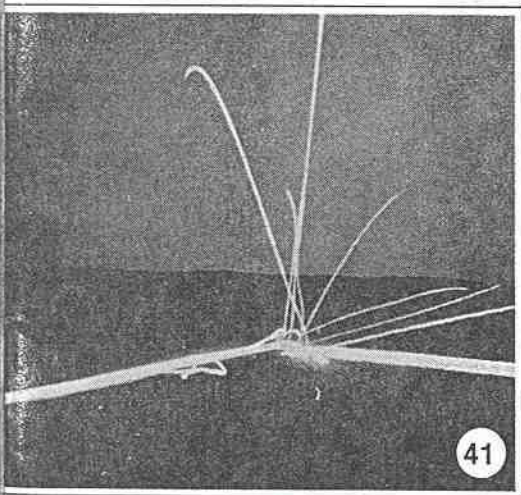


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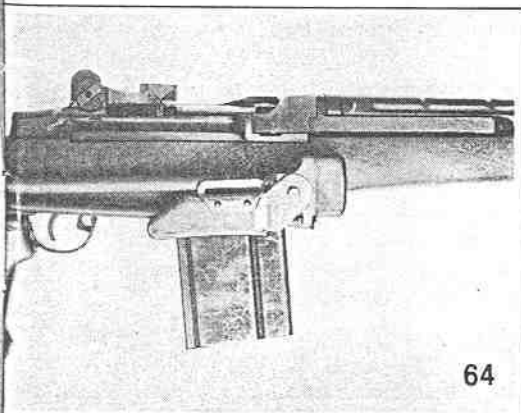
Rock Island Armory's
CAR-60 LMG
Photo: Gene Brownell



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ON BEING

EDITOR'S NOTE: Author Sanders, though admittedly somewhat tongue-in-cheek at times, is deadly serious on the subject of preparedness, both with and without weapons. A highly respected American martial artist, he has studied extensively in the Orient and yet remains committed to realistic, 20th-Century self-defense for the concerned citizen. In this SWAT submission he takes a hard look at a subject which has been talked about a lot, and yet in many cases never really discussed at all: our hypothetical attackers, the "bad guys". Furthermore, in doing so he is in no way espousing or condoning criminal behavior --- rather he's putting forth some worthwhile observations of his own on the crucial differences between combat and competition.

For the purpose of this article, *combat arts* are defined as being any of the world's armed or weaponless fighting methods whether from the United States, Japan, South Africa, Okinawa or elsewhere. Indeed, training objectives and methods are similar when one fights bare-handed, with handgun, nunchaku, submachinegun, short staff or knife. The author, a resident of Japan and student of combat arts, assumes the role of that invisible man, the imagined attacker who is often too easily disposed of in mock combat efforts around the globe.

Ladies and gentlemen of the combat arts, I submit for your consideration that you

have misjudged us --- your trackers --- in books, movies, magazines, contests and even target design. We, your "dummy" attackers, have been grossly underestimated for too long! One danger in propagating a particular combat art is that its disciples will become overly impressed with the seeming ease with which we are defeated. Rules, the vote of the judges, elapsed time, even a solid hit in the "kill zone" do *not* guarantee *our* defeat. You armchair warriors, dojo (martial art school) ballerinas and IPSC gamesters had better get your thinking straightened out if you intend to defeat me and my associates. The following observations are relevant to your re-thinking efforts.

PREPARED

By TERRY SANDERS

We are not stupid nor even necessarily ignorant. For lack of information to the contrary, assume at least normal intelligence. Furthermore our real-life attacks will be well-timed, quick, forceful and many. We are held back neither by conscience, convention nor any author's opinions on how to fight. The idea that one of my friends will engage you with a lunge punch from a lunge stance, stand thereafter you have blocked it and allow you to work your canned oriental magic is laughable. Are we incapable of blocking, striking repeatedly or kicking? Think about it...

Our attacks will come as surprises: you *won't* be warmed up, wearing a loose-fitting uniform, jogging shoes, groin protector or body armor. The chances are slim that you will be attacked while standing on the firing line of the local shooting range or in a fighting stance at the neighborhood karate dojo. We've got weapons and techniques that your teachers, coaches and authors have never seen or heard of. Additionally, (don't tell the contest/match promoters), we have been known to use reinforcements, study both eastern *and* western combat arts *and* practice a lot.

And to you firearms users, I've *seen* the criminal way (pun intended) you represent

us in competition. Alas, that Taylor fellow and his ilk have been influential here. No longer are we conceived of as out-sized black silhouettes with white numbers painted on our parts. Now we are portrayed as life-size drab or camouflage targets with diminished "kill zones". But what you have yet to realize is that we try *very* hard not to expose these areas. We do this by moving around frequently and trying to present the least amount of target area for the shortest period of time. We've been known to use body armor (gasp!), armor-piercing bullets (horrors!) and even to *shoot back* after a direct hit in the vitals (foul!). Chances are pretty good that we will survive such a hit --- at least for the most significant moments in *your* life!

At the risk of annoying my associates in the underclass, I'll put forth some suggestions for your consideration. Furthermore I'm willing to bet many of you are already too offended to listen...

(1) When imagining us on the attack, remember the pace of a professional fighter going for a quick knockout; or the hyper-excited guerilla's shooting speed that you watched on last night's six o'clock news. We're not your training partners --- we're your *enemies*.

(2) Devise moving targets and randomly select some of them as "surprise extra hit" objectives. A third party should control the target movement and indicate the harder-to-stop targets during your counterattack.

(3) Train in areas other than the shooting range and the well-lit, smooth-floored dojo. Wear your street clothing, not your pajamas.

(4) Strive for a true "liberal education" --- cross train in several combat arts. Learn a striking art such as karate or boxing, a grappling art such as ju-jitsu or wrestling, a weapons-based art such as jo-jitsu (short staff) or fencing along with commensurate skill with any type of western firearm. It is dangerous to devote all of your training time to the mastery of only *one* weapon; combat is usually a come-as-you-are affair in which the odds favor the most prepared participant.

(5) Remember that *contest* skill in the many combat arts does not necessarily equal victory in *combat*. Banish the movie-inspired vision of the good guy emerging untouched from the battle against the stereotypic bad guys. We attackers don't read such scripts, ignore the judges and rules and really want to put you down permanently. ●