

ATSA STUDY GROUP

SEPTEMBER 15, 2007

KILLING, FIGHTING AND DUELING

I. ATSA Study Group

A. Purpose of the Group was to look at the training for encounters with VCA.

1. Team members were to engage in personal regular training.
2. Monthly meetings were to look at training models and examine each for its value to Practitioners.
3. Attempt to aid the Practitioner in being an informed consumer of training products.
4. Training exercises were made part of the meetings as a means of exploring various techniques and provide a forum for multiple Practitioner interactions. E.g. Interactive Interpretation training.

B. Discussion period is to provoke thinking and discussion on various aspects of the encounter with VCA.

1. Mental and spiritual preparation for an encounter is every bit as important as technique preparation.

C. Exercise component is for reflection on skills and techniques that may be called up for use in an encounter with a VCA.

1. The operating assumption is that Practitioners have a certain level of understanding of skills and techniques operational when they come to Study Group.
2. This was turned on its head when some members asked questions about the use of sights that reflected deficit in their use concept.

II. Encounter Training Constructs

A. Military Encounters

1. Military training is generally for group on group encounters where fighting is done as a cohesive unit.

2. Individual fighting techniques are usually seen as a by-product of instances where opposing groups become mixed with one another and the fighting becomes hand-to hand.
3. Exceptions do exist but such exceptions are based on exceptional conditions.
4. Projectile weapons techniques are based on massed fire and volume of fire.

B. Police Encounters

1. Police encounters are predominately initiated encounters with the purpose of affecting the exercise of a police arrest power.
2. Individual, partner and in some instances, small team techniques are for the purpose of over-coming resistance to the exercise of a police power.
3. Projectile weapons techniques are based on limited volume of fire that is particularly directed at a specific individual whose actions must be brought under control for the purpose of exercising an arrest power.
4. In a recent police encounter in Florida, one VCA was able to shoot 4 police officers who stopped him in a vehicle traffic incident.
 - a. The police officers were on a burglary surveillance detail.
 - b. They saw a subject driving erratically and decided to initiate a stop.
 - c. The VCA was wearing armor and had an AK-47. He was able to initiate and wound or kill the officers before they could effectively respond.
 - d. Their assignment and response would suggest they were experienced and prepared for an encounter with a VCA.

C. Citizen on Citizen Encounters

1. Citizen on Citizen encounters tend to be:
 - a. assaults by VCA
 - b. duels

III. Training for Citizen on Citizen Encounters.

A. History

1. Training institutions for citizen on citizen encounters have existed as long as civilization.
2. These institutions have addressed the forms of such encounters according to the laws, customs and practices of time and location for the encounters.

3. Greek and Roman writings reveal systems designed for VCA encounters that dealt with unarmed against armed encounters and use of expedient implements of opportunity as weapons.
4. During the Medieval Period in Europe guilds were formed to produce Masters of Defense.

B. Masters of Defense

1. MoD guilds followed two schools of thought during the Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation periods.
 - a. In the former period, professional fighters, knights, developed fighting techniques and placed their skills at the service of Lords and at times others who had need for those skills in disputes.
 - 1) Land disputes were expensive and time consuming in court so they were often resolved using individual combat.
 - 2) Techniques suitable for specific weapons systems were developed.
 - b. In the latter two periods, with the increase of individual wealth, guilds were formed to develop fighting skills and to transmit those skills.
 - 1) As with all guild systems, the apprentice period for becoming a master was 14 years.
 - 2) Tests along the apprenticeship and as a final test for master were standardized.
 - c. Communities of even small size had one or more such schools.
 - 1) As with today, there was competition among the schools. Each school master promoted his system as superior to all other systems.
 - 2) Each school claimed “science” as the principle on which their system was derived.
 - 3) Schools were very secretive about their system. Some wrote books on their system, but many are lost once the masters passed on without handing off their techniques.
2. Reformation schools evolved along two categories.
 - a. English and German schools tended towards systems that taught competence with a broad spectrum of weapons, empty hands and improvised implements of opportunity.
 - 1) These schools tended to see the use of force as morally associated with fighting VCA.

- 2) They recognized and accepted duels as a form of dispute resolution.
 - 3) Masters were expected to be able to respond to any attempt at domination with any weapon system available.
 - 4) The test for Master was the “Rule of Nines”.
 - a) A candidate for Master had to satisfactorily fight (3) Masters, (3) untrained but competent fighters of demonstrated skill and (3) bar room brawlers of known skill who were half drunk.
 - 5) Masters and students tended to come from the growing ranks of tradesmen.
- b. Italian, Spanish and to a degree French schools were more devoted to dueling.
- 1) These schools tended to develop techniques around very specialized weapons.
 - 2) Training was focused on these weapons which tended to be thrust weapons.
 - 3) Students tended to be from the growing class of merchants who were becoming wealthier and could indulge their male children not only with university studies but with the study of dueling.
 - 4) Dueling developed as “comment” fighting where elaborate rules were developed as parameters for the contest.
 - 5) Duels were fought among class equals as any below the recognized class distinction were not entitled to “honor”.

C. Schools Devolve

1. Guilds were disbanded by law.
2. The period of time for the development of Masters was no longer the law.
3. Royalty saw an opportunity to make money from the schools that were styled to dueling because the students were from a class that had greater financial resources.
4. Dueling schools developed forms that were approximate equivalents of ballet.
5. Perfect form was as important if not more important than results. Rules “Comment” of engagement enforced this devotion.

6. To perfect the form, long hours of “agonistic” training and sparring were required.
7. Belief in the “superiority” of the Master, his “secret” technique and the “comment” combined to create a view in the Practitioner that he was unbeatable against another Practitioner.
 - a. In the event of a real duel, a student who failed against a student of another Master was blamed for not following the “true” way of his respective Master. The technique could not be to blame.
8. Guild Practitioners were appalled and contemptuous of the dueling school Practitioners and occasionally goaded the Masters of those schools into fights. The duelers usually lost embarrassingly.
 - a. One was beaten by a fishmonger with an oar against a thrust sword. The dueler forgot that he was effectively fighting a pole weapon with a sword.

IV. Agonistic Training V. Antagonistic Fighting

A. Training is agonistic.

1. Today’s training is based, in part, on speculative assumptions about the actions of the opponent.
 - a. The trainer uses whatever source he has as a source for developing his view of what an opponent will do. A response is developed. Counter responses and counter-counter responses are developed.
 - b. Techniques are developed around these speculative assumptions and drills are developed for repetition by the Practitioner.
 - c. Some of these techniques are developed around specific forms of weapons systems.
 - 1) The assumption that a high-capacity handgun will be on the Practitioner’s person.
 - d. The “theater man”. He will do what he is expected to do.
 - e. Beware the fight with the amateur.

B. Fighting is antagonistic.

1. The practice of style V. reality.
2. In fights, all style and tools default to the will and spirit of the man.
3. In Sir Thomas Mallory’s story of Arthur, Mordred pulls himself onto Arthur’s lance so as to avenge his own death.

4. The fighter understands that simple bad luck can strike in problem one or problem two. He accepts that as part of the fight.
5. Remember the lesson in the Rule of Nines.