

U.S. MARINE CLOSE COMBAT FIGHTING HANDBOOK

Stances & Target Areas • Falling & Rolling Techniques
Striking & Blocking Skills • Knife & Bayonet Fighting
Throws, Chokes, & Holds • Kicks, Sweeps, & Stomps
Unarmed Combat, Grappling, & Joint Manipulation



United States Marine Corps

Foreword by Jack Hoban, subject matter expert,
Marine Corps Martial Arts Program

U.S. Marine Close Combat Fighting Handbook

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FOREWORD

In the spring of 1996, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Chuck Krulak, convened a Close Combat Review Board (CCRB) at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia. A number of subject matter experts (SMEs) were assembled to represent various perspectives on Close Combat, and I was pleased and flattered to be among them.

Our mission was to review the Marine Corps doctrine on Close Combat and recommend revisions or—if necessary—an overhaul of the Program. It was a lively group that included a World War II veteran whose time with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had made him an expert in silent killing techniques, various Marines known for being experienced martial artists, and several men who had worked in the dangerous field of personal protection after serving as Marines. I was invited because of my reputation as a Marine martial artist and longtime student and practitioner of Japanese battlefield arts. I was also representing Robert L. Humphrey, who had killed an enemy soldier with a butt stroke while serving as a rifle commander on Iwo Jima. Humphrey, a confidant of General Krulak, was too ill to attend, and passed away shortly thereafter.

We were a fairly collegial group, sincerely dedicated to making recommendations to the Marine Corps that would adequately address the combat needs of Marines in the relatively new era of low intensity conflict (LIC). A sense of cohesion and shared purpose developed gradually over the course of that week due in part to some after-hours training sessions sponsored by one of the men. In those sessions, we shared a gritty, no-nonsense training experience. That small dose of “shared adversity” broke down some of the natural barriers between us and created a warrior bond. Actually training—as opposed to talking and debating—tends to do that.

That is not to say that we were all singing from the same sheet of music. We weren't. And as the week progressed it was clear that there were at least two fundamentally different viewpoints on the approach that should be taken in revamping the Close Combat program. This may be an oversimplification—and it certainly is a personal point of view—but it appeared that one group felt that the objective was to compile the most vicious and effective hurting and killing techniques in history. This new Close Combat system would be “for Marines by Marines” and designed to make Marines the most feared close combatants the world had ever known. Although we were all mostly on board with the new program being tough and effective—and an extension of the legacy

of Biddle and Walker*—there was another group that was focused on the ethical issues of Close Combat.

Was it possible for the new program to provide all the skills needed along the entire continuum of force, while also producing Marines who were Ethical Warriors? Although the idea of an honorable and ethical Marine was appealing, there were a number of people who feared that including “values-training” in the curriculum was outside the scope of our mandate. They feared that such training might be a distraction and could possibly, in the context of the realities of Close Combat, put Marines at risk by making them hesitant or soft. A valid concern, indeed. We left the CCRB without truly resolving how to integrate the ethics into the curriculum.

Our findings and recommendations went through the usual vetting and revisions (I recall receiving draft copies at various points between 1996 and 1999), and eventually resulted in the document you hold in your hands. As you will see, there is little mention of the ethics discussions that occurred at the CCRB. In my opinion, the lack of an ethical component in the Marine Corps Close Combat Training Program (MCCCTP), for which this manual provides the doctrinal basis, is why it was superseded by the new Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) in 2000.

MCRP 3-02B is an interesting and historical document. In many ways it is the basis for the physical techniques of MCMAP, especially the tan belt curriculum. After all, there is not much that is radically new—perhaps not for a few millennia—in the basics of Close Combat. Therefore, regarding the technical aspects of Close Combat, this book is a valuable addition to the warrior’s library. However, what we have learned (or relearned) since the publication of this manual is that warriors need more than physical techniques to prevail in Close Combat. The combat mindset is vitally important, but they also must have the ethics of a warrior. These ethics ensure that our Marines act in accordance with our Core Values of honor, courage, and commitment as they apply close combat techniques as Ethical Warriors and protectors of our country. True, ethics without the physical skills may not make an effective Marine Close Combatant, but possessing these dangerous physical skills without ethics may create a thug who could use these them inappropriately, thus bringing shame and dishonor upon our Corps and country in this delicate era of Counterinsurgency (COIN).

Semper Fidelis.

—Jack Hoban
Subject Matter Expert, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program
President, Resolution Group International

*Anthony Joseph Drexel Biddle (1874–1948) was a pioneer of bayonet and hand-to-hand combat training in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Anthony “Cold Steel” Walker (1917–2004) served as a Marine Raider during WWII and was an instructor and great advocate of the use of cold steel in combat.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Headquarters, United States Marine Corps
Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

18 February 1999

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Today's Marines operate within a continuum of force where conflict may change from low intensity to high intensity over a matter of hours. Marines are also engaged in many military operations other than war, such as peacekeeping missions or noncombatant evacuation operations, where deadly force may not be authorized. During non-combative engagements, Marines must determine if a situation warrants applying deadly force. Sometimes Marines must decide in a matter of seconds because their lives or the lives of others depend on their actions. To make the right decision, Marines must understand both the lethal and nonlethal close combat techniques needed to handle the situation responsibly without escalating the violence unnecessarily. Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 3-02B, *Close Combat*, provides the tactics, techniques, and procedures of Marine Corps close combat. It also provides the doctrinal basis for the Marine Corps Close Combat Training Program (MCCCTP).

2. SCOPE

This publication guides individual Marines, unit leaders, and close combat instructors in the proper tactics, techniques, and procedures for close combat. MCRP 3-02B is not intended to replace supervision by appropriate unit leaders and close combat instruction by qualified instructors. Its role is to ensure standardization and execution of tactics, techniques, and procedures throughout the Marine Corps.

3. SUPERSESSION

MCRP 3-02B supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 0-7, *Close Combat*, dated 9 July 1993. There are significant differences between the two publications. MCRP 3-02B should be reviewed in its entirety.

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4. WARNING

Techniques described in this publication can cause serious injury or death. Practical application in the training of these techniques will be conducted in strict accordance with approved Entry Level Close Combat, Close Combat Instructor (CCI), and Close Combat Instructor Trainer (CCIT) lesson plans. Where serious danger exists, the reader is alerted by the following:

—————WARNING—————
—————

5. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

J. E. RHODES
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General
Marine Corps Combat Development Command

DISTRIBUTION: 144 000066 00

Close Combat

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OVERVIEW OF CLOSE COMBAT

1. Purpose of Close Combat

Close combat is the physical confrontation between two or more opponents. It involves armed and unarmed and lethal and nonlethal fighting techniques that range from enforced compliance to deadly force. The purpose of close combat is to execute armed and unarmed techniques to produce both lethal and nonlethal results. Unarmed techniques include hand-to-hand combat and defense against hand-held weapons. Armed techniques include techniques applied with a rifle, bayonet, knife, baton, or any weapon of opportunity.

2. Continuum of Force

Marines will find themselves in both combative and noncombative situations. The threat level in these situations can rise and fall several times based on the actions of both Marines and the people involved. The escalation of force stops when

one person complies with the demands imposed by another person. This range of actions is known as a continuum of force. Continuum of force is the concept that there is a wide range of possible actions, ranging from voice commands to application of deadly force, that may be used to gain and maintain control of a potentially dangerous situation (MCO 5500.6, *Arming of Security and Law Enforcement (LE) Personnel and the Use of Force*). Continuum of force consists of five levels that correspond to the behavior of the people involved and the actions Marines use to handle the situation (see the table below). Close combat techniques are executed in levels three, four, and five.

Level One: Compliant (Cooperative)

The subject complies with verbal commands. Close combat techniques do not apply.

Level Two: Resistant (Passive)

The subject resists verbal commands but complies immediately to any contact controls. Close combat techniques do not apply.

Continuum of Force		
Level	Description	Actions
1	Compliant (Cooperative)	Verbal commands
2	Resistant (Passive)	Contact controls
3	Resistant (Active)	Compliance techniques
4	Assaultive (Bodily Harm)	Defensive tactics
5	Assaultive (Serious Bodily Harm/Death)	Deadly force

Note: Shading indicates levels in which Marines use close combat techniques.

Level Three: Resistant (Active)

The subject initially demonstrates physical resistance. Marines use compliance techniques to control the situation. Level three incorporates close combat techniques to physically force a subject to comply. Techniques include —

- Come-along holds.
- Soft-handed stunning blows.
- Pain compliance through joint manipulation and the use of pressure points.

Level Four: Assaultive (Bodily Harm)

The subject may physically attack Marines, but he does not use a weapon. Marines use defensive tactics to neutralize the threat. Defensive tactics include the following close combat techniques:

- Blocks.
- Strikes.
- Kicks.
- Enhanced pain compliance procedures.
- Nightstick blocks and blows.

Level Five: Assaultive (Serious Bodily Harm/Death)

The subject usually has a weapon and will either kill or seriously injure someone if he is not stopped immediately and brought under control. Typically, to control the subject, Marines apply deadly force through the use of a firearm, but they may also use armed and unarmed close combat techniques.

3. Marine Corps Tactical Concepts

Close combat techniques support the following key Marine Corps tactical concepts. The concepts are not standalone ideas but are to be combined to

achieve an effect that is greater than their separate sum.

Achieving a Decision

Achieving a decision is important in close combat. An indecisive fight wastes energy and possibly Marines' lives. Whether the intent is to control an opponent through restraint or defend themselves in war, Marines must have a clear purpose before engaging in close combat and act decisively once engaged.

Gaining an Advantage

A basic principle of martial arts is to use the opponent's strength and momentum against him to gain more leverage than one's own muscles alone can generate, thereby gaining an advantage. In close combat, Marines must exploit every advantage over an opponent to ensure a successful outcome. This can include employing various weapons and close combat techniques that will present a dilemma to an opponent. Achieving surprise can also greatly increase leverage. Marines try to achieve surprise through deception, stealth, and ambiguity.

Speed

Marines use speed to gain the initiative and advantage over the enemy. In close combat, the speed and violence of the attack against an opponent provides Marines with a distinct advantage. Marines must know and understand the basics of close combat so they can act instinctively with speed to execute close combat techniques.

Adapting

Close combat can be characterized by friction, uncertainty, disorder, and rapid change. Each situation is a unique combination of shifting factors that cannot be controlled with precision or certainty. For example, a crowd control mission may call for Marines to employ various techniques ranging from nonlethal restraint to more forceful applications. Marines who adapt quickly will have a significant advantage.

Exploiting Success

Typically, an enemy will not normally surrender simply because he was placed at a disadvantage. Marines cannot be satisfied with gaining an advantage in a close combat situation. They must

exploit any advantage aggressively and ruthlessly until an opportunity arises to completely dominate the opponent. Marines must exploit success by using every advantage that can be gained.

CHAPTER 1

FUNDAMENTALS OF CLOSE COMBAT

This chapter describes all techniques for a right-handed person. However, all techniques can be executed from either side.

The Marine is depicted in camouflage utilities. The opponent is depicted without camouflage.

The fundamentals of close combat include ranges, weapons of the body, target areas of the body, and pressure points of the body. These fundamentals form the basis for all close combat techniques. They provide Marines with a common framework regardless of the type of confrontation or the techniques used. If Marines apply these fundamentals properly in a close combat situation, they may save their lives or the lives of fellow Marines.

During any engagement, these ranges may blur together or may rapidly transition from one to another until either the opponent is defeated or the conflict is resolved.

Long Range

During long range engagements, combatants engage each other with rifles, bayonets, sticks, or entrenching tools. See figure below.

1. Ranges of Close Combat

Close combat engagements occur within three ranges: long range, midrange, and close range.



Midrange

During midrange engagements, combatants engage each other with knives, punches, or kicks.



Close Range

During close range engagements, combatants grab each other. Close range engagements also involve elbow strikes, knee strikes, and grappling.



2. Weapons of the Body

Hands and Arms

The hands, forearms, and elbows are the arm's individual weapons. The hands consist of several areas that can be used as weapons: fists, edges of hands, palms, and fingers.



Fists. To minimize injury to the fists, Marines use their fists as weapons to target soft tissue areas such as the throat. The fists' striking surfaces are the first two knuckles of the hands or the meaty portions of the hands below the little fingers.



Edge of Hand. Marines use the edge of the hand (knife edge) as a weapon. Marines use the edge of the hand to strike soft tissue areas.



Palms. Because of the palm's padding, Marines use the heels of the palms to strike, parry, and/or block.



Fingers. Marines use the fingers to gouge, rip, and tear soft tissue areas (e.g., eyes, throat, groin).

Forearms. Marines use the forearms as a defensive tool to deflect or block attacks. Forearms can also be used as striking weapons to damage or break an opponent's joints and limbs. Marines sustain less self-injury when strikes are conducted

with the forearms than when strikes are conducted with fists and fingers.

Elbows. Marines use the elbows as striking weapons. Because of the short distance needed to generate power, elbows are excellent weapons for striking during the close range of close combat.

Legs

The legs are more powerful than any other weapon of the body, and they are less prone to injury when striking. The feet are protected by boots and are the preferred choice for striking.

Feet. Marines use the balls of the feet, the insteps, and the toes to kick an opponent. Marines use the cutting edge of the heels and the heels to stomp on an opponent. Marines must be wearing boots when striking with the toes.

Knees. Like elbows, knees are excellent weapons in the close range of close combat. Knee strikes are most effective while fighting close to an opponent where kicks are impractical. The opponent's groin area is an ideal target for the knee strike if he is standing upright. Knee strikes can deliver a

devastating secondary attack to an opponent's face following an initial attack that caused him to bend at the waist.

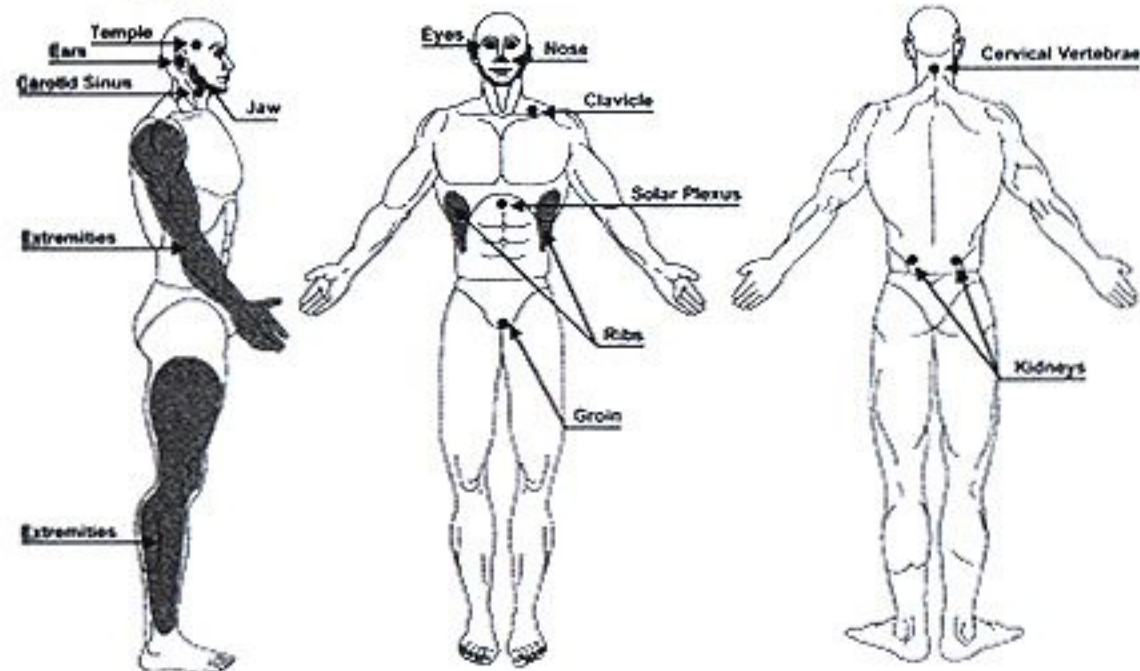
3. Target Areas of the Body

During close combat, Marines strive to attack the accessible target areas of an opponent's body. The readily accessible areas will vary with each situation and throughout the engagement. The target areas are divided into five major groups: head, neck, torso, groin, and extremities. The figure below illustrates target areas of the body.

Head

The vulnerable regions of the head are the eyes, temple, nose, ears, and jaw. Massive damage to the head kills an opponent.

Eyes. The eyes are excellent targets because they are soft tissue areas that are not protected by bone or muscle. Attacks to this area may cause the opponent to protect the area with his hands, allowing Marines to execute a secondary attack to other



THE TRAINING MANUAL USED IN THE MARINE CORPS MARTIAL ARTS PROGRAM

U.S. Marines are respected as the most fearsome and skilled warriors in the world. They operate in conflict situations that change from low intensity to high intensity in just a few moments. They depend on the skills and techniques taught in this concise manual. Now, you can too! The *U.S. Marine Close Combat Fighting Handbook* is the publication (MCRP 3-02B) used by Marines training at the Martial Arts Center for Excellence. This fully-illustrated guide features both the lethal and nonlethal techniques needed to responsibly handle any situation without unnecessarily escalating the violence. It explains the methods to quickly neutralize any attacker in close quarters and teaches you how to use any part of the human body as a weapon.

Whether you are an active member of the military or simply a civilian looking to be prepared, the *U.S. Marine Close Combat Fighting Handbook* is your essential guide.

The **UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS** was founded in 1775 and is a branch of the Department of the Navy. It is headquartered at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

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