



[Click here to return to homepage](#)

AWARE

PREPA

CAPABLE

New Guest writers



Geoff 'Tank' Todd

The Combat Boot by New Zealand's Chief CQB instructor Tank Todd

Caution: *The contents of this article are for education purposes only. The principles described are extremely for military close combat training and operations only. Their application applies solely to the military.*

Combat kicks are the primary unarmed offensive and counter offensive option. These kicks are not sporting c this edition of the close combat files I will explain the strengths and weaknesses of individual kicks for combat

First, bare feet may be for martial arts and water sports but boots are for combat both to cover terrain and combat. The late Mad Mike Calvert of British SAS fame killed a Jiu Jitsu trained Japanese officer in an encounter he attributed wearing his boots while bathing in that river while his Japanese enemy was bare footed as giving advantage. Many traditional martial artists train and spar against each other bare footed but they do not fight as combatants. Like the terrain related risks of bare foot travel the reality of having the foot stomped by the sole devastating.

Many soldiers in countries where martial art training is mainstream have extensive groundings in sport or these practices are far from primary options when carrying a pack and rifle and wearing boots and webbing or only time my combatants kick to the head is when their enemy is on the ground and the highest kick in close quarters below the knee joint.



The only other leg involved offensive action, above the knee joint is the use of the knee to the groin as part of

combination. The only part of the boot that will contact with your enemy during an offensive or counteroffense is the sole of the boot. The point of contact is the arch of the sole of the boot during an axe kick or leg stamp and the sole of the boot will close around the shinbone directly below the knee joint reducing the risk of sliding off of the target.



The edge of the foot like in traditional kicks is never employed as this method would see the ankle joint in a vulnerable position and prone to injury. The reality is without a blade attached to the edge of the sole of your samurai sandal, a severe injury you are putting your own limb at risk. Offensive assault kicking is fully committed, stomping down from the knee joint to the foot and ending on the ground and never is a sparring or sporting type reaction type kick. Full commitment right through the limb to ensure you take out your target or your enemy along your attack line.



The key to these kicks is the set up phase that comprises of dirty tricks, feints or distractions. The kicks for the combatant to have an affinity with the ground and be in total control of their footing to enable them to execute combat kicks. This requires the stability leg to be flat on the ground with the boot pointing vertically backward and being secured firmly on the thigh of the stability leg to form a stable platform to absorb contact shock and reduce the risk of spraining or loss of footing.



Front kicks in combat are not only difficult but also dangerous especially above the groin where they are supported considerably by load bearing and boot wearing. I was on a course recently where an exponent through such a kick during demonstration and had his leg easily seized and was driven backwards into a tree where he dropped to the ground. House type kicks in combat especially against formidable combatants are high risk and low result and will have a high failure rate when intercepted with a combat boot or met with a weapon. Sweeping is for demonstration or competition and not for the results by considerable. Combat kicks must incapacitate and decentralize your enemy to the point that they can't escape or combat your ground finishing techniques with your boots. You always finish your grounded enemy with your hands, simply because if you have to bend down to strike your enemy on the ground with your hands, you lose your advantage of leg length to kick you from the ground. He also has the ability to seize your legs and tackle you.



Ground incapacitation or elimination methods with the boot or boots are devastating and terminal. The amount of force applied to a target when stomped on is concentrated and incredible. Ground finishing kicks must be set up and involve feints or deception. Some methods include dirt in the eyes, a false offer of assistance, or pre-employment set-ups involving movements to take the attention away from the boots. The key to achieving your ground-finishing objective without exposing your delicate and venerable parts of your own lower leg and foot to injury from kicks executed by an enemy. Even with boots on, injuries can occur if you get it wrong. The heel stomp is less effort to employ and is executed from a lower height, reducing the risk of your enemy having time to recognize and counter. The heel stomp involves a natural set-up that acts as a distraction and a means of cocking the stamping leg. The heel stomp can incapacitate by targeting the ankle or knee joints or to eliminate by targeting major vitals.



The football kick employs the hard toe end of the boot to soft targets such as the crotch. The correct application of a kick requires target centering and a double-arm cocking distraction and follow-through. The kick itself is immediately prior to impact, contacting with the center of the hardened front toe cap.

The Bronco kick is deadly and is only intended for enemy elimination. There is a risk of loss of balance, however, if both targets are achieved with the heels of both boots and the ankle joints are locked rigid, the result is your enemy.



The most important aspect of combat kicks as far as self-safety goes is that the foot is in the same position of flat on the ground when standing or walking at point of impact. The only variation to the rule is in the axe kick, where the knee and hip are turned out, enabling the arch of the boot to encircle the shinbone below the knee but still maintain ankle joint alignment.



These low line kicks are the most guaranteed form of unarmed offensive or counter offensive assault as they reach and the boot is far more robust than bare hands. Very large strong muscles that can achieve maximum contact impact power them. High levels of safety under entry execution are maintained by being able to ensure range of any counter punches. These kicks can also be employed in the CQ clinch where the use of your arms is because of being held in an arms and body hold. They can be employed in confined spaces or when your hands are like in POW situations or sexual abductions. You could be in a phone box or toilet and the CQ clinch stomp axe kicks would be the best offensive option. Your enemy may hold you in such a way that you cannot get to groin but because he is standing on legs and feet he is vulnerable to being stomped. These stamping kicks primarily joint with the objective of dislocation followed by ripping down the shin front and smashing with the heel of bones of the foot.



X-ray image showing a normal knee (left) and a dislocated knee (right)

When the knee joint is taken out there is no stand up fight anymore or any chase. Outside taking your enemy leg is the only way to put him down and keep him down.



The devastating result of a kick to the knee, dislocated knee

On the opposite side of the encounter to combat being kicked tactically correct evasion and counter offensive employed or if taken unawares leaving no time for evasion the kick is countered with a kick. The incoming leg which ever presents itself first is intercepted with the hard arch of the sole of the boot on the shin stopping tracks.



Effective kicks can also be employed on the ground prior to or during recovering your footing. These ground ground applications of the axe kick if you are flat on your back or the leg stamp if you are on your side.



The previous combat kicks and ground take out kicks are for military battlefield employment only and are the Todd Systems military programs.



Joint UK & US WWII Combative Pioneers: An article by Tank Todd

The following is a brief outline of the life and times of three of the most important pioneers in modern military. While there have been and will continue to be historic writings on these individuals from historians, there are post-World War II instructor qualified descendants of the late and great Colonel Rex Applegate. This individual from New Zealand learnt his lessons directly from Colonel Applegate and while he did gain a personal look at the pioneer's times, it was the specialist skills that he was most interested in. From Colonel Applegate he was all the deadly subjects of instruction from his WWII programs and personal notes before much of this information was lost when he was refiling over 50 years of paper war. The reason the Colonel allowed access to such information was the only instructor qualified in European military close combat that was a Special Operations Group C who operated a fulltime training facility. Much of the information Tank learned from Colonel Applegate : Operations, however the basic armed and unarmed skills have been preserved with Tank now being the only descendant. This preserved information includes the systems of other expert instructors such as Fairbairn and Tank by Colonel Applegate. Tank has original programs and taken notes from the WWII programs of Fairbairn and Applegate.

The information for this article is from notes taken by Tank from Colonel Applegate and researched by Jar Jar pictures as supplied to Tank by Colonel Applegate from his collection. For any inquiries regarding the system feature contact tank@toddgroup.com



Here is Fairbairn demonstrating on Applegate and here training an OSS Operative.



William Ewart Fairbairn was born on 28 February 1885, in Surrey, England. At age 15, Fairbairn was an under-age worker in London, England when he saw a Royal Marines recruiting poster. Since Fairbairn was underage he forged Fairbairn's paperwork and he joined the Royal Marines. It was here he got his beginning in close combat. In 1907, Fairbairn was assigned to Korea, where he studied the different Martial Arts practiced there. His experiences were further developed during this period. In Korea Fairbairn was assigned to the British Legation Guard stationed in Shanghai, China. From 1907 to 1940, Captain W. E. Fairbairn was assigned to the International Police in Shanghai, China. This was known as the toughest Police assignment in the world. The city was overrun with gangs and he had experienced a gang attack that near left him for dead as a constable in Shanghai. The criminal strong-arm tactics, extortion, slavery, prostitution, kidnapping and smuggling. To contend with these gangs he organized and led the famous Shanghai Riot Squad. The gangsters in Shanghai earned the reputation as being the toughest in the world. Fairbairn's fighting system was developed to enable the Police to counter the gangsters they had to contend with. It had to be effective in hand to hand and with weapons. It had to be effective and get results fast. Sometimes Fairbairn's system was used to fight one or several gangsters by themselves, without assistance. Fairbairn became famous during this period for his toughness and ruthlessness. Fairbairn studied numerous Martial Arts. He studied with the chief Kung Fu instructor in Shanghai of China and with her personal bodyguard Yin Fu.

In 1925, the infamous Shanghai riots occurred and mob violence was rampant. Fairbairn's Shanghai Riot Squad was instrumental in quelling this riot. In 1925, Fairbairn wrote his first book on the use of the M1911, 45-caliber pistol in close combat. He wrote the book "Defendo" on hand-to-hand combat. This book became the training manual for several Police departments. During this period, Fairbairn also wrote "Shooting to Live". Fairbairn was a bayonet specialist who wrote the British Bayonet Manual. He spent three and a half years training with professor Okada in Ju Jutsu and was only the second Westerner to receive a Black Belt in Judo and Jujitsu personally from Jigoro Kano. He trained at the Kodokan in Japan from 1918 until 1931. This book in itself is worth telling and provides an example of Fairbairn's fighting skills. Fairbairn graded to 1st Dan in Judo in 1931.

With hostilities between Japan and China beginning Fairbairn was in a particularly dangerous position. One day Fairbairn met a Japanese Officer, who was a fellow Judo exponent on a pier. They exchanged pleasantries and then the Japanese Officer asked what was to become of the 150 Chinese men, women and children with their hands tied behind their backs sitting by a Japanese Navy ship. The Japanese Officer asked what was to become of them. The Japanese Officer said they would be shot. Fairbairn asked if he could see them. The Japanese Officer said no, they are to be shot. Fairbairn very calmly said that if they were shot he would meet them in the afterlife.

some night and they would settle the score. The threat was implicit and the Japanese Officer later gave the (Fairbairn.

Colonel Biddle of the U.S. Marines trained under Fairbairn during this time as well as Fairbairn's unorthodox assistant when it came to close combat, Dermot M. "Pat" O'Neill. When the Second World War was declared back to England to teach his fighting system to the British Commandos and Parachute Forces. Fairbairn taught Combatives at the Special Training Center at Lachailort, Scotland. Fairbairn trained such specialist units as Special Operation Executive, British Commandos, the M19 saboteurs, the Special Air Service (SAS) including Brothers and Mad Mike Calvert, the Canadian Special Service, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the numerous law enforcement agencies. One of Fairbairn's students was Ian Fleming who went on to write the James Bond books. Fairbairn taught his famous silent killing course. He taught here in conjunction with the legendary fighting system was designed for use when you have lost your firearms, or when the use of firearms is undesirable. The course was divided into six segments of instruction. In 1941 Wilkinson Sword made the first of the Fairbairn Sykes dagger. Fairbairn and Sykes referred to as the Commando Dagger. Fairbairn and Applegate later designed the superior dagger but it was never mass-produced as the war was near an end, that is until many years after the war and after the war Fairbairn met Rex Applegate with the OSS and together they taught America's Spies and Assassins. Finally World War Two the OSS persuaded the British to allow Fairbairn to work exclusively with the OSS on their secret operations. Fairbairn was promoted to the rank of Colonel.

Fairbairn then wrote a book on his fighting system called, "Get Tough". This was his definitive civilian weapon for close combat. It was filled with graphic easy to follow instructions to win an encounter and put your opponent away from what hit him. When World War Two ended Fairbairn was in his sixties and still a man of action. In 1950, Fairbairn was in Singapore and was instrumental in developing a riot squad for their Police Force. In 1956 the Cyprus Police Force was teaching Combatives, riot control and combat shooting.

Fairbairn passed away on 20 June 1960 at his home in England. He is definitely one of the chief pioneers in the twentieth century. Fairbairn's fighting methods worked and are still taught today. His students nicknamed him "Pat". Fairbairn never swore, never drank or boasted. He was a quiet man with the manners of a gentleman. Fairbairn's time involved with close combat and had no other hobbies or interests. He was not an academic man or did he have a man of action and a pioneer in his field. Fairbairn is probably the most famous unarmed hand-to-hand combat instructor in the twentieth century. His exploits and teaching methods are still talked about by elite units the world over.



In the 1920's to the 1930's, Eric Anthony (Bill) Sykes worked with Fairbairn in Shanghai, China as part of the Commando Squad. Sykes was a Sergeant and commanded the sniper unit. His exploits during this period are famous and he worked with Fairbairn in developing his unarmed and armed combat courses. He had plenty of opportunities to put his techniques to actual use in the streets of Shanghai. When World War Two broke out Sykes moved back to England to teach the British Commandos and later the Special Air Service (SAS) in weapon usage and hand to hand combat. Fairbairn taught at the Lochailort and Achnacarry Training Centers. His specialty was armed combat and he developed techniques for the use of firearms to use in the dark, also silencers and covert weapons. Sykes was a pioneer of the point instinct methods. He was a pioneer in combat weapon craft. When Fairbairn moved over to the Office of Strategic Services, Sykes went with him. It was the early 1940's that Sykes and Fairbairn developed and made the famous Commando dagger that was used extensively by Allied Commandos during World War Two. This was a double edged sword.

specifically for killing. Sykes, Fairbairn and Applegate developed a complete method of knife fighting around Fairbairn/Sykes dagger is still used by elite forces worldwide. Sykes was an expert on knife fighting and trained. When Sykes taught knife fighting he first instructed the students on how to hold the knife, how to pass it another, how to thrust, and how to use the free hand. The next step was the correct method of knife carry and the final stage of training was taught on sentry neutralization. The students were also taught how to search a prisoner and movement with a prisoner.

His Commando exploits are well known and respected. Sykes also worked closely with Colonel Rex Applegate with Fairbairn on the Silent Killing Course. Sykes did bodyguard work for Winston Churchill on several occasions and worked closely with the Cloak and Dagger Division of the OSS. Sykes and co designed the first kill house and urban combat training facilities in various cities. Sykes was a very private and quiet man. He never boasted or bragged of his skills. During World War II he rose through the ranks and by the end of the war was a Captain. He was noted for his toughness and accepted all missions with a reputation as one of a true professional. He personally trained thousands of men in combat warfare.

Sykes will go down in history as one of the key pioneers in unarmed and armed combat of the twentieth century.



Colonel Rex Applegate during WWII and again here pictured with Geoff Todd

Colonel Rex Applegate was born on 21 June 1914 in Oregon. His expertise is world-renowned. His family has been in the area since the first Oregon settlers in 1843 and Colonel Applegate owned Oregon's oldest colonial home. He ensured this home was always maintained in its original form except for the addition of a shooting range on the property. Colonel Applegate spent much of his youth in Oregon hunting and following pursuits in the outdoors. As a teenager he assisted his uncle the exhibition sharp shooter, Gus Peret, by loading his guns for him and learning shooting techniques. He graduated from the University of Oregon with a degree in Business Administration and then joined the U.S. Army. Due to his aggressive nature he was assigned to the Military Police. He served in this capacity until World War II when he was assigned to duties with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The OSS was the forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency. Colonel Applegate was recruited to form the section in OSS known as "The School for Spies and Assassins" where he was responsible for developing skills and weapons for covert operations for worldwide use. Many of these trade methods are still used today. While serving as the director of close combat training for clandestine operations, he was given free rein to develop the best training center and methods available.

Wild Bill selected Colonel Applegate because of his large stature, shooting expertise, fighting skills and all-around ability to cause mayhem. Colonel Rex Applegate had no Eastern martial arts background and all his training was of Western origins and combat sports. He was six feet three inches tall and 230 pounds of muscle. He was a crack shot and a mix it up. The first thing Colonel Applegate did was enlist the help of Fairbairn and Sykes from the British Commandos. These three men developed and instructed in unarmed combat, close quarter shooting, knife fighting, espionage, assassination and sabotage.

Colonel Applegate was instrumental in the development and making of the famous dagger called the "Fairbairn Fighting Knife". He also along with Fairbairn made the famous fighting weapon called the "Smatchet". He designed numerous covert weapons. Applegate worked closely with Lord Mountbatten in espionage operations. The Commandos were involved in the development and instruction of Commando Operations training but also involved with missions.

enemy lines which gave him a first hand chance to put his skills to use. He was even assigned to protect President Winston Churchill when they secretly met during the war.

In 1943, he was heavily involved with Army Intelligence and had their expertise and equipment at his disposal. He had a well equipped machine shop where he could design and construct realistic training aids, simulators, covert weapons, and disappearing targets. Applegate created an entire German town that his operatives could use to train in. This was the first fully automated Killing House. He was also in command of two units that specialized in German and Japanese units. These units were comprised of military personnel who could speak German and Japanese and wore these nations' uniforms and their weapons. Applegate would use these units to train his operatives. He continued to develop and refine combat techniques into a fine art. He was constantly upgrading and reviewing field reports to determine what methods

Applegate's entire career has been involved with instruction, invention, and development, training and implementation of combat operations. He would compile reports from returning operatives and modify techniques that were needed to meet requirements. Battle proven techniques was what counted to him and he was no fan of what he described as "book brigade". He was a master of his trade, close combat and silent killing. Applegate has written numerous textbooks, including the Field Manuals for military units the world over. His most famous is the book, "Kill or Get Killed". This book has been translated into several languages and is a best seller. He also wrote "Combat Use of the Double-Edged Fighting Knife", "Get Tough and Shooting to Live", and "Bull's-eyes Don't Shoot Back" and "The Close Combat Manual" by Rex Applegate.

Colonel Applegate's personal museum of firearms and knives was world-renowned and featured many original items that were priceless and a true labor of love. He had antiques and modern weapons in his collection. It was the most complete collection of weapons ever compiled. Applegate is known as the Father of Close Combat and had a long and colorful career that spanned the total twentieth century. He was a man whose expertise was sought out until the day he died. He was involved in governments, stopping riots, instructing special units, teaching close quarters battle, or as a public speaker.

His associations with men like Roosevelt, Wild Bill Donovan, Churchill, Patton and Eisenhower are testament to his knowledge and demand for the best man for the job. The Colonel was a personal friend of John Wayne and appeared on his movie "The Alamo". The late Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series of books and movies, said that Applegate was where he got the ideas for some of his characters. Applegate was also associated with the famous boxer, Bob Jordan. Bill Jordan autographed a copy of his book for Applegate and in it he said, "To Rex Applegate, the greatest fighter I ever knew". Colonel Applegate was a close friend of G. Gordon Liddy and described him to Tank as one of the toughest men on the planet.

Applegate was an advocate of instinctive shooting that he, Fairbairn and Sykes developed and used during World War II. These methods are still used by Police Officers and soldiers worldwide. They give the person the best chance of surviving in a hostile environment. Colonel Applegate was on the Board of Directors for the National Rifle Association to the many prestigious positions he held. He was also the developer and first user of dye markers and loading system ball technology. He has been involved in the development of protective helmets for police and military personnel, knives, guns, sighting devices, and silencers.

His early instructing at the School for Spies and Sabotage included the use of killer dogs, booby traps, cross hairs, and explosives. He worked with a Finnish soldier who killed twenty-six Russians with his knife, the Stirling brothers (brothers of the Special Air Service (SAS) for the British Army), and those individuals responsible for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. He has touched shoulders with the meanest and dirtiest fighters the world has ever known. He was given the mission by Wild Bill Donovan, commander of the OSS, to learn all he could about armed and unarmed combat and he continued this mission throughout his lifetime. He developed a system that was brutal, simple, effective, and efficient. It was to maim, or kill your enemy without flashy stances or techniques. He deployed dirty tricks, feints, methods of deception, and got the job done and quick. He used to say, "Against a knife, if you're armed, shoot him, if you're unarmed use your hands, feet, or an improvised weapon, plus throw anything available, then kick his knee, follow up with more kicks, after he falls, kick his head, and then finish the job." Applegate always said many fights can be stopped before they begin by a well placed knee kick. Once an opponent is down, the job should be finished with your boots. He also said your teeth, in spite of any mental qualms as to their use,

One of the basic principles of his fighting method is to retain your own physical and mental balance while des of your enemy. Another facet of his method is to pit your strongest weapon against an enemy's weakest point.

After the end of the Second World War, Applegate spent over fifteen years in Latin America and Mexico ir governments and in the armaments business and training various military units. He was given the honorary ran Mexican government for his work there. When he returned to the United States he was sought out by Police Agencies for training and his expertise. When the Vietnam War broke out he was once again consulted by government. Applegate was respected by the U.S. Special Forces soldier and knife innovator, Al Mar, as th and knife maker in the world. Al Mar is famous in his own right and made the first knife accepted by Colonel Special Forces SERE Instructor School at Camp McCall, North Carolina.

In 1980, Applegate began to release his new versions of fighting knives to the military and general public. Th sold today and are very popular. He knew that his knives needed to have basic attributes; must be strong, capable of retaining an edge under normal combat operations, and have a clean and functional design. He was double edge blade and must be long enough to reach vital organs when stabbed or thrust into a body. Balance, design are very important features. For a person with sweaty palms a non-slip surface for the handle is require scientist of knife fighting. Post WWII Colonel Applegate instructed many people in instinctive shooting but l certified one instructor in his 'Kill or Get Killed' Close Combat Systems. This instructor is Tank Todd of worked with him for the ten years leading up to his death on projects and as his trade show assistant. The W program complete film footage was destroyed and Tank is the only recipient of this entire program and other of Applegate, Fairbairn and Sykes directly from Colonel Applegate.

The International Close Combat Instructors Association (ICCIA) made Colonel Applegate its patriarch and ; was instrumental in this Association's development including naming the association and his advice was alway of his work can never be revealed for security reasons but no other individual has accomplished so mu instrumental in the development of Close Combat over such a long period of time. Colonel Rex Applegate i Military Close Combat in the twentieth century. He was a dirty fighter and the worst enemy the bad guys could of coming up against. In 1998, he was made a member of the Cutlery Hall of Fame by Blade magazine. He d folder that won international acclaim. He also won the National Riflemen Association's "Outstanding Hand gu lifetime contributions." Applegate and Chuck Melson wrote the book, "The Close Combat Files of Colonel R teachings are based on Military science and battle proven experience. On 14 July 1999, while working at San Rex Applegate passed away. This ended the era of a true Combat Master. In 2005 will see the publishing of th *Masters of the 20th Century*" by Tank Todd and James Webb that will include chapters on over 25 of the lec military armed and unarmed combat. Watch this space for the release of this book.

This is now available via www.toddgroup.com