DO OR DIE

A SUPPLEMENTARY MANUAL ON
INDIVIDUAL COMBAT

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DO OR DIE
A SUPPLEMENTARY MANUAL ON
INDIVIDUAL COMBAT
SHOWING ADVANCED SCIENCE IN
BAYONET, KNIFE, JIU-JITSU, SAVATE
AND BOXING
FOR THOSE WHOSE DUTIES MAY LEAD THEM
INTO A
“TIGHT SPOT”

BY
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With an Introduction by
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“This Manual has been accepted by the United States Marine Corps
and issued as a guide for training in ‘Individual Combat.’

JOHN H. RUSSELL,
Major General Commandant
United States Marine Corps”
PART II

KNIFE FIGHTING

Considerable space in this treatise is given to knife fighting, because the Marines serve in many knife fighting countries and are frequently called upon to capture or fight against the dagger, machete or bolo. There are countries in Asia, Europe, Central America, Africa, and South America where the knife is a chief fighting weapon. While the military police in such countries, if they be Marines as is sometimes the case, can hardly attempt to match skill in the use of the bolo, machete, dagger or other type knives of the native, they can draw the bayonet and apply the hand-cut which is an unknown art to the native knife men. The hand-cut is particularly prescribed for use with the bayonet as knife and is an exquisitely scientific movement, taken from the sword and known to few others than scienced swordsmen. The skilled épée fencer or duellist thrusts at the sword hand and arm of an opponent; the scienced broad-swordsman cuts or thrusts at the sword hand and arm. When time does not permit the attachment of the bayonet to the rifle, or when the bayonet is worn in the belt and no rifle is carried, it is prescribed to use the bayonet as a disarming weapon against the armed adversary. In fact, with a quick cut to the opponent’s knife-holding hand, it
is possible for the bayonet thus used to disarm several in a group of attacking knife men. There are various methods of wielding the knife in the many respective countries where the dagger is publicly and generally recognized as a standard weapon, and the overhand guard and stroke and the underhand guard and stroke are separately characteristic to particular races and are standardized and correct. Notwithstanding, the infinitely superior stance and method of the truly scientific knife duellist traces directly back to Roman Amphitheatre days; then the dagger duellist fought to the death. The best of these knife fighters are recorded to have been Gauls, who had been made slaves, as the gladiators were in ancient Rome. These old-time gladiators used what is still today the accepted method of the large majority of professional or champion knife duellists. The names of the movements are Gaelic-Roman. Underhand or overhand dagger contestants confronting the cool skill of the prescribed dagger duellist would be at a disadvantage like the amateur boxer facing the professional. Hand cutting is a practically unknown art to the underhand or overhand dagger fighter, and the straight knife-hold stance of the skilled duellist places the underhand or overhand dagger fighter at a disadvantage.

But, while the Gaelic-Roman names for the knife movements are still used, the following course of instruction teaches the use of the knife as prescribed by the late Colonel James Bowie, U. S. A. The Bowie knife has proved the most complete knife and knife method. While the Colonel traced his methods of attack and
defense through the lines of knife history as recited in this brief preamble, the following course of instruction is after the teachings of the Bowie knife as prescribed by the Colonel himself: he was a celebrated sword duellist. The knife had its inception when Colonel Bowie broke his sword in a duel and continued his fight by closing in and killing his opponent with the shortened broken blade which he still held at the hilt. Thus his newly found weapon was fashioned as a straight blade of the precise length of the broken blade with which he killed his enemy. Not only did he prove with his newly found blade to be the greatest knife fighter of his time, but it is related that when he was ill in bed he was attacked by some nine Mexican Indians, who stole in upon him to take his life with tomahawks and knives. From his sick bed Colonel Bowie met their united attack with his Bowie knife: with this he killed seven of the Indians before he himself succumbed. It is related that he was found dead in bed with the bodies of seven dead Indians about him. The other two Indians of the attacking party fled after receiving wounds from the Bowie knife. This is one story of his death, but another account tells that he was killed with Colonels Travis and Prockett during the taking of the Alamo. Colonel Bowie was born in Georgia in 1790 and met his death in Alamo, Texas, March 6, 1836. Although he settled in 1802 in Chatahoula parish, Louisiana, with his brother and parents, he later emigrated to Texas: there he took a foremost part in the Texan Revolution. He opposed the Mexicans in battles during the year 1835, and eventually commanded
his troops as Colonel. The name of Colonel Bowie as a soldier and a fighter is immortalized.

As is elsewhere recounted in this Manual, many graduates from the U. S. Marine Corps Student Officers Basic School continue their study and practice in individual combat. They frequently return to the School and tell of subsequent experiences. An outstanding example was related at the Basic School by a prominent Marine Aviator: he said that he and a fellow officer had continued their individual fighting practices and that each always carries a bayonet in his belt.

In Nicaragua the two drew their bayonets against an attack of the enemy and successfully hand-cut their way to safety through this force of some twenty Machete fighters. He testified that the knowledge of knife Science saved their lives. Thus, two Marine skilled knife fighters defeated twenty Machete fighting opponents.

In Germany the Army officers, the police and the Hitler Storm Troopers are now all armed with the knife which they use as either knife or bayonet.

**ON GUARD**

Command: “On Guard”!

The correct guard position of the dagger is shown in illustration, page 37. In taking this photograph, the camera was held on the ground to fully show the blade. Unfortunately, the picture taken from this position looks as though the blade were pointing slightly upward. As a matter of fact, this was not and is not the
case; the blade must be positively held strictly level on the opponent’s middle so that no opening is presented for a hand-cut or thrust from said opponent’s knife. It will be seen that the grab hand is ever ready to apply as shown in picture, page 39. This picture represents what is known as the—
OUTSIDE PARRY AND GRAB—Identical Command
To execute this movement the opponent’s blade is parried from the outside, and instantly afterwards the wrist of his knife hand is grasped from the outside by the disarming (left) “grab hand” of the defensive opponent who parried (illustration, page 39).

INSIDE PARRY AND GRAB—Identical Command
This movement is not pictured, but is the opposite of the “outside parry and grab” as shown in the accompanying illustration. The wrist of the opponent’s knife-holding hand is grasped from the inside in similar fashion immediately following a parry of his blade from the inside—it is the opposite side “parry and grab” of the picture here shown.

THE PARRY AND GRAB FOLLOW-UP
Wrist grabs are taken with fingers up, thumb down. And immediately following his left hand grab, the defense steps in with left foot advance.

BLADE POSITION
As prescribed in the bayonet stance, the knife is also held with the flat side above and below, and the cutting edge facing outward to the right. The knife hold is correct when, palm down, the forefinger of the knife-holding hand encircles the bayonet button at the handle. Whether held with the left hand or the right hand the blade should be held outward so that in either case
"Outside parry and grab." Showing an accomplishment of the ever ready left grab hand.
the forefinger of the blade-holding hand presses against the button at the bayonet handle. The position of the blade as a detached knife or as a bayonet on the rifle is identical with the position of the blade of the French broadsword guard position. As the hand- or wrist-cut or thrust is the basic plan of attack in both bayonet and dagger, so it is the basic attack of the épée swordsman, and it is also a particularly effective attack of the broadswordsman. In point of fact, it is the particularly scientific attack known to best swordsmen and rarely known to bayonet fighters or knife men. The ordinary bayonet fighting course does not teach the hand-cut, and the usual stab and slash dagger man knows nothing of this scientific play. The natural skill and celerity of the bolo or machete in native hands is definitely offset by the hand-cut which is a swordsman’s science.

**EXTEND LEFT ARM REAR IN RIGHT THRUSTS**
Always follow the swordsman’s method of throwing out your left arm straight rear when making a right hand thrust; it adds velocity and balance. See illustration *Stoccata*, page 43.

**IN-QUARTATA**
Command: “In-quartata—Time—Thrust”!
To accomplish the In-quartata thrust, step with the left foot to the rear and right of the right foot as shown in the foot position of illustration, page 41. But in the precise in-quartata movement the left step right rear is accompanied by a *quarte* thrust at the lower body
"In-quartata." Defense’s left step right rear and hand-cut.
of the opponent which the changed thrust position has place unguarded, “out of line.” Illustration, page 41, while actually showing the in-quartata step, pictures a cut at the opponent’s right wrist, and this precise movement was devised by Lieutenant Kengla.

The opposite of the in-quartata movement is called stoccata and consists of a left step to left and thrust to lower right body as shown in illustration, page 43.

PASSATA SOTTO
Command: “Passata Sotto—Time—Thrust”!

This movement is executed on an opponent who lunges forward with a high thrust. It is so graphically illustrated in the accompanying picture that a detailed description seems unnecessary. Here the more skilled knife fighter avoids the thrust of an adversary by stooping to his own left under his adversary’s outstretched arm and bringing the dagger point to the middle section of his adversary (illustration, page 44).

UNARMED DEFENSE AGAINST OVERHAND DAGGER ASSAULT

The accompanying illustration shows how the unarmed man may successfully defend himself against the overhand dagger thrust. This particular defense is prescribed by Major William J. Herrmann, P.M.T.C., former World’s Bayonet Fighting Champion. The faster and more violent the attack, the easier this defense is of accomplishment. A quick upward jolt with the left hand
Stoccata—Left step and body thrust.
“Passata Sotto.”
at the elbow of the attacking arm completely deflects and throws aside the attacker (illustration below).

![Image of Major Herrmann defense against overhand knife attack](image)

The Major Herrmann defense against overhand knife attack.

The writer especially recommends the favorite unarmed defense which Colonel C. J. Miller, U.S.M.C., Bayonet Fighting Champion, prescribes against the overhand dagger assault. The following is Colonel Miller’s own celebrated instruction in this movement:
“Catch the blow of the opponent’s descending right forearm on your left bent forearm, step in quickly and pass your right arm in rear of the opponent’s right upper arm (knife arm), so that your right hand or fist rests in front of the opponent’s right forearm just above the elbow—then bend the opponent backwards, breaking the arm.”

**THE CHAIR SWORD CONTEST**

As shown in the accompanying picture, this is the particular exhibit of a contest in the master weapon, the sword. This illustration is presented to more clearly show why the sword is the master weapon of all the blades, and how a complete defense can be had by skillful wrist movements of the seated sword scientist (illustration, page 47): he must score his point with the riposte.

At the Cercle Hoche in Paris, where the author frequently fenced with men many years older than himself, he recalls the special skill of a Monsieur Priam, an elderly gentleman more than seventy-two years of age, who, at the time, continued to be one of the great foil professionals of France. In his fencing bouts he scarcely ever found it necessary to take a single step, for he could hold an adversary at bay with exquisite sword play from his scienced wrist, and he scored his point with a “riposte” from his parry of the opponent’s lunge.
The chair sword contest.