

www.AmericanCombato.com

www.SeattleCombatives.com

Sword and Pen

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

EDITORIAL

The Reality of Close Combat And Self-Defense Vs. The Popular Fantasies And Fads

“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”

Arthur Schopenhauer (German Philosopher — 1788 - 1860)

HOW well we remember when, just around or about 1970, when we began to advocate a departure from the classical/traditional *karate* and *ju-jutsu* type arts to a more practically-based approach to serious self-defense — an approach based heavily upon the WWII systems and methodologies, and utilizing the most basic and fundamental of the martial skills in an **attack** rather than in a defensive tactical manner:

“That’s not *true* martial arts.”

“In karate and in ju-jutsu we *never* attack — we only defend. The opponent always makes the first move! *Karate begins and ends with blocking.*”

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

“Who are you to think that you’ve got a better solution to developing martial arts for self-defense than those ‘masters’ who came before all of us — hundreds and even thousands of years ago?”

One individual on the East Coast, a highly ranked “traditionalist” who had apparently never acquired the traditionalist’s humility (he *invariably* placed “PhD” after his name — as though his acquisition of this academic credential meant anything, in regard to martial arts — in all of the advertisements for his martial arts publications and teachings) proclaimed, in response to our publication of the name of our newly formed System: “*There is no such system as ‘Combato’!*” (Talk about the arrogance and self-importance — and **fraudulence** — of so many who obtain academic degrees!)

The above are but a few sample belchings of inanity that were thrown at us — often, without the speaker’s having even had a single lesson in, or a moment’s actual exposure to, that which we were doing, or why we were doing it the way that we were!

Today, the “latest thing” is “*modern, practical/WWII system based/no-nonsense/real world, etc.*” training. In their effort to scramble aboard what has become something like a bandwagon, a lot of “teachers” and “experts” have forsaken their gi’s, and donned in their place *military fatigues* (“cammies”). The almost universal inclination of many of these “teachers” today is to drop all of the Asian terminology, and to adopt, instead, a kind of “tough guy” demeanor. Speaking like street-savvy types, many black belts in ju-jutsu, karate, etc. now strive to emulate marine corps DI’s or Navy SEAL trainers. As they embarrass themselves by doing this, and as they discredit themselves in the eyes of those with anything above a room temperature IQ, the gullible public unfortunately gravitates to these people — learning, as a result, the same ineffective classical/traditional **ART**, which has been disguised by its packaging and marketing, as was taught previously as **ju-jutsu**, **taekwondo**, “**kung fu**”, and **karate**, etc. Or, they are given a quick mishmash of dirty tricks and disconnected techniques of sometimes good/sometimes not-so-good self-defense moves, which leave them less prepared to actually handle a violent confrontation than is a seasoned judo player, boxer, or wrestler.

Dear reader, our System, doctrine and techniques have passed through the first two stages described by *Shopenhauer*. Laughing at that which we espouse, and even ridiculing us, personally, is doubtless still done in some circles. However, we have so solidly established our position through sheer force of **truth**, **reality**, and **fact**, that by attacking us, such detractors as might come out from under the occasional rock here and there (like snakes, to spit their venom) merely succeed in discrediting *themselves*. Like the jungle witch doctor who scorns a modern surgeon, the person who attacks the concepts that we have proven to be **true** and **necessary** for real world close combat and self-defense, only demonstrates that he understands *nothing* about

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

that which he proclaims to possess knowledge. *Those who do it for real, and those who appreciate the importance of learning from that which has been established by those who do it for real, never ridicule the truths that we — and that our ICMAF-Associate Teachers — practice, teach, and promote.*

“Violent opposition”, regrettably, was experienced by us in the past, and it came largely from those who had at first taken to our work, even spent some time studying with us and learning some of that which we had to teach, and then simply (for reasons of egotism or just plain, run-of-the-mill neurotic disorder in their psyches) decided that they could not bear subordinating themselves to our school of thought and technical doctrine, but needed to “do their own thing”. Truly pathetic were those who felt the need to ascribe solely to “Fairbairn, Applegate, O’Neill, Brown, etc.” that which they began to teach — rather than to simply acknowledge that they “borrowed” (ahem) from us.

C’est la vie.

Lest anyone feel that we are attempting to claim that we are the *only* person to be offering legitimate, authentic methods and training, we want to emphasize — and emphasize ***very strongly*** — that this is not so. Fabulous teachers, like the late John McSweeney (“Father of Irish Karate”), who was a close friend and colleague of ours from the late 1970’s until his passing, the late Prof. Florendo M. Visitacion (also a friend and colleague), Charles Nelson (one of our beloved teachers), Caesar Bujosa, Robert H. Sigward, John Martone, John Perkins, Jim Harrison, and others — some still with us, some who passed on — were/are each in their own right a justifiably prestigious instructor of practical, realistic and reliable individual close combat, and each has developed dedicated students who — now as teachers, themselves — pass on top quality instruction.

What is important to appreciate is that “all that glitters is not gold”. By this we mean ***caveat emptor*** (“let the buyer beware”) when shopping for instruction. The mere fact that some instructor proclaims that he is offering effective and reliable close combat and self-defense training does not necessarily mean that he is. Watch out for:

- Schools where clenched fist punching is emphasized
- Schools where freestyle sparring is encouraged, or is a “mainstay” in the curriculum
- Schools where grappling/groundfighting is

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

treated as an important element in hand-to-hand combat and personal defense

- Schools devoting time to the practice of classical or traditional *kata* training
- Schools where an attempt is made to “balance out” the ground-grappling methodology with percussory (striking) skills
- Schools where there is an emphasis upon throwing — especially throwing that is elaborate or complex, where “*sacrifice*” type throws or competition type throws are stressed
- Schools that stress blocking, learning an enormous *quantity* of “self-defense” techniques that attempt to address virtually every specific type and variant of attack
- Schools that neglect to emphasize counters to **armed** attacks, **multiple** assailants, and **attacks from behind**
- Schools in which the idea is advanced and encouraged that *competitive* excellence is the way to *combative* competence
- Schools in which *any* high, spinning, turning, or jumping type kicks are taught
- Schools in which **enormous emphasis** is not given to ***MENTAL CONDITIONING, GOOD COMBAT TACTICS, RELIABLE PERSONAL SECURITY MEASURES***, and all forms of psychological interactive elements pertaining to interpersonal confrontations and encounters
- Schools where the teacher lacks a rather lengthy and

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

objective *track record* of teaching, advocating, practicing, training in, advancing, writing about or otherwise promoting *serious, realistic close combat and self-defense*

- Schools in which *weapons* (ie **MODERN** weapons) are not taught or advocated
- Schools in which the absurd myth of “not needing strength” and “size is unimportant”, etc., are taught or believed. **Run** from any hand-to-hand combat teacher who does not advocate sensible weight training!
- Schools in which control grips, holds, pinning, or immobilization skills receive any emphasis, *save peripherally, for law enforcement use only*
- Schools that do not emphasize attacking combinations and tremendous followup, but that suggest that handling an attacker can be quickly and “neatly” managed.

We could go on, but that’s a pretty comprehensive list of **WHAT TO AVOID**, if anyone needs suggestions and help in locating instruction in reliable close combat and self-defense that is professionally taught.

And let us say this: ***IN NO SENSE ARE WE DOWNGRADING OR ATTACKING ANY COMPETITIVE, SPORTING, CLASSICAL, TRADITIONAL, ESTHETIC, OR OTHER SCHOOL, TEACHER, OR MARTIAL ART SYSTEM.*** We are simply discussing **combat** and **self-defense**, and while it is certainly not our position that our (or any) school or system or approach is “better” per se than any other, we **ARE MOST DEFINITELY SAYING THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM, AND THAT THE DIFFERENCES MATTER!**

It is just not true that you can have your cake and eat it, too. Decide what you’re looking for. A sport? A classical art? Or a combat system? All are worthy and excellent studies, and all offer enormous benefits to those who earnestly apply themselves to the study; but each approach is different and unique; and neither advertising nor wishful thinking can change that fact.

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

When, in the late 1960's, we began to write and to teach that **combat** and **sport** or **traditional arts** were diametrically opposite, we were ridiculed and laughed at. Opposition of a nearly hysterical kind arose — until the truth prevailed. Now, since the “martial arts world” has finally come at least partially to its senses and acknowledged what the facts have always demonstrated to those who paid attention to them, *we see upstarts and others of questionable merit maintaining that they “have always” been teaching (or studying) “real world combatives”.*

Just using the right terms and referencing names like “Applegate”, “Fairbairn”, and “O’Neill”, etc. does not convert *sport* or *traditional methods* into real world, no-nonsense combat doctrine.

If you want to train in a classical/traditional art, go to a seasoned, experienced master of that venue. There are many, many excellent schools in just about every major urban area on the planet. If your goal is competitive excellence, then study with long standing champions and experienced competition experts. And, if your purpose is becoming proficient in hand-to-hand unarmed and armed combat and reliable self-defense, then come to us — or to one of our Associates who has been in and at this for a *lifetime*. If you ever actually *need* that which you study in a self-defense program, you will need it very, very *badly*, indeed!

Bradley J. Steiner

A NEW TECHNIQUE — THANKS TO ONE OF OUR STUDENTS!

IF it works, *we use it*. And we welcome and encourage our students to experiment and consider how the proven principles and skills of close combat that we teach them may be blended, adopted, modified, and applied in different versions, to the emergency situations they are taught to deal with.

Recently we had the great pleasure of having one of our finest Black Belts (Howard Stoppelman) call our attention to something that, in working with one of our relatively new (and most excellent) students (Yellow Belt Greg Hall), the student had hit upon — apparently “by accident” — when the two were working on Greg’s development of a variation of a counterattack against a “mugger’s grip” from behind.

We were greatly impressed with Greg’s discovery (which, interestingly, occurred by accident, as he erred in applying a counter to Howard’s grip).

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

The hold that was applied was that in which a very large and strong individual seizes one from behind with a forearm around the neck, and a grip on the defender's wrist, with the attacker's opposite, free hand. (**Note:** This type of hold is only effective when the attacker has a great size and strength advantage. Otherwise, a defender can easily yank his wrist free or just stamp kick the attacker and break loose, instantly).

Upon having the hold applied on him by Howard, Greg suddenly spun around *in the direction of his trapped arm* and, *using his free hand*, drove a vicious tiger's claw attack to Howard's face and eyes. **BINGO!** Greg was out of the hold, Howard had lost his grip (and Howard is larger than Greg and *very* strong!). The two men had discovered — quite by accident — a terrific action that, henceforth, we shall be advocating to all of our Yellow Belts — with acknowledgment to Greg! — when they commence learning the “mugger grab counterattacks”.

Naturally each individual will apply this action with slight differences in the manner of his footwork as he turns, and perhaps using a heelpalm or half-fist blow (rather than a tiger's claw) if he wishes, etc. as he turns into his attacker. *But this fundamental strategy of turning sharply toward the seized arm and using one's free hand to attack the enemy's facial/throat area is GREAT!*

We are truly delighted with the serious attitude, dedication to training, and plain good sense of so many of those whom, like Greg Hall and Howard Stoppelman, we are privileged to call our students.

THANK YOU, GREG! THANK YOU, HOWARD!

We hope that you — our visitor — will experiment with and benefit from this excellent counterattacking movement.

Happy training!

A Note On “Blocking” — And How It Was Actually Taught During WWII

BLOCKING, in our opinion, is one of the least desirable ways of handling an attack. We say this based upon the following:

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

In order to block a blow that is directed against one (empty handed, or with a club or edged weapon in the hand) one must *see the action of the blow's delivery as the assailant makes it*. If in fact you do perceive that a blow is being initiated, then **why block it?** It is much smarter to either *preempt* the attack by jamming into the attacker before his action gets fully underway, or by moving out of the line of delivery and then attacking the assailant and neutralizing him.

It is very misleading to teach people that “blocking” is, per se, a viable means of self-defense against fist blows, knife thrusts or stabs, and club blows, etc. *Teaching this encourages the individual to **try to deal with blows by blocking them*** (“karate begins and ends with blocking?”), and to *think defensively, rather than offensively — or preemptively*.

You cannot block a surprise blow that a fast attacker delivers against you when you are within range. We learned this years ago with the gracious assistance of boxers who trained at the gym that we ran, in NYC.

None of the ju-jitsu or karate blocking actions that we learned could be done — even *occasionally* — against a man who whipped fast, properly executed punches at us.

The message is: You need a tactic *other than* blocking in order to stand a chance against either an experienced boxer or a fist fighter who knows what he's about. That tactic is, of course, proper distancing and stance positioning. ***BY STANDING OUTSIDE OF ARM'S REACH OF A STRANGER, AND BY BEING IN A MENTAL STATE OF ALERTNESS WHILE MAINTAINING A SHARP VISUAL ON THE STRANGER, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE AN ATTACK IN ITS FORMATIVE STAGE. EVEN A PROFESSIONAL BOXER CANNOT HIT YOU UNLESS HE MOVES IN WITHIN RANGE SO AS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECTIVE.*** If you maintain distance from a stranger whose approach you are aware of, and if you are in the proper frame of mind, utilize eye contact, and are **fully prepared to attack ferociously at the first indication of an aggressive action** then you can effectively preempt the boxer/fist fighter as he endeavors to take that step in to hit you. Otherwise, ***YOU GET HIT!*** And if you do get hit, it makes no sense (assuming that you are still conscious), to “prepare to block his *next* blow”. ***JUST ATTACK HIM!*** No one hits slowly enough and clumsily enough for you to block his blows *sequentially* — as we so often see karate and “kung fu” exponents practicing. It's fine when you are standing ready and you *know* exactly what your opponent is going to throw at you, and how he will do it. But in a combat situation — **forget it!** You get hit or your preempt. And if you do get hit, your only hope then is: ***GET THE ATTACKER BEFORE HE GETS YOU!*** NO “BLOCKING”. NO DEFENSIVE STUFF. **ATTACK!**

Fundamental blocking actions, such as the circular ch'uan fa blocks (which we teach in *American Combato*) are *sometimes* helpful when you can move in, for example, against a club

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

swing or amateurish slashing type attack, etc. But please, if you wish to be realistically ready to defend yourself, do *not* practice blocking a boxer's fist attack!

Now what about the numerous blocks and blocking counteractions (i.e. in which armlocks are applied against an attacking limb *following* the block) that we sometimes see in the old WWII photos of rangers, marines, etc. training in hand-to-hand combat? After all, didn't Fairbairn himself say that the "bent arm hold" could be employed against an attack by an assailant's arm (punch, knife stab); and wouldn't that have required the blow to have been *blocked*?

Indeed. Blocking *was* taught — judiciously — not only by Fairbairn, but by Applegate as well . . . and by other excellent combat savvy trainers (like O'Neill, Carlin, Hipkiss, Leather, etc.).

But here's the thing that made the manner in which the real combat experts taught (and in some instances still teach) blocks, effective:

Blocking was taught as an action that essentially *jammed* an attacker's initial move. In other words, blocks were not advocated in order to stop a blow, swing, or stab or slash. They were taught almost as *blows*, themselves, which the defender employed while moving in against the attacking limb and smashing into it, thus preventing the full force swing/thrust, etc. from gathering any momentum. A careful study of Applegate's section in *Kill Or Get Killed* dealing with knife attack and defense should make this clear.

We can personally juxtapose what is the *correct* way to employ, for instance, the cross-arm block, versus the popularly taught "martial arts way" of employing it, by direct recollection of that which we learned from Applegate versus that which we were taught long ago by Kiyose Nakae, in ju-jitsu. Nakae taught that a downward or an upward knife stab should be defended against by driving the x-block *upward* or *downward*, depending upon the direction of the attacker's stab, *into the oncoming stab attack*. We appreciate that this is *possible*, but we insist that it is undesirable. If the attack is coming down or up (or in) **at us** we get the hell out of the way! Applegate, while not necessarily advocating that the x-block be employed, did specify that *if* one chose to utilize it, then it was desirable *only* to do so **BEFORE** momentum had gathered behind the attack. We caution, however, that Applegate, like our self, preferred a much more proactive attacking and preempting action, the second that one perceived a weapon in the enemy's hand.

One arm blocks are *especially* problematic. Slightly built women and men who are attacked by much larger, heavier men, will almost never be able to "knifehand block" a powerful attacking limb. And forearm blocks — such as the classical inward or outward — will perhaps stop a

half-assed *push*. ***DON'T TRY THESE ACTIONS AGAINST A LUNATIC WHO IS FEROCIOUSLY DRIVING IN ON YOU WITH A SHARP BLADE IN HIS HAND!***

The “block-to-armlock” type counter to a knife attack *might* work well for a practiced expert ***IF*** he moves in before momentum has gathered in the assailant’s limb. But whether practiced expert or relative beginner, *getting the hell out of the way and then attacking the enemy* remains the best and most viable *real world* way of coping with such onslaughts.

If you insist on practicing blocking, and if you are addicted to the types of counters in which an attacking limb is “locked up” in a hold, (**hopefully!**) so that the enemy will be subdued, please be sure to practice it in the manner in which it was taught and used by those who **actually did this stuff for real**, during WWII.

How W.E. Fairbairn Taught

WE never actually met or knew William E. Fairbairn, personally — although we studied all of the books, manuals, notes, and papers that he wrote, and we studied the few filmed demonstrations that he gave. Our introduction to Fairbairn came more than 50 years ago when we first obtained a wartime copy of *Get Tough!* And he has been a powerful influence on us since that day.

From Rex Applegate, and another of our teachers who had trained personally under Fairbairn during WWII, we came to know a lot about how this incredible close combat authority conducted his instructional presentations. There were books, too, written by wartime students of Fairbairn’s (*The O.S.S. And I*, and *Knights Of The Floating Silk*), etc. that discussed what the “Shanghai Buster” was like as a teacher. We also once heard one of the late Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard M. Helms (who had trained under Fairbairn as a WWII O.S.S. operative) speak of his experience with and his impressions of Fairbairn.

Fairbairn, in our opinion, was a teacher whose style was not entirely unlike that of one of our old teachers, Charles (“Charlie”) Nelson, of New York City. We learned that Fairbairn —

- Never hurt a student
- Never humiliated a student
- Never lost his patience
- Slowly, carefully, clearly, and gently demonstrated all moves and techniques
- Never discouraged questions
- Was open, approachable, and always eager to enjoy the company of, and feedback from, fellow enthusiasts

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

- Always sought to encourage and build up his students' confidence and appreciation for that which they were learning to do

Naturally, Fairbairn had a considerable amount of confidence in himself, and due to the lengths that he had gone to acquire the knowledge that he possessed, was not exactly tolerant of disrespect or of disagreement from those who did not possess even 1/1000th of his background. Not everyone liked Fairbairn. However, this can also be said of *any* and of *every* significant contributor to any field of study or body of knowledge, who has ever lived.

In our experience, and from our own studies, we conclude that the derisive commentary that one so often finds touted about those who have established serious names for themselves in their professional endeavors, says much more about the *lack* of character and worth of the critics and detractors, than it ever says about any real or invented flaws or shortcomings in the targets of their scorn.

Fairbairn was much more than a close combat genius. He was a teacher par excellence! That he was not “perfect” confirms his humanity and surprises only fools.

Both Rex Applegate and Maury Geier (our two teachers who *knew* and who themselves had learned from Fairbairn) spoke very highly and respectfully of the man. In compiling the information that we have been able to compile about Fairbairn's teaching style and ability, we can only say that we wish that we also had had the privilege of training under him — or at least of having met and known him, during his lifetime.

We might add to all of this that readers might consider using the attributes of Fairbairn the teacher as standards by which they measure the quality and ability of those whom they consider training under, and accepting as *teachers*, themselves.

Respecting The Enemy

NO bully, troublemaker, or felonious predator of any kind deserves to be respected as a *human being*. Having chosen to exist as a threat to others and as a tormentor of the innocent, such predators should be relegated to the status of harmful bacteria; bacteria whose destruction and elimination deserves the prioritization of all who are concerned with and who care about the maintenance of proper civilization and human existence.

We would never dream of insulting our readers (or our self!) by positing the suggestion that those who prey upon others deserve any consideration beyond that which a physician might afford the polio virus.

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

We begin with the sentiment above so that no one misunderstands what we mean when we say that a critical prerequisite for being able to defend against violent predators and related forms of scum, is the acquisition of a healthy *respect* for this filth, and for the potential harm that it is capable of inflicting upon human beings.

We often hear violent types referred to by martial arts teachers as being “stupid”, or as being “throwbacks”, etc. Implied in the tone and in the descriptions used when referencing this garbage is the idea that so long as one has been trained in the martial arts, one need not concern oneself with the matter of being able to cope with them.

This is a dangerous attitude, indeed.

Violent types are often cunning, street-smart, highly experienced in the ways of violence and predation, and — what is *most* important — these monsters are **willing to do serious harm to others with little or no provocation, most often simply to enjoy their sick “pleasures”, and to get whatever they want, regardless of how badly they injure those from whom they take it. Killing people is, for many violent types, just part of their “game”.**

A human being who is worthy of the designation adheres to two fundamental principles in dealing with members of his species:

1. HE DOES NOT EVER INITIATE PHYSICAL FORCE, EXCEPT IN SELF-DEFENSE OR IN THE PROTECTION OF OTHERS WHO ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO PHYSICAL VIOLATION,

and

2. HE DOES NOT DEFRAUD OTHERS, BUT DEALS WITH THEM IN AN HONEST, STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER — UNTIL OR UNLESS HE FINDS HIMSELF OBLIGED TO DEAL WITH UNSCRUPULOUS OR TREACHEROUS PEOPLE.

Simple principles that make for fair, straightforward, aboveboard, civilized interactions in which no one is taken unfair advantage of, and whereby no one is mistreated or violated.

People who subscribe to those principles are, as *human beings per se*, deserving of respect. The freak/monster/misfit/savage/garbage percentage of scum who refuse to recognize or to subscribe to those simple tenets of proper, civilized human behavior are — also, but for a very different reason — deserving of respect; respect of a different kind.

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

Just as one must respect the rattlesnake's potential for suddenly doing terrible harm while obviously and at the same time having no respect for the creature's mental capacity, or for its "value" as anything resembling a productive member of the human community, so one must respect the homo sapien predator as possessing the capacity to do harm, while also frankly acknowledging that its worth as an actual *human* human being is **nil**, and that it (**IT**, please note; not "he") merits not the *slightest* degree of respect as a ***person***.

Do not train with the idea that you may safely dismiss with total contempt and unconcern the threat that the predators you are training to defend yourself against actually pose. *Unless you condition yourself to have a realistic and ever-present respect for the serious danger that encounters with these bacteria inevitably bring, you are living — and training — in a fool's paradise.*

In the real world the good guy does not always win. And unfortunately, too many good guys, by virtue of their smug assurance that their enemies are all buffoons, literally block themselves off from acquiring and maintaining the careful respect for those enemies that is the precondition for defending successfully against them.

Once a man appreciates and respects the potential danger that a rattler poses, he increases his caution whenever out and about, so as to avoid insofar as possible, encounters with these snakes.

His respect also prompts a man to *arm properly* whenever the possibility of encountering a rattler exists.

What is more, his respect for the gravity of that which the rattler might do to him, makes a man ***absolutely willing and set to USE his weapon, and to use it unhesitantly*** should he find himself confronted by a rattler.

With no intention of suggesting that violent predators possess the dignity or the stature that rattlesnakes possess, we submit that in precisely the same way that **respect** for the rattler prepares a man thoroughly to *deal* with the rattler if and when he encounters one, respect for the predatory felon prepares a man to realistically and well to deal with *him*, should he ever be so unfortunate as to find himself needing to do so.

Respect the enemy. That prepares you to destroy him!

Kicking In Combat

KICKING is a powerful and reliable means of self-defense. No system or course in self-defense or close combat may be said to be complete unless the effective methods of kicking are taught and emphasized to the student.

Too many in the martial arts advocate kicking methods that *look* beautiful and that are certainly impressive athletic feats when mastered, but that are at best impractical and at worst *extremely dangerous for the kicker*, when attempted in hand-to-hand combat.

The combative value of a kick is not to be measured by its eye appeal. In close combat one is not posing for the cover of a martial arts magazine, or for a movie poster.

Consider a few of the important facts that must be considered when developing kicks and kicking strategies for actual, real world applications in violent encounters:

- One will not necessarily be “in training”, with any elaborate or acrobatic capacities on tap, so to speak. One may not even be warmed up, or stretched out, or limbered when called upon to lash out with a kick against a violent offender
- One may be in one’s 80’s when attacked — and one’s assailant(s) may be in his/their teen years or early 20’s
- One will not be attacked on a polished wooden, cleared floor, or on a mat in a well-lit, safe area that is free of such natural impediments as rain or snow or debris that is strewn about
- One will almost certainly be attired normally. This may include heavy outerwear, shoes or boots, and the weather may be very cold, causing muscular stiffness *in addition to* one’s lack of opportunity to “warm up”
- There may well be two or more attackers
- One may, if one is on active military or law enforcement duty, be encumbered by a lot of equipment and gear
- One’s attacker will not be standing still, but will likely be moving — and moving aggressively

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

None of the above is even remotely conducive to any flashy or fancy kicks — whether high or low area!

Over the years we have come to the conclusion that for realistic combat readiness and personal protection one ought to master the basic **front kick**, **side kick**, **knee attack**, **snap kick**, and **back stomping kick**. With a question mark we will also add: *Maybe the O’Neill version of the roundhouse type kicking movement — referred to by O’Neill as the “pivot kick”*. We personally do not like the pivot kick much, but we defer to Pat O’Neill’s great reputation and experience, and we therefore leave it up to each student — individually — to decide if he wishes to make this kick part of his repertoire, after we teach it to him. If he doesn’t like it, he can drop it.

In reality all kicks derive from only **two**: the **FRONT KICK** and the **SIDE KICK**. The “snap kick” is a front kick in which the inside edge of the foot smashes into the knee, shin, foot arch target, as opposed to the *ball* of the foot or the *crook* of the foot (both of whose impact points normally strike the *testicles*).

O’Neill’s *pivot kick* is nothing but a front kick delivered at a slight inward angle, arching into the groin/bladder area.

The *knee attack* is the first part of the basic front kick.

The back stomping kick is a side kick delivered to the rear, rather than to the literal side.

Simple stuff.

Our rules, then, for training to use kicking in combat are:

KEEP THE KICKS SIMPLE (The few that we have listed are more than enough)

KEEP THE KICKS LOW (Highest target, for knee attacks and front kicks, is the testicles. Side, back, and snap kicks go to the *knees*, *shins*, *insteps*)

KEEP THE KICKS DIRECT (This last point refers to avoiding any turning, spinning, jumping or *angling* type kicks (like the traditional roundhouse or crescent kick, etc.).

Developing the kicks:

Practice barefoot: Certainly you’ll probably be wearing shoes or boots; but what if you aren’t?

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

Practice with normal footwear and attire: Get the feel of how it will be when you are clothed normally and you use your kicks for real.

Practice on irregular terrain: You will not need your kicks in the training hall. In order to be able to kick on uneven, irregular ground, *get out on uneven, irregular ground and practice your kicks there.*

Kick things: Heavy bags, dummies, trees, brick walls. Always wear sneakers when kicking substantially unyielding targets (i.e. trees, etc.) but make sure that you build power, confidence, and absolute inner knowledge that your kicks pack destructive force

Build up the legs and hips: Nothing can take the place of practicing your kicking techniques in order to develop and perfect them. However, since the leg muscles and the hips are instrumental in generating the crushing, forceful power that combat kicks ideally ought to impart, it makes good sense to work on exercises that build these muscles. The best exercise of all is heavy **squats**. Stair climbing, dead lifting, and the old “straddle lift” exercise are all excellent for developing superior leg strength. Leg presses are also good, but this exercise requires a leg press machine, and not all of you have access to one of these.

Good, reliable kicking techniques are very easy to learn. Once learned, however, they must be developed through assiduous repetition and hard work in training. Speed, power, balance, and accuracy must all be constantly improved and polished. Remember, the legs are not utilized for much by the majority of people, except the act of locomotion. We therefore recommend that training sessions be conducted with *a greater number of repetitions allotted for the practice of kicking methods than that which one utilizes when practicing hand and arm techniques*. We personally favor a schedule of 30 kicks each side (per combat kick that is practiced) each practice session. We feel that ten repetitions each side is plenty for hand and arm strikes, however.

Most trainees develop a favorite or “pet” kick when they train for a while on the key kicking techniques.

Always work on the use of your kicks — and of your *pet* kick — in the context both of preempting and counterattacking. Additionally, remember when you train and practice that a swift, simple kick is an excellent set up for a stick or knife attack — if you are using a weapon.

Ideas For Your Own Training And Development

WE have received a lot of e-mails (all very welcomed and appreciated!) in praise of our site, www.seattlecombatives.com. Some visitors have said that the technique outlines, the how-to-pieces, and the recommended reading and book reviews have actually helped them plan and develop their own training. Those unable to train with us personally have said that they find the ongoing appearances of articles describing training methods, ideas, skills, tactics, etc. and so on, enormously useful to guide their self-teaching efforts. One very kind visitor said that the site has given him the incentive and the know-how to get started training on his own, and not waste time in the courses offered where he lives, which simply do not address the matter of practical, serious, real world self-defense and close combat.

Thank you.

It is certainly our intention and hope that the material on www.seattlecombatives.com, as well as that which appears right here each month in each edition of *Sword & Pen* provides help, inspiration, encouragement, and sound assistance in all of our readers training endeavors. We also hope that it will serve to inspire many who have thus far been procrastinators to **get started and begin training, NOW!**

Our sites are helpful, but nothing can replace qualified, professional instruction!

If you live in or around Prescott, Arizona, get in touch with Mark Bryans and get started training now. The investment of time, energy, effort, and money that you make will not be too great . . . **AND WHAT YOU ACQUIRE MAY ONE DAY SAVE YOUR LIFE OR THE LIFE OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE.**

If you live in or around Seattle, Washington, get in touch with us and get started training now. *What on earth could you possibly be waiting for?* As time goes by you are not going to need the ability to defend yourself “less than you need it, now”; you are almost certain to need it even **MORE**. The decay and disintegration of our society is seeing a rise in horrific violence that is unprecedented in the history of our Nation.

And, if you live in a state other than Arizona or Washington — perhaps in another Country — consider a trip to take a package or a complete course of private lessons. In four hours we can teach you more about practical defense and hand-to-hand close combat than you’ll likely learn in two or three *years* in classical/traditional or other popular martial arts.

Sword and Pen – April 2010 Issue

We cannot make you an expert in a short-term course. However, the skills, tactics, and mindset that we impart, can make you quite well able to take care of yourself within a reasonable period of practice time, but training in and reviewing what we teach you in private lessons.

We have been at this as a teacher for almost **50 years**. Mark Bryans has been teaching for more than **22 years**. We offer no sport, no fads, no false claims or promises. We guarantee only that we will teach you war-proven skills that *work*, and that you may call upon, once learned, to defend yourself and your loved ones in any emergency. Our System, ***American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)***[™] is recognized worldwide. It has been imitated, but there is no copycat System that even comes one quarter of the way toward approaching it for sheer completeness, authenticity, and reliability — not to mention the professionalism with which it is taught.

The confidence that you enjoy when once you realize that you need fear and cower before *no one* who decides to attack you, and that you *can* fight back and **WIN**, is worth more than gold. Quality training in serious, workable, no-nonsense self-defense and close combat as we teach it offers you benefits in every area of your life — and for the rest of your life. No magic. No fake promises. No fantasy. Just good, solid, realistic preparation in proven skills and mental conditioning.

Why not get started?

We hope that you will check out www.seattlecombatives.com and that you'll return in May for the next edition of *Sword & Pen*.

Please do tell others about our web sites!

Until next month, then,

STAY COMBAT READY!

Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

www.americancombato.com
www.seattlecombatives.com

— E N D —