

# Get the inside track on Army combatives

## ***An insider's look at Army combatives here at Carlisle Barracks***

*As a public affairs specialist for the Army War College, Erin Stattel will be providing an inside glimpse into the new world of combatives at Carlisle Barracks. Initiated by Army War College leadership, combatives is more commonly known as hand-to-hand combat and helps prepare officers to go back to the operational force.*

(January 12, 2010)--On the first day of the new combatives course at the Army War College, one might anticipate a simple day of getting to know each other and learning about the significance of ancient martial arts throughout history, but upon entering Thorpe Hall Gym on Monday afternoon, I encountered an enthusiastic small crowd of local military personnel, stretching and warming up for some roughhousing.

Being the newbie to the group, I was a little apprehensive about what I was going to be participating in, but I was quickly encouraged by the spirit around me and jumped right in to learn about striking.

Led by instructor Brian Sarjeant, a former Army NCO who is known in some circles as "the Godfather of Combatives," we learned to jab, punch, and hook, then moved into a series of lethal elbow combinations. One of the most important parts of carrying out the combinations, Sarjeant said, is to protect oneself while engaging the enemy, never leaving your face exposed while striking with the other hand.

"We are going to hold one hand up here like we are on the telephone," Sarjeant said while raising a clenched fist beside his right jaw line.

"And the other hand we are going to hold here like we are eating a sandwich," he continued, placing his other fist in front of his mouth.

Students then paired off for clinch moves, practicing a series of grappling-type moves under Sarjeant's watchful gaze.

Sarjeant instructed us on how to put our opponents into clinches that will give us the upper hand, quite literally. Through a few quick motions Sarjeant demonstrated how certain vulnerable positions can work to an opponent's advantage or disadvantage.

I turned to the fellow on my right and began putting him in one of the clinch positions with my hands on the back of his neck, bringing his head down to about my waist level, a position in which I could deliver a hard blow

to his face with my right knee. But I spared him; he seemed like a nice guy.

I am eagerly anticipating the next session, on Wednesday. We were told to bring our mouth guards, which I can only assume means we begin more intense combatives training.

*Erin O. Stattel, Army War College, Public Affairs*

*Army combatives classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays in Thorpe Hall Gym at 3 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. A makeup session will also be held at 6 p.m. in case students have to miss a class or two due to scheduling conflicts. Parties interested in signing up should contact the sports office in the Root Hall gym. Become a fan and follow combatives coverage on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/USAWC>*

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