New Guest writers

**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. In 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 attributed wearing his boots while bathing in that river while his Japanese enemy was bare footed as giving an advantage. Many traditional martial artists train and spar against each other bare footed but they do not fight against combatants. Like the terrain related risks of bare foot travel the reality of having the foot stomped by the sole is 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 combat is 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 counteroffensive 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 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 an position and prone to injury. The reality is without a blade attached to the edge of the sole of your samurai sanda a severe injury you are putting your own limb at risk. Offensive assault kicking is fully committed, stomping and or 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 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 employ combat kicks. This requires the stability leg to be flat on the ground with the boot pointing vertically backward being secured firmly on the thigh of the stability leg to form a stable platform to absorb contact shock and reduce spraining or loss of footing.

Front kicks in combat are not only difficult but also dangerous especially above the groin where they 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 type kicks in combat especially against formidable combatants are high risk and low result and will harm when intercepted with a combat boot or met with a weapon. Sweeping is for demonstration or competition an the results by considerable. Combat kicks must incapacitate and decentralize your enemy to the point that escape or combat your ground finishing techniques with your boots. You always finish your grounded enemy never your hands, simply because if you have to bend down to strike your enemy on the ground with you 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 to a target when stomped on is concentrated and incredible. Ground finishing kicks must be set up and include feints or deception. Some dirt in the eyes a false offer of assistance or pre employment set ups involve movements to take the attention away from the boots. The key to achieving your ground-finishing objective involves exposing your delicate and venerable parts of your own lower leg and foot to injury from kicks executed enemy. Even with boots on injuries can occur if you get it wrong. The heel stomp is less effort to employ as it is executed from a lower height reducing the risk of your enemy having time to recognize and counter involves a natural set up that acts as a distraction and a means of cocking the stamping leg. The heel stomp 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 requires target centering and a double arm coiling distraction and follow through. The kick itself is immediately prior to impact contacting with the center of the hardened front toecap. The Bronco kick is deadly and is only intended for enemy elimination period. 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 the knee and hip are turned out enabling the arch of the boot to encircle the shinbone below the knee but still 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 because of being held in an arms and body hold. They can be employed in confined spaces or when your hands 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 venerable 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)](image_url)

*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](image_url)

*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 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 standard in 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 combatives. While there have been and will continue to be historic writings on these individuals from historians, there have been post-World War II instructor qualified descendent of the late and great Colonel Rex Applegate. This individual, 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 descendent. 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 Tank.

The information for this article is from notes taken by Tank from Colonel Applegate and researched by Jar pictures as supplied to Tank by Colonel Applegate from his collection. For any inquires regarding the system 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 worker in London, England when he saw a Royal Marines recruiting poster. Since Fairbairn was underage forged Fairbairn’s paperwork and he joined the Royal Marines. It was here he got his beginning in close cor 1907, Fairbairn was assigned to Korea, where he studied the different Martial Arts practiced there. His expl 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 Internation Shanghai, China. This was known as the toughest Police assignment in the world. The city was overrun with g 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 g organized and led the famous Shanghai Riot Squad. The gangsters in Shanghai earned the reputation as being the world. Fairbain’s fighting system was developed to enable the Police to counter the gangsters they had to be effective in hand to hand and with weapons. It had to be effective and get results fast. Sometimes Fairbairn’s to fight one or several gangsters by themselves, without assistance. Fairbairn became famous during this toughness and ruthlessness. Fairbairn studied numerous Martial Arts. He studied with the chief Kung Fu instru 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 in quelling this riot. In 1925, Fairbairn wrote his first book on the use of the M1911, 45-caliber pistol in co wrote the book "Defendo" on hand-to-hand combat. This book became the training manual for several Police d this period, Fairbairn also wrote "Shooting to Live". Fairbairn was a bayonet specialist who wrote the British: He spent three and a half years training with professor Okada in Ju Jutsu and was only the second Western Black Belt in Judo and Ju jitsu personally from Jigoro Kano. He trained at the Kodokan in Japan from 1918 unt in itself is worth telling and provides an example of Fairbairn’s fighting skills. Fairbairn graded to 1st Dan in in 1931.

With hostilities between Japan and China beginning Fairbairn was in a particularly dangerous position. One Fairbairn met a Japanese Officer, who was a fellow Judo exponent on a pier. They exchanged pleasantries an 150 Chinese men, women and children with their hands tied behind their backs sitting by a Japanese Nav: asked what was to become of them. The Japanese Officer said they would be shot. Fairbairn asked if he co Japanese Officer said no, they are to be shot. Fairbairn very calmly said that if they were shot he would meet tl
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 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) inc 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. It was divided into six segments of instruction. In 1941 Wilkinson Sword made the first of the Fairbain Sykes daggers. Fairbairn and Sykes referred to as the Commando Dagger. Fairbairn and Applegate later designed the superior but it was never mass-produced as the war was near an end, that is until many years after the war and after Fairbairn met Rex Applegate with the OSS and together they taught America's Spies and Assassins. Finally the OSS persuaded the British to allow Fairbairn to work exclusively with the OSS on their secret operations.

Fairbairn then wrote a book on his fighting system called, "Get Tough". This was his definitive civilian work on combat. It was filled with graphic easy to follow instructions to win an encounter and put your opponent away what hit him. When World War Two ended Fairbairn was in his sixties and still a man of action. In 1950, he returned to England and was instrumental in developing a riot squad for their Police Force. In 1956 the Cyprus Police 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 20th century. Fairbairn’s fighting methods worked and are still taught today. His students nicknamed him "Doc" 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 teach a man of action and a pioneer in his field. Fairbairn is probably the most famous unarmed hand-to-hand combat method of the 20th 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 OSS squad. Sykes was a Sergeant and commanded the sniper unit. His exploits during this period are famous as he worked with Fairbairn in developing his unarmed and armed combat courses. He had plenty of opportunity techniques to actual use in the streets of Shanghai. When World War Two broke out Sykes moved back to England and later the Special Air Service (SAS) in weapon usage and hand to hand combat. He Fairbairn at the Lochailort and Achnacarry Training Centers. His specialty was armed combat and he designed 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, Donovan, Sykes went with him. It was the early 1940's that Sykes and Fairbairn developed and made the famous combat dagger that was used extensively by Allied Commandos during World War Two. This was a double edge...
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 trainee. 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 final stage of training was taught on sentry neutralization. The students were also taught how to search 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 occ closey with the Cloak and Dagger Division of the OSS. Sykes and co designed the first kill house and urban cities. Sykes was a very private and quiet man. He never boasted or bragged of his skills. During World War the ranks and by the end of the war was a Captain. He was noted for his toughness and accepted all missions w reputation was 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 centur

Colonel Rex Applegate was born on 21 June 1914 in Oregon. His expertise is world-renowned. His family had the first Oregon settlers in 1843 and Colonel Applegate owned Oregon's oldest colonial home. He ensured the house was always maintained in its original form except for the addition of a shooting range on the property. Colonel Applegate did 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 went to 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 Wild Bill Donovan, the Director of 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" with developing skills and weapons for covert operations for worldwide use. Many of these trade methods are still in use today. While serving as the director of close combat training for clandestine operations, he was given free reign 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 at 600 yards. 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 "Applegate Fighting Knife". He also along with Fairbairn made the famous fighting weapon called the "Smatchet" and numerous covert weapons. Applegate worked closely with Lord Mountbatten in espionage operations. The Colonel was involved in the development and instruction of Commando Operations training but also involved with military intelligence operations.
enemy lines which gave him a first hand chance to put his skills to use. He was even assigned to protect Presi
Prime Minister 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 dispo
equipped machine shop where he could design and construct realistic training aids, simulators, covert weapon
disappearing targets. Applegate created an entire German town that his operatives could use to train in. This al
first fully automated Killing House. He was also in command of two units that specialized in German and Japa
units were comprised of military personnel who could speak German and Japanese and wore these nation's
their weapons. Applegate would use these units to train his operatives. He continued to develop and refine ck
 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 imple
combat operations. He would compile reports from returning operatives and modify techniques that wo
requirements. Battle proven techniques was what counted to him and he was no fan to what he described as
brigade". He was a master of his trade, close combat and silent killing. Applegate has written numerous text:
the Field Manuals for military units the world over. His most famous is the book, "Kill or Get Killed". It
translated into several languages and is a best seller. He also wrote "Combat Use of the Double-Edged Fighting
and Patrolling", "Get Tough and Shooting to live", and "Bull’s-eyes Don't Shoot Back" and "The Close Com
Rex Applegate"

Colonel Applegate's personal museum of firearms and knives was world-renowned and featured many origi
was priceless and a true labor of love. He had antiques and modern weapons in his collection. It was the re
collection of weapons ever compiled. Applegate is known as the Father of Close Combat and had a long and c
that spanned the total twentieth century. He was a man whose expertise was sought out until the day he
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 testam
knowledge and demand for the best man for the job. The Colonel was a personal friend of John Wayne and as:
on his movie "The Alamo". The late Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series of books and movies, said
was where he got the ideas for some of his characters. Applegate was also associated with the famous Bon
Jordan. Bill Jordan autographed a copy of his book for Applegate and in it he said, "To Rex Applegate, the
fortune I ever knew". Colonel Applegate was a close friend of G. Gordon Liddy and described him to Tank as
and toughest men on the planet.

Applegate was an advocate of instinctive shooting that he, Fairbairn and Sykes developed and used during
War. These methods are still used by Police Officers and soldiers worldwide. They give the person the best cl
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 used dye markers and loading syst
ball technology. He has been involved in the development of protective helmets for police and military pe
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
explosives. He worked with a Finnish soldier who killed twenty-six Russians with his knife, the Stirling bro
the Special Air Service (SAS) for the British Army), and those individuals responsible for the assassination
Reinhard Heydrich. He has touched shoulders with the meanest and dirtiest fighters the world as ever kno
given the mission by Wild Bill Donovan, commander of the OSS, to learn all he could about armed and ur
continued this mission throughout his lifetime. He developed a system that was brutal, simple, effective, ar
aim, or kill your enemy without flashy stances or techniques. He deployed dirty tricks, feints, methods of de
get the job done and quick. He used to say, "Against a knife, if you're armed, shoot him, if you're unarmed t
 improvised weapon, plus throw anything available, then kick his knee, follow up with more kicks, after he
Applegate always said many fights can be stopped before they begin by a well placed knee kick. Once an op
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 in 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 leg military armed and unarmed combat. Watch this space for the release of this book.

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