

BY STANLEY I. WHITE

The martial arts are thousands of years old and are found in every culture in the world. These systems of combat contain a wealth of information that can be adopted into a fledgling or established defensive tactics program. However, with numerous different systems and a multitude of high-ranking experts, making a sound decision for law enforcement use can be a challenge.

Outside Instructors

The task of searching for an outside instructor to consult with self-defense can be a draining experience. In any metropolitan phone book there are a number of schools that claim they teach street-wise self defense. Many times the ads are flashy, with a high-ranking expert pictured among his students and a large number of trophies. This individual will probably have a resume stating he has instructed military, special forces and police.

When presented with the task of selecting the best instructor to assist with your program here are some facts to consider.

Will this individual be willing to present a demonstration that will exhibit his skill in self-defense tactics? This should not include slicing apples on the necks of students, breaking boards or bricks, but a non-choreographed tactical presentation that applies to law enforcement professionals. These techniques should include simple takedowns, escapes and control holds. The instructor should be able to demonstrate these techniques on willing members of the audience.

The chosen individual should also be able to supply references and certifications documenting his skill in defensive tactics as well as martial arts. Trainers and coordinators should also observe any potential instructor teaching one or more classes at his own school. They should establish an outline of what they are looking for from this individual and stick to it.

Martial Arts Systems

The number of martial art systems in



Pictured left to right, Greg Ryman Controlled Force Instructor, Barrion Staples, and Law and Order's own Henry Kingwill, a former police officer and Defensive Tactics Instructor. All three are instructors at Chung Kim's Black Belt Academy in Davenport, IA.

MARTIAL ARTS

Defensive Tactics

the world is vast. Karate originated in the Japanese Ryukyu Islands. The word Karate translates as the "art of the empty hand." Karate is characterized by linear movements, strong punches and kicks.

Kung Fu has its roots in China; the word kung fu is Cantonese and translates as "human effort." This system combines linear and circular movements, strikes, punches, kicks, joint locks and takedowns.

Aikido is Japanese; the word Aikido translates as the "way of union within the universe." This system is characterized as a form of upright grappling where the user is able to execute

throws, takedowns and submissions by using the aggressor's energy against himself. Aikido uses a strong base combined with circular movement and leverage (no punches or kicks are thrown).

JuJitsu, which also has its roots in Japan, the word JuJitsu translates as the "art of gentleness." This art utilizes circular movement and leverage combined with kicks, punches, a vast number of joint locks and grappling moves.

Hapkido has its roots in Korea; the word Hapkido translates as the "way of coordinated energy." This system uses circular movement and a solid base to

execute punches, kicks, joint locks, escapes, takedowns and submission holds.

TaeKwonDo also has its roots in Korea; the word TaekwonDo translates as the "way of the foot and fist." This art uses circular movement combined with a greater number of kicks than hand strikes.

Techniques

Regardless of which art is practiced some basic facts should apply. Trainers and coordinators must remember that most martial arts were originally developed for the battlefield, not to arrest suspects.

Techniques need to be screened and modified for use on the street. All techniques chosen must be defensible in court and not deemed excessive. All officers trained in selected techniques must be able to effectively execute them regardless of gender, strength and size. Once a core curriculum has been established, officers should not add techniques from outside sources without consulting their department trainer and use of force policies.

Selected techniques should include the following steps:

Breathing: officers should be instructed to exhale when executing a technique to improve their focus and strength level during execution.

Natural Stances: officers should be taught a solid stance they can easily transition into from their interview stance. Officers should also be able to move, block, strike and escalate the use of force continuum from this stance.

Blocks: officers should be taught strong blocks that can be deployed against a violent suspect. They should also be taught to move evasively following a block and be prepared to escalate the use of force continuum. Effective blocking can also be used to deflect a suspect's attempt to grab an officer's sidearm.

Kicks: officers should be trained to execute kicks below the waist to a suspect's inner and outer thigh. These techniques will disrupt the balance and upright mobility of the suspect. High flashy kicks present the danger of losing balance and falling.

Punches/Strikes: officers should be trained to deliver open hand strikes to a

suspect's head and closed fist strikes to the body. These techniques will impair the suspect's focus and upright mobility, decreasing the chances of an officer breaking his shooting hand.

Knee strikes: officers should be trained to execute knee strikes to the suspect's torso. These strikes will disrupt the suspect's upright mobility and double him over.

Breakfalls: officers should be trained to properly fall and tactically get up off the ground if knocked down. If an officer is knocked down he must keep his legs between the suspect and himself until he is able to stand up. Never turn your back on a suspect to get up.

Control holds: officers should be trained to apply control holds to a suspect's wrist and arm without causing him injury. Holds that allow the officer to have one arm free at completion are most favorable. Officers should also practice handcuffing in conjunction with these holds.

Grappling: officers should be trained in grappling techniques as a means to escape from the suspect's hold on the ground and to regain control when tied up. The ground is not a safe place for an officer. If the altercation goes to the ground officers need to be trained on how to quickly regain control and avoid being disarmed.

Blunt and Edged Weapons Defense: officers should also be instructed in simple and effective defensive counters against suspects armed with blunt and edged weapons.

Questions

This is a basic guide for trainers and program coordinators who choose to integrate martial art techniques into their existing or future programs. However, the most well thought out plans will still be questioned or challenged.

Two common questions come to mind. The first is, what will officers gain from an integration of martial art techniques into a program?

Criminals have access to videos, DVDs, internet and literature on everything from defensive tactics combat to weapons of mass destruction. Many times prisons are often universities on criminal skills where inmates are released with greater fighting skills than when they entered. By integrating

martial arts techniques into a department's DT Program, officers can improve their odds during a physical encounter with a suspect.

Officers will see increased confidence, greater understanding of their own physical strengths and weaknesses, improved balance and footwork, improved hand/eye coordination, greater focus while under pressure and enhanced ability to assess a physical threat.

The second question commonly asked is, how can this work since all officers are not martial arts material and there is not enough time to learn a whole system? Departments need not feel they have to start from scratch or re-invent the wheel. There are established field tested defensive tactics systems that train in-house instructors for your department. One such system is the Controlled FORCE system (www.controlledforce.com) that was established in 1990.

This system incorporates martial arts techniques, defensive tactics and leverage for those unfamiliar with the martial arts. This is achieved by using five Mechanical Advantage Control Holds (MACH). The MACHs can be easily incorporated into a department's existing program and students are encouraged not to disregard previous training. These five holds are also incorporated into handcuffing procedures, weapon retention, baton and use with a partner. The average graduate of this program has a 75-90% retention level by course completion. In-house instructors and users can train these five holds in less than a minute during roll call or on their own with a willing participant.

A properly trained officer will have an added level of confidence and protection on the street. However, an officer who is poorly trained or skilled in out-dated techniques is more likely to experience excessive force liability and possible injury or death to himself or suspects.

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