

COMBATIVES

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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PREFACE

This field manual contains information and guidance pertaining to rifle-bayonet fighting and hand-to-hand combat. The hand-to-hand combat portion of this manual is divided into basic and advanced training. This manual serves as a guide for instructors, trainers, and soldiers in the art of instinctive rifle-bayonet fighting.

The proponent for this publication is the United States Army Infantry School. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to Commandant, United States Army Infantry School, ATTN: ATSH-RB, Fort Benning, GA, 31905-5430.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Very few people have ever been killed with the bayonet or saber, but the fear of having their guts explored with cold steel in the hands of battle-maddened men has won many a fight.

-PATTON

1-1. DEFINITION OF COMBATIVES

Hand-to-hand combat is an engagement between two or more persons in an empty-handed struggle or with hand-held weapons such as knives, sticks, or projectile weapons that cannot be fired. Proficiency in hand-to-hand combat is one of the fundamental building blocks for training the modern soldier.

1-2. PURPOSES OF COMBATIVES TRAINING

Soldiers must be prepared to use different levels of force in an environment where conflict may change from low intensity to high intensity over a matter of hours. Many military operations, such as peacekeeping missions or noncombatant evacuation, may restrict the use of deadly weapons. Hand-to-hand combatives training will save lives when an unexpected confrontation occurs.

More importantly, combatives training helps to instill courage and self-confidence. With competence comes the understanding of controlled aggression and the ability to remain focused while under duress. Training in combatives includes hard and arduous physical training that is, at the same time, mentally demanding and carries over to other military pursuits. The overall effect of combatives training is—

- The culmination of a successful physical fitness program, enhancing individual and unit strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiorespiratory fitness.
- Building personal courage, self confidence, self-discipline, and esprit de corps.

1-3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Underlying all combatives techniques are principles the hand-to-hand fighter must apply to successfully defeat an opponent. The natural progression of techniques, as presented in this manual, will instill these principles into the soldier.

a. **Mental Calm.** During a fight a soldier must keep his ability to think. He must not allow fear or anger to control his actions.

b. **Situational Awareness.** Things are often going on around the fighters that could have a direct impact on the outcome of the fight such as opportunity weapons or other personnel joining the fight.

c. **Suppleness.** A soldier cannot always count on being bigger and stronger than the enemy. He should, therefore, never try to oppose the enemy in a direct test of strength. Supple misdirection of the enemy's strength allows superior technique and fight strategy to overcome superior strength.

d. **Base.** Base refers to the posture that allows a soldier to gain leverage from the ground. Generally, a soldier must keep his center of gravity low and his base wide—much like a pyramid.