

# Army Combatives: Spending day two on the mat

*Day two in a series following the new combatives courses at the Army War College, Public Affairs Specialist Erin Stattel provides an inside glimpse into the courses. 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.*

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(January 14, 2010)--Aggression and intensity filled the room as we paired off, ready to practice striking jabs, punches, hooks and combinations. We were getting into the thick of it and it was just the second combatives class at Carlisle Barracks. Bringing the mouth guard was definitely good advice.

Already I can see marked improvement among my peers from the first day. Some of them must have been practicing at home. I watched as they easily rolled into the combinations, letting out a torrent of punches into their partners' boxing mitts, not a task for the fainthearted.

Doing a lightning round of punches was tough; I could feel the fatigue setting into my arms as I struggled to keep hitting the dead center of Lt. Col. Janet Holliday's mitts. But the Garrison Commander wouldn't let me quit, so I pushed on. Thirty seconds never passed so slowly, but it was worth it.

Soon enough we had switched and I manned the mitts while Lt. Col. Holliday hit. We circled each other as she let loose a string of jabs, punches and left hooks. I thought striking was hard work, but I hadn't expected holding the mitts to be so tough; what a great workout.

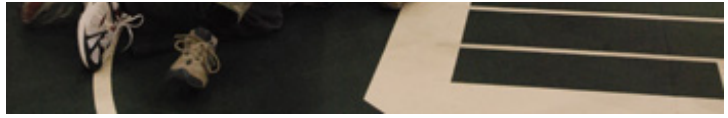
Next, instructor Brian Sarjeant demonstrated mounting maneuvers and quickly put us into a set of moves to thwart someone attempting to sit on top of us and attack us from above. Simple enough, right? Not at all.

***Instructor Brian Sarjeant demonstrates mounting moves on Sgt. Radoune Moukraj as Col. Bobby Towery, deputy commandant of the Army War College, looks on. Photo by Erin O. Stattel.***

"Don't let your head relax on the ground, you need to hold your head up while someone is



attacking you from above," Sarjeant reminded us as he demonstrated mounting. "Keep your head up and your elbows tight against your sides so they cannot move closer to your neck. You can use your elbows to move them lower on your body and regain control."



Although I value my job, I wasn't going easy on anyone. But my officemate, Suzanne Reynolds, community relations officer for the Army War College, surprised me by keeping me pinned until I promised not to touch her stapler again. I am kidding about the stapler. Suzanne has practiced martial arts before and was quickly able to remember all the moves Sarjeant had shown us just minutes earlier.

The class had most definitely advanced from the first day.

"There certainly is a lot more striking with your elbows and knees from the last time I did this," Lt. Col. Rob Weaver had remarked as he exited the 4 p.m. class.

"This is such an enthusiastic and informative class," Lt. Col. Tony Teolis said. "This is my first time doing combatives and the pace is great, slow enough to learn, yet fast enough to be challenged."

"Any kind of martial art is great to know," said Air Force Lt. Col. Curtis Zablocki as he walked off the mat. "I am glad Col. Towery added this because it is a great addition to the Army War College curriculum."

My comrades and I hit the mats next on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 due to the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

*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>*