Unarmed Combat - The Army Training Memorandum (WAR) (Australia) that made up this course. The first No. 27, was dated 22nd November 1943.

13. UNARMED COMBAT

Below are set out the general principles and description of Unarmed Combat. Appendix "D" contains a list of holds and counters, also photographs demonstrating the first six of the series. Further photographs demonstrating the remainder of the holds and counters set out in the list will be published in successive A.T.M.'s. Owing to the number of photographs involved it is not possible to publish all in one number.

1. The term "Unarmed Combat" is usually applied to the tactics adopted by an unarmed man against an opponent who is armed. Unarmed combat means complete ruthlessness when used against the enemy. "All-in" wrestling, in spite of its name, does not mean quite the same thing, as it is a test of skill and strength between two unarmed opponents, and intentional killing or maiming is not allowed. "All-in" wrestling forms a part of Unarmed Combat training, because it has been proved beyond doubt that a course of tuition in "All-in" wrestling makes men more receptive of the Unarmed Combat holds and counters. In the list, holds that may be used in wrestling are marked with an asterisk. Many of them are preliminaries to the application of ruthless tactics.

2. Use of Defence and Offence — Unarmed Combat has hitherto been considered as a means of defence at close quarters when no weapons are at hand. Its use as a means of attack, however, cannot be overlooked, particularly on such occasions as those when weapons cannot be conveniently used, e.g., the stalking of a sentry, when no noise must be made. Moreover, it should be noted that every defensive movement is invariably followed, if successful, by an offensive movement, whereby absolute mastery of an opponent should be obtained.

3. Ruthlessness — War is a matter of life and death, even where unarmed combat is concerned; hence there must be no scruple or compunction over the methods employed. Complete ruthlessness is necessary in order to gain the mastery over one's opponent. Such brutal methods of attack as kicking, gouging the eyes, etc., though foreign and detestable to the Britisher, must be used without hesitation against a desperate enemy. At the same time, one must not underestimate the value of a good solid punch should the opportunity for its use occur.

4. Essentials of Success — Surprise, speed and smoothness of execution, and, possibly most important of all, the gaining and retention of the initiative, are all essential if success is to be achieved. These cannot be achieved without a thorough knowledge of the art, allied to constant practice with a variety of partners and under different conditions; e.g., in the matter of dress, or when one is tired, or when it is dark. No two opponents will attack in precisely the same way, but the skilled exponent of unarmed combat will, by virtue of his continual practice under all conditions, have a variety of moves at his command. Although the initiative of an attack may appear to be with the combatant who is armed, the unarmed man can, and should, by skillfully-timed offensive action, seize the initiative, disarm his opponent, and thus secure the upper hand.

5. Avoidance of Injuries — Great care must be taken during practice to avoid injuries; hence speed of movement may have to be partially sacrificed. Nevertheless, all movements should be made as realistic as possible. In actual combat, do not be misled by the false cries of an artful opponent into relaxing a lock or a hold before control has been obtained.

6. Use of the Steel Helmet — The steel helmet can be used with great effect as a weapon of offence, as well as serving its usual role as a means of protection. Even when kept on the head it can still be used to deal a vicious blow. Similarly it can be used in the hand to deliver blows, full use being made of its sharp cutting edge. Finally it can be used as a shield, particularly against bayonet or dagger thrusts, or even against a thrown knife. The rubber lining of the steel helmet is intended as a shock absorber, which makes it all the more suitable for use as a shield. Whenever it is used in the hand, the chin strap should be wound around the wrist, to avoid dropping and possibly
losing the helmet. For this reason the steel helmet should never be thrown.

7. **Dress** — In the early stages, unarmed combat may be practised in P.T. kit. Later, however, it may be performed in any type of dress; gradually working up to battle dress and equipment.

8. **Instruction.**

   a. To obtain best results the squad should not consist of more than 14 men, and must be under supervision of a qualified Instructor.

   b. Under no circumstances should men be put through Unarmed Combat training without first being well warmed up with loosening and quickening exercises for a period of not less than five minutes.

   c. The Instructor will demonstrate each movement to the squad at high speed to show its effectiveness, then execute slowly, explaining every detail.

   d. To practice movements, the squad will be paired off with ample space between pairs to prevent one pair fouling another.

   e. The Instructor will put the squad through the movements very slowly until they have been thoroughly mastered, gradually working up to maximum speed. Great care must be taken that correct technique is maintained throughout.

   f. As men gain confidence and reach a higher state of efficiency, battle tests in Unarmed Combat can be introduced for periods of 10 to 12 minutes' duration, changing partners every 2 minutes.

   This exercise takes the form of hand-to-hand combat, with men putting into effect grips and counters, already learnt, and assures that each man works with various partners and gains the experience of different weight, style, etc., thus developing toughness, initiative, and the ability to make split second decisions as opportunities present themselves.

   g. Quick-decision exercises should be practiced in the form of ambushes, surprise attacks, etc., e.g., the noiseless capture of the last man of a patrol moving along jungle trails. This will foster a sense of alertness, and develops in men the ability to react instinctively.

   h. In this war of movement and infiltration no unit is immune from surprise attack. Men with a knowledge of Unarmed Combat are not helpless even if caught unarmed.

   i. It is only by constant practice in actual hand-to-hand combat that men can be brought to that state of toughness and efficiency required of a capable Unarmed Combat man.

9. **Initial Lesson** — How to fall and tumble; balance and leverage. Explain wristlocks, arm bars, face bars, arm rolls, headlocks, crutch holds, body scissors, head scissors, quarter, half and three-quarter Nelsons, throat and wrist strangles, toe holds, hammerlock.

10. **Vulnerable Points of Body.**

    **Front** — Head, eyes, temples, base of nose between eyes, under nose, point of chin, and jaw, under lobes of ears, sides of throat, Adam's apple, collarbone, under and above heart, solar plexus, testicles, knee caps, shins and insteps.

    **Rear** — Head, base of skull, nape of neck, ears, all spinal region, base of spine, kidneys, inside legs above knees, heels.

APPENDIX "D." - LIST OF HOLDS AND COUNTERS (UNARMED COMBAT).

1. Quickening exercise.
2. How to tumble *.
3. How to fall *.
4. Balance and leverage *.
5. Wristlocks, arm bars, etc. *.
6. Vulnerable points of the body.
7. Counter grasped round waist from rear, arms free *.
8. Counter grasped round waist, from behind, arms pinned low *.
9. Counter grasped from behind, arms pinned high *.
10. Counter grasped round waist from front, arms pinned low *.
11. Counter grasped from front, arms pinned high *.
12. Single arm lock, trip and throw *.
14. Side headlock and hip throw *.
15. Counter held on ground in side headlock *.
17. Counter to side headlock *.
18. Counter grasped by the hair *.
19. Counter full nelson *.
20. Stomach throw *.
22. Ruthless tactics.
23. Throat strangles from behind on ground.
24. Counter cross arm strangle applied on ground.
25. Counter cross arm strangle standing.
26. Counter throat strangle from front, standing.
27. Counter throat strangle applied on ground.
28. Counter strangle applied from rear.
29. Counter strangle applied from rear (alternative).
30. Stalking man from behind, capturing and strangling.
31. Pistol disarm from rear.
32. Pistol disarm from front.
33. Disarm with rifle and bayonet.
34. Use of steel helmet for defence.
35. Use of steel helmet as means of offence.
36. Counter, knife attack to stomach.
37. Counter, attack with waddy.
38. Counter, kick in stomach.
40. Come-alongs.
41. Neck twist; break and throw.
42. Tying man to tree without cord or rope.
43. Tree climbing with use of rope (toggle rope).

*May be used in wrestling up to the point when injury might be done.

<Note: Numbers 40-43 were never published>
QUICKENING EXERCISE TO CULTIVATE SPEED AND SMOOTHNESS OF MOVEMENT.

1 (a) From standing position of attention fall forward bonding the elbows and striking the ground, legs straight.

1 (b) With quick movements twist completely over to left on to back, legs straight and together, arms extended above head.

1 (c) With quick co-ordinated movement swing trunk and arms forward, bringing feet under thighs, placing hands, fingers extended, on ground behind buttocks and push up.

1 (d) With strong quick arm, leg and body action spring to feet on balance. Reveal turning left and right alternately.
HOW TO TUMBLE: RIGHT SHOULDER

2 (a) Running to make tumble, in co-ordinated movement place right foot firmly on ground, swinging left leg to rear, right arm swung across body, head turned to left.

2 (b) Tumble forward, landing on flat surface of right shoulder blade.

2 (c) Somersaulting over.

2 (d) Finishing up in standing position, on balance.
HOW TO TUMBLE: RIGHT SHOULDER cont.

2 (e) From erect position, man falls backward breaking fall with outstretched arms, head clear of ground, legs swung upwards.

2 (f) And over right shoulder (or left), weight of body on right shoulder blade and side of head.

2 (g) Following through into crouched position on balance.

2 (h) Pushes up smartly with hands and comes to erect position on balance.
HOW TO FALL FORWARD

As body strikes ground, fingers together and pointing to front, right or left leg draws up under body, knee clear of ground. Weight of body is now distributed over arm and legs.

BALANCE AND LEVERAGE

Man on top of opponent is on perfect balance, lying at right angles across opponent's chest. Has applied wristlock, exerting pressure on opponent's arm by levering upward with own left forearm.
5 (a) Double wristlock.

5 (b) Reverse wristlock.

5 (c) Hammerlock.
5 (d) Hammerlock.

5 (e) Goose neck or wrist strangle.

5 (f) Toe hold, with leg bar.

5 (g) Arm bar.
VULNERABLE POINTS OF THE BODY
7a. COUNTER GRASPED AROUND WAIST, FROM REAR; ARMS FREE.

7a (i) Quickly moves to his right, bends down and grasps opponent's right leg at ankle, and jerks upward.

7a (ii) Throwing opponent to ground, retaining hold on leg, and sits on opponent's stomach and chest.
7b. COUNTER GRASPED AROUND WAIST, FROM BEHIND; ARMS FREE (ALTERNATIVE).

7b (i) With co-ordinated movement, side steps to left (or right), raising right arm.

7b (ii) Chops downwards, and backwards with heel of right palm into opponent's fork, breaking grip.
8a. COUNTER GRASPED AROUND WAIST FROM BEIND; ARMS PINNED LOW.

8 (b) Quickly Pivots on left foot, twisting and thrusting body and right hip outward.

8 (c) Grasps opponent's left wrist with his right hand, taking pressure off his own left arm.
8 (d) Frees left arm and applies double wristlock.

8 (e) Sits down backwards, throwing opponent to ground.

8 (f) Retains grip and applies head scissors.
9a. COUNTER GRASPED FROM BEHIND; ARMS PINNED HIGH.

9 (b) With co-ordinated movement takes step forward with right foot swinging, right shoulder up, and left shoulder down, throwing off pressure of opponent's arms.

9 (c) Drives down with right and left elbows alternatively into opponent's ribs. Follow up with ruthless tactics.
10a. COUNTER GRASPED AROUND WAIST FROM FRONT; ARMS PINNED LOW.

10 (b) With quick movement drives thumbs into opponent's groin or fork, forcing his body back, giving freedom of movement.

10 (c) Pivots on left foot, grasping opponent around upper part of body.

10 (d) Throws opponent with hip throw and follows up with ruthless tactics.
11a. COUNTER ARMS PINNED HIGH.

11 (b) With co-ordinated movement he swings right arm and shoulder up, left shoulder down.

11 (c) Swings his right arm over opponent's upper left arm, and grasping own right hand, bears down sharply with whole weight of upper body on opponent's arm. Adopt ruthless tactics.
SINGLE ARM LOCK TRIP AND THROW.

12 (a) Man at right grasps opponent's right wrist with both hands.

12 (b) Pulls opponent forward, bringing opponent's right leg forward.

12 (c) In Co-ordinated movement, grasps opponent's right upper arm with right hand, and places right foot behind opponent's heel, pulling and tripping.

12 (d) Brings opponent to the ground retaining grip of arm. Follows up with ruthless tactics.
JAPANESE LEG TRIP.

13 (a) Man at left grasps opponent's left wrist with both hands, pulling opponent forward so that his left leg is foremost.

13 (b) In co-ordinated movement, twists quickly to the right, dropping on right knee, right foot to the rear, left leg extended outside opponent's left leg.

13 (c) With quick, strong pulling action trips opponent across leg and throws him to the ground.

13 (d) Applies strangle or adopts ruthless tactics.
SIDE HEADLOCK AND HIP THROW.

14 (a) Man at right has taken opponent in side headlock, feet well apart, knees slightly bent, opponent draped over right hip.

14 (b) In co-ordinated movement he then pulls down on headlock, straightens knees and pushes buttocks back into opponent, throwing him off guard.

14 (c) Throws him to the ground, retaining headlock, with weight on opponent's chest.

14 (d) Traps opponent's right arm with legs, and applies ruthless tactics with thumb under nose.
15 (a) Man underneath is held in a side headlock.

15 (b) As a counter he places his right hand under opponent's nose and forces opponent's head back.

15 (c) ALTERNATIVE METHOD - Man held in side headlock reaches right arm across opponent's throat, grasping opponent's clothing on right shoulder. Applies strangling pressure, forcing opponent's head backward, breaking the headlock and applying a head scissors.

15 (d) He then raises his legs and applies a head scissors on opponent. Then adopts ruthless tactics.
16 (a) Man at right has applied a headlock, grasping his own wrist, and applying pressure, with forearm across cheek of opponent's face. Feet and buttocks well away from opponent.

16 (b) Retaining the grip, he jumps forward, dragging opponent with him.

16 (c) Reclines, holding opponent face downwards to the ground, whilst applying pressure by squeezing and forcing his head back.
COUNTER TO SIDE HEADLOCK.

17 (a) Man at left is held in a side headlock.

17 (b) In co-ordinated movement he drops on his right knee, places right forearm behind opponent's right knee, and grasps opponent's clothing at left shoulder with left hand.

17 (c) With a lifting and pulling action, he then throws opponent over his left knee and thigh.

17 (d) On to the top of his head or back of his neck.
18 (a) Man at left has been grasped by hair.

18 (b) Quickly interlocks fingers and hands, clamps down on opponent’s hand and applies pressure on wrist joint, bearing in and down.

18 (c) Forces opponent to knees.

18 (d) Follows up with ruthless tactics.
19 (a) Man at right is held in full nelson.

19 (b) With co-ordinated movements clamps down on opponent's arms, clasps hands in front of chest, moves to right, bends knees and body forward and buttocks back, and places his left hip against opponent's right hip.

19 (c) With quick twist of body and straightening of legs throws opponent over his left hip.

19 (d) Retains grip on the ground, and throwing weight of body on opponent's chest breaks his grip.
19 (e) Should opponent's grip not be broken at this stage, man on top turns to his left and hooks his right leg behind opponent's right leg.

19 (f) With a quick twist of the shoulders to the left breaks grip and lies across opponent. Applies reverse wristlock or ruthless tactics.
COUNTER FULL NELSON - ALTERNATIVE METHOD.

19 (g) Man at right held in full nelson.

19 (h) With co-ordinated movement bends knees, quickly reaches back and clasps opponent's head or hair.

19 (i) Simultaneously pulls down on opponent's head and straightens knees, forcing buttocks back into opponent and throwing him overhead.

19 (j) Throws opponent to ground, following up with ruthless tactics.
STOMACH THROW.

20 (a) Man at right has grasped opponent by shoulders.

20 (b) With co-ordinated movement pulls opponent forward, placing right foot in pit of opponent's stomach.

20 (c) Falls backward, pulling opponent's shoulders down and straightening right leg, throwing opponent in overhead somersault to ground.

20 (d) Retaining grip follows opponent over in back somersault.

20 (e) Finishes up kneeling astride opponent and applying cross arm strangle or ruthless tactics.
21 (a) Man at left has been grasped by clothing.

21 (b) Places left forearm over wrist joint of opponent and grasps left fist with right hand, bearing in and down.

21 (c) Forcing opponent to knees.

21 (d) Following up with ruthless tactics.
RUTHLESS TACTICS.

22 (a) Jabbing fingers in eyes.

22 (b) Pulling hair.

22 (c) Biting.

22 (d) Kicking in the kneecaps.
RUTHLESS TACTICS cont.

22 (e) Kneeing in the fork.

22 (f) Kicking in the fork.

22 (g) Kneeing in the fork.

22 (h) Kicking in the fork.
RUTHLESS TACTICS cont.

22 (j) Tearing mouth.

22 (k) Breaking hold by use of fingers.

22 (l) Breaking hold by use of thumbs.

22 (m) Twisting and breaking fingers.
RUTHLESS TACTICS cont.

22 (n) Bending back and breaking thumbs.

22 (o) Jabbing with heel of hand.

22 (p) Clapping hands over ears. (Compression shatters eardrums)
THROAT STRANGLING.

23 (a) With co-ordinated movement, grasp opponent's collar at left side of his throat with right hand, left arm under opponent's left armpit and across back of neck, placing left hand on right forearm. Force right knees into opponent's back and apply strangle with pulling, squeezing action. This strangle can also be used with great effect from behind when opponent is face down on ground.

23 (b) Fold arms across opponent's throat and neck, and apply squeezing pressure. Care to be exercised during practice.

23 (c) Cross arms, and grasping opponent at shoulders, apply pressure with a scissors action.
COUNTER CROSS ARM STRANGLE APPLIED ON GROUND.

24 (a) Man on ground is held in cross arm strangle.

24 (b) With co-ordinated movement place his left hand behind opponent's left elbow, and grasps it with his right hand.

24 (c) Twisting body smartly to left, applies pressure on opponent's elbow; at same time presses down on opponent's left hand with chin to prevent opponent releasing head.

24 (d) Throws opponent over, retaining pressure on arm and hand.

24 (e) Moves forward and takes up kneeling position on opponent's upper left arm. Applies goose neck on hand, or adopts ruthless tactics.
COUNTER TO CROSS ARM STRANGLE STANDING.

25 (a) Man on left is held in cross arm strangle.

25 (b) Places his left hand under and behind opponent's left elbow.

25 (c) Strikes left hand sharply with right hand, and applies upward pressure against opponent's left elbow.

25 (d) Breaking opponent's strangle, throwing him off balance, and following up with ruthless tactics.
26 (a) Man at right is held in throat strangle.

26 (b) With quick movement swings right arm and shoulder across and against opponent's left wrist and forearm, breaking grip.

26 (c) Swings back, chopping across side of face, and follows up with ruthless tactics.
27 (a) Man on ground is held in throat strangle.

27 (b) In co-ordinated movement, grasps opponent's left wrist with left hand, strikes opponent's left elbow sharply with palm of right hand.

27 (c) With quick twist of body throws opponent over to left.

27 (d) Face downwards retaining grip.

27 (e) Moves smartly forward, kneeling on opponent's upper left arm, applying goose neck on hand. Adopt ruthless tactics.
28 (a) Man at left is held in strangle.

28 (b) In co-ordinated movement, moves to his right, grasping opponent's right wrist with both hands.

28 (c) Pulls down sharply on opponent's wrist, and steps behind him, breaking grip.

28 (d) Applies hammerlock, and places right foot in front of opponent's right leg.

28 (e) Pushes and trips opponent to ground face downward, retaining hammerlock, break arm or adopt ruthless tactics.
29 (a) Man at right is held in strangle applied from behind.

29 (b) In co-ordinated movement take short step forward with right foot, stretching left leg between opponent's, grasps opponent's right forearm with right hand, placing left hand on opponent's left thigh.

29 (c) Pulls down on opponent's right forearm, thrusts back with buttocks and left hand, and throws opponent overhead.

29 (d) To ground - follows up with ruthless tactics.
STALKING MAN FROM BEHIND, CAPTURING AND STRANGLING.

30 (a) Man on left creeping up on opponent.

30 (b) With co-ordinated movement places right forearm across opponent's throat, grasping right wrist with left hand, places right knee in small of opponent's back and pulls opponent backward.

30 (c) To ground, applying pressure by pulling in with the arms, forcing opponent backward and pressing on back of opponent's head with chest, strangling him.

THIS STRANGLE CAN BE USED TO GREAT ADVANTAGE ALSO WHEN STRUGGLING ON THE GROUND WITH AN OPPONENT.
DISARM REVOLVER FROM REAR.

1. Man at right held up from rear.
2. Quickly pivots left about.
3. Wrapping own left arm around opponent's revolver arm; simultaneously smashes opponent under chin with heel of palm and drives knee into fork.
PISTOL DISARM FROM REAR.

1. Man at left held up at close quarters.
2. Quickly pivots about on right foot, encircling opponent's pistol arm with left arm.
3. Grasping own left and right hands, applies downward pressure across opponent's pistol arm.
1. Man at left held up at close quarters.
2. With co-ordinated movement pivots away on left foot striking opponent's pistol hand away with left hand.
3. Follows up by grasping barrel of pistol with right hand with upward motion.
4. Swinging opponent's pistol hand and arm upwards and backwards over right shoulder, disarming him. Adopt ruthless tactics.

PISTOL DISARM FROM FRONT.
DISARM WITH RIFLE AND BAYONET.

1. Man at right moving in towards attacker armed with rifle and bayonet.
2. Lunges to right as opponent makes point and parries opponent's rifle with left hand.
3. Steps forward with right foot, grasping opponent by chin with left hand, right hand around back of head.
4. With neck-twisting action throws opponent sideways and backwards.
5. To ground. Follows up with ruthless tactics.
USE OF STEEL HELMET'S MEANS OF DEFENCE.

1. Against a bayonet strike.
2. Against a knife attack.
3. Against kick in fork or stomach.
USE OF STEEL HELMET AS MEANS OF OFFENCE.

1. Correct method of holding steel helmet when being used as a weapon of offence. The chin strap should be wrapped around wrist as illustrated to prevent helmet being lost during use.
2. For chopping and slashing from the front.
3. Chopping when held from rear.
4. Chopping when held from rear.
5. Chopping back with the head when held from the rear.
6. Chopping forward with the head when held from front.
COUNTER KNIFE ATTACK AT STOMACH.

1. Man at right is being attacked by man with knife.
2. As attacker attempts to drive knife to stomach, man at right parries attacker's knife arm with own left forearm, diverting knife away from body.
3. Quickly drives right knee unto attacker's fork, disabling him.
COUNTER ATTACK WITH WADDY.

1. Man at right is being attacked by opponent armed with waddy. (A waddy, nulla nulla or hunting stick is an Australian Aboriginal war club.)
2. As attacker makes blow at head man at right sways upper body and head to right, and parries with left forearm.
3. Following through, wrapping own arm around opponent’s, and jolts opponent under chin with heel of right palm. Follow up with ruthless tactics.
1. Man at left anticipates kick at stomach.
2. With co-ordinated movement pivots on left foot out of range, grasping opponent's foot under heel.
3. Throws opponent's leg upward and backward.
4. Throwing opponent to ground. Following up with ruthless tactics.
BREAKING GRIP FROM WRIST.

1. Man at right is held in two-handed wrist grip.
2. With free hand reaches over and grips own left fist.
3. And by pulling and flexing arms upwards exerts pressure against opponent's thumbs.