



**The Arizona Correctional Peace
Officers Association**

Check and Mate Newsletter

No. 6

*A bi-weekly
newsletter to inform
Union members on
important grievance
results, trends,
procedures and
important information
relevant to a better
quality of work life.*

In This Issue:

*-SELF DEFENSE TRAINING:
The reality of Hand to Hand
combat in a prison setting*



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SELF DEFENSE

TRAINING: The reality of Hand to Hand combat in a prison setting

When it comes to the politics of prison and staff safety, it is best not to down play, sugarcoat, water down or in any other manner, oversimplify the reality of the extreme danger officers face, day to day, when dealing with a population that simply doesn't care about other humans other than themselves.

That's a reality so let's face it head on.

Let's cut to the chase and discuss this week's topic then: self-defense.

What exactly does that term mean? Well, it implies defending yourself against any attack from another source, whether it be human or animal, intending to cause you harm. In America and other countries, people often study different martial disciplines such as Karate, Kung Fu, Jiu-Jitsu, Boxing and Krav Maga, in an effort to learn self defense skills that can better their odds in a physical confrontation.

The reality is that every effort helps, so I won't judge or offer an opinion on this matter other than one should do what makes one feel more confident and fit, period.

The Arizona dept. of Corrections also teaches a self-defense curriculum at C.O.T.A. and during yearly in-service training that aims at teaching self-defense skills to its employees and again, every effort helps so I won't judge but there is a reality that you, the correctional professional must face if you are to survive in this violent environment. With that said, let us form a circle of amnesty then, as they say, and let us whisper together about the true reality of defending yourself in a prison setting against what will

be, more than likely, a violent and potentially deadly attack.

Fair Fight?

Question: What is a fair fight in prison?

Answer: Trick question. There is no such thing as a fair fight when your life is at stake.

Remember the following basic rule for defending yourself in prison:

“Inmates fight with one another but Inmates assault staff, Period!”

This is an important difference that needs to be grasped at all times to understand what follows here in terms of defending yourself successfully.

Defense of “self” or defense of “team”?

Another extremely important rule is realizing that while you are at work, you are part of a team. The term self defense is really a misnomer and myth in prison because you are not defending yourself per se but the entire structure that keeps inmates confined and law and order intact.

When you are assaulted by an inmate or inmates, they are not only threatening your life but the lives of all your team members because they are attempting to decrease the number of effective units that are stopping them from doing what they want.

In ancient times as well as today, soldiers learn combat skills that will defend their countries and freedom. You are no different. The reality is that law enforcement personnel, like soldiers, should learn combat skills that can translate into self-defense skills when needed. But while they are at work, they should be more focused on the team than on themselves. That is why a forced cell team is effective.



Self defense skills and Physical fitness

Reality Check:

No amount of self defense training will save you or your team if you are out of shape.

Being and staying in shape is your responsibility, not the departments.

All legitimate self-defense maneuvers work if you have the strength and stamina to support them.

In fact, a person who is in great physical shape can survive most physical altercations without having an extensive knowledge of combat skills.

How?

Have you ever had someone rush you with a sustained barrage of punches that lasted well over one minute without them running out of energy or momentum?

That's how!

Many inmates know this simple tactic and maintain a high level of fitness for just the occasion.

You should follow suit if you want to survive a physical altercation.

Basic Combat Oriented Physical Fitness principles

1-Run, jog or take advantage of the elliptical machine. The reality is that this is an easy combat exercise but most people are just plain lazy and would rather do nothing. The aftermath of surviving, if you are lucky, a physical assault is not the time to decide that you are out of shape. Your life and that of your team is at stake here.

2- follow a fitness routine that mimics hand to hand combat. An excellent example is the punching bag. If you can sustain at least 5 minutes of constant punching on a bag, you can survive most encounters like a champ.

3-Pushups, jumping jacks, crunches, and jumping rope are combat proven exercises that have stood the test of time. The elite forces of today practice these as a standard. You should follow suit.

4-Any exercise is better than none at all.

5-Start a basic exercise program and stick with it. Don't overcomplicate things with fancy programs that will tucker you out before you even begin them.

6-Learning a martial art is an amazing thing but the reality is that all of them need many years of commitment before they can be utilized as a personal combat system. Better to learn a few maneuvers and stay in excellent physical condition.

And Finally

Remember:

Self-defense in prison is a misnomer. You are in reality defending every one of your teammates as well as yourself.

Don't let them or yourself down!

Stay in shape and have a clear idea on the reality that you may be assaulted one day and that initiating an I.C.S. alone will not save your life or that of your teammates.

Yours in Solidarity,

Carlos Garcia

Executive Grievance

Coordinator

Deeds not words!

