utilized as an adjunct and an extension of your body's natural weapons, and your combative mindset.

## Selecting A Suitable Stick For Personal Defense

Anything that can be done with a baton sized stick (ie approximately 18" to 24-36") can be done, and done better!, with a walking stick. And a walking stick is not classified as a "weapon" per se.

We have always liked the English or the Irish Blackthornes. However, any stout hardwood walking stick (not a hiking stick, but a cane-length walking stick) will do admirably. Skill is demanded, of course, in order to fully exploit the weapon's potential, — but assuming that the reader understands this and is prepared and willing to train and to practice, he should obtain a plain, hardwood walking stick, or a good, stout blackthorne.

Question" "How about a 'cane'? Wouldn't the crook on the end permit some excellent additional techniques to be employed?"

Answer: We would strongly advise that a cane per se not be chosen. The cute tricks of catching an enemy's wrist or ankle when he kicks or punches, or hooking him behind the neck and throwing, etc. look great in demonstrations and in dramatic photographs that have been carefully taken for martial arts magazines. However, such techniques are nearly impossible to use for real, and the crook-necked cane is much less versatile than the plain walking stick. Locking up with an attacker (when utilizing a cane, just as when utilizing bare hands) is suicide if and when multiple attackers are encountered. The cane is also poorly balanced for speedy combative skills manipulation. Go with a hardwood walking stick, or a good, stout blackthorne

PLEASE TELL A FRIEND OR TWO ABOUT SWORD & PEN! We wish you and yours a wonderful, Merry Christmas! May this Holiday Season bring you all good things! We'll be back on 1 January 2009. Please visit us at this site then.

Cordially,  
Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

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