

Practising to be Miserable

Excerpts taken from the yet-to-be-published
“On Combat”

The Physical and Mental Effects of Deadly Combat in War and Peace

by US Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman and Loren W. Christensen

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This is the second of two excerpts from LTC Dave Grossman's new book - "On Combat". All together there have been three articles of David's in the Signalman magazine. Although some may have been heard to have said that perhaps this sort of content is not for Signallers - we reply with ...the Royal Australian Corps of Signals is an ARM - and there is not much that separates the Infantryman and the Signaller in the middle of combat. In fact, the Signaller knows best the value of trust - the trust he has for others while he is trying to do his communications job - as is others' trust for him to get the message through.

There is a possibility of LTC Dave Grossman visiting Australia sometime next year, and we look forward to being able to advise you of the locations and dates of the visit. In the meantime, Dave's book (On Combat) should be published and released early next year. Look out for it!

Hooah and again, "thanks", Dave.

.....Ed.

Stress Inoculation and Fear: Practicing to be Miserable

"First class training is the best form of welfare for the troops... The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle."

Irwin Rommel

There is an old Army adage that says, "You don't have to practice being miserable." There is some truth in these words, but sometimes they are used as an excuse to avoid hard, rigorous training. Sometimes there *is* value in practicing to be miserable.

Army Ranger school consisted of months of sleep and food deprivation in grueling environments of jungle, swamps, mountains and desert. After Ranger school, almost everything else in life seemed easy by comparison.

General Barry McCaffrey (best known as our nation's Drug Czar during the Clinton administration) told a story to a group of West Point cadets about his experiences in Vietnam that exemplifies what stress inoculation is all about. One day he and a friend (who was a classmate from West Point and Ranger school) were in Vietnam lying behind a rice paddy dyke as bullets screamed over their heads. At the peak of the battle, the General's friend turned to him, and said, "Well shit, at least we're not in Ranger school."

One of these days, scientists will probably have to pay for what they have done to all those poor little rats that were standing in the wrong line and got chosen for laboratory duty. Dr. Paul Whitesell tells about one such experiment (conducted in the days before PETA and the ASPCA), where scientists reportedly divided rats into three groups. Rats from the first group were dropped into a bucket of water to see how long it took them to drown. According to this study, it took about 60 hours.

The second group was first held upside down to give them a dose of stress, and when they eventually stopped kicking and squirming (i.e., they gave up and went into parasympathetic backlash), the scientists dropped them in a bucket of water. That group lasted about 20 minutes before they drowned.

The third group was also held upside down until they stopped kicking and fighting, but instead of being dropped into the water, they were placed back into their cages. The next day, the same group (actually, there was only this one group left by now) was again picked up, held upside down until they quit kicking, and

again put back into their cages. The next day when the same rats were held upside down, they had figured out that this was just how the white coats got their kicks and that it was no big deal. However, instead of being placed back in the comfort of their cages, they were dropped into the bucket of water, where they swam -- for 60 hours.

Unlike the second group of rats, the third group had been inoculated to the stressor. They had encountered it on two previous occasions and had always come out of the experience alive and triumphant. Being held upside down a third time was not a big deal to them.

One report says that over a third of all police officers killed in combat did not defend themselves. The solution to this lies in training, hard training that includes preparation for the possibility of being shot at and preparation for the possibility of being hit. Like our third group of rats, it is about being prepared ahead of time for the stress of combat. Let's look at three training principles that are critical for preparing the warrior for the harsh reality of life and death combat.

Principle 1: Never "kill" a warrior in training.

Many training exercises involve trainees getting "killed" when they err in the exercise. "You shouldn't have done that. You're dead now!" This type of training only trains you to die. "I'm dead," you think when another trainee or a trainer shoots you with a Simunition round or pretends to stab you. This is wrong. A trainer should never declare his students to be dead, and if a student ever declares himself to be dead, the right answer is, "No, you aren't dead! I don't give you permission to die. I don't train people to die. I train them to live!"

Ken Murray, director of training for the Armiger Police Training Institute and co-developer of the family of cartridges bearing the name Simunition, says to his officers who have been "shot" in training, "Yeah, you're hit, but you're sure as hell not done ... now finish this bastard." His officers hear this so often in his training program that they "take him into battle" with them. In the event they are really hit, he wants them to hear his words -- "Yeah, you're hit, but you're sure as hell not done" -- and then do what needs to be done. Ken says that stress

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inducing simulation training places an obvious fork in a person's survival psychology pathway at the point of projectile impact. If the trainee is conditioned to stop when he is hit (as if the scenario is over), he programs an undesirable and potentially self-destructive action into his mind.

I know of gangbangers who have sucked up a dozen 9-millimeter rounds and drove on to survive. If they can do it, you can too. If when the training scenario ends, you think it did not go the way you wanted it to, then do it again, but do not ever think you are dead in an exercise. If you are practicing knife defenses and your training partner "stabs" you, do not think you failed and that you are dead. I know of a little old lady who was stabbed 20 times and then crawled to the phone, dialed 9-1-1, and lived to tell about it. Never, ever give up after being shot or stabbed. Do not train yourself to die and do not train other warriors to die.

Principle 2: Try to never send a loser off your training site.

Yes, there will be a certain percentage of people who never grasp the training, but your goal as a professional is to keep that percentage to a bare minimum. It is easy to design a Simunition scenario that makes every trainee look like an idiot, but all that that proves is that the trainers are jerks. But suppose you are a trainer and you put a warrior through a scenario where he fails, and *then* you put him through it again and he succeeds. *Now* you have shown him a flaw in his armor and then you have taught him how to shore up that weakness. In so doing, you have brought him out the other end of the exercise as a superior warrior.

If possible, add a little variance his second time through, but send a winner off your training site. *If* there is not sufficient time and resources to run it again, then don't get tricky: toss him a softball, and let him knock it out of the park, because your goal is to send winners out the door.

Principle 3: As a trainer, never talk trash about your students.

A warrior trainer is a *sensei*, a professional, who has confidentiality standards like a priest or a doctor. Say a police officer gets a physical where the doctor checks him out from top to bottom. Do you think at night over a beer he tells other doctors about the officer and laughs about the poor man's droopy butt? No, because he is a professional.

If you are a trainer and you laugh about Smith's failures when having a beer with other warriors, how do you think the others are going to take that? They might laugh at your story, but inside they think you are a jerk and that it will be a cold day in hell before they let you see them fail.

Friends tease each other. SWAT teams tease each other; it comes with the territory. If you are a leader, however, you are not permitted to play the teasing game. You never joke about your trainee's failures, but you do brag about their achievements. Your entire repertoire is to talk about what went right, and when you say *these* things over a beer with your peers, they hear and appreciate it, and they will want to be the ones you brag about next time. When word gets out that this is the type of trainer you are, people will no longer avoid training but will want to be there because of the environment you have created.

The fundamental rule of warrior leadership is to punish in private and praise in public. Report all failures and problems up

the chain of command, but report successes to everyone. Maybe you were publicly punished and embarrassed at one time and now you despise the person who did it to you. Perhaps there was a time when you were privately praised. Someone called you into his office and told you that you did a great job yesterday. While you appreciated the nice comments, you wish he had said them in front of everyone.

Create an environment in which your people want to train and be inoculated. Do not kill your warriors. Do not send losers off the training site. Do not talk trash about your students. Punish in private, praise in public. This is the way that a warrior-trainer, a *sensei*, creates a training environment in which the warrior spirit is nurtured and his warriors want to train.

A word on fear

Dr. Paul Whitesell is a brilliant psychologist, counselor, Vietnam veteran and law enforcement officer who trains police officers in leadership and warrior spirit. He draws from the works of Lord Moran to teach his students that there are four kinds of fear.

-There are those who know no fear and they do the job. These are rare people because most know fear. Usually, they are caught by surprise and the situation it over so quickly that they did not have time to be afraid.

-There are those who know fear and no one knows it, and they do the job.

-There are those who know fear and everyone sees it and smells it, but it does not matter because the job gets done.

-There are those who know fear and everyone knows it because they failed to do the job.

Human beings usually vacillate between all four stages, with a propensity towards one or another. We all have bad days and good days. Allow yourself the flux. Do not destroy yourself because of a bad day, and do not destroy others because they had a bad day.

Name your favorite baseball pitcher or football quarterback. Do they ever have bad days? Would you judge them for the rest of their lives on one bad day, one bad game? Instead, do as most professional ball players do when they throw a bad game or have a bad season: They learn from it, and when the next season rolls around, they are usually all the better because of it.

My co-author won 50 trophies during his competitive years in the martial arts. Today, when Christensen's students ask him about those wins, he is quick to tell them that while he did indeed win 50 karate competitions, he entered well over 100. It was always fun to win, he tells them, and bring home big gaudy trophies for his den, but it is those empty places on the shelves where there are no trophies, places that represent his losses, that were the most valuable to him. When he won, he would bask in the glory, but when he had a bad day and lost, he always analyzed why, and tried to learn from his mistakes so that the next time he competed, he competed stronger and wiser.

Do not destroy yourself over the bad days. Take pride in your good ones and strive to constantly improve. While it is acceptable to have a bad day, it is unacceptable not to train, not to try to get better, not to use the resources available to make sure that what caused that bad day never happens to you again.

It is all about prior preparation, preparation for warriorhood.

Looking Forward To It, and Getting It Over With

Warrior attitudes before combat: looking forward to it, and getting it over with

If you are in a war, you are a warrior. There are only two types on the battlefield: warriors and victims. Sheep avoid the battle, or refuse to participate, but warriors seem to have two basic attitudes as they go into combat. One group appears to honestly look forward to combat. The second group doesn't really want to do it, but since it has to be done their attitude is, "lets get it over with." Both are perfectly healthy and appropriate responses.

Drew Brown is a reporter for Knight Ridder newspapers who served in combat with the 1st Ranger Battalion in the invasion of Panama in 1989. He was with the US forces preparing to invade Iraq in 2003 when he sent me a E-mail with this very astute observation.

I know that a lot of what I'm hearing is bravado. You often hear things, like "I just want to get in there, get it over with and get the job done" or "It's just part of the job," both of which indicate a more detached view. How does one explain these two attitudes from a psychological point of view? Do you really buy it when you read about soldiers who say they want to go to war? What is driving these men? And also, how does one account for the more detached attitude?

I told him that I sincerely believe that a sizable slice of warriors really *do* want to see combat. Some of this may be mindless bravado, but some of it is not. Many of these individuals are very mature, levelheaded warriors. It is like a good football player who scrimmages and practices endlessly, but never gets to play a game.

As I train warriors around the world, traveling on my endless odyssey, I often get to spend time in police cars with law enforcement officers who drive me from the airport to the city where our training session is taking place. One very senior state trooper told me once, as he was driving me across a vast Midwestern state in the middle of the night at 120 mph, that there were two things he wanted before he retired. One was to have a car fast enough to hit a crow (troopers do a lot of high-speed driving and have an interesting sense of humor about it) and the other was to get into a gunfight. He was not embarrassed or full of false bravado about it, he just simply stated the fact that he had trained for a lifetime and wanted to see how he would do. I train members of most of the special operations community (SWAT, SEALs, Rangers, Green Berets), and that kind of attitude is common with them.

In ages past it was quite common in popular poetry to speak of finding a degree of pleasure or satisfaction in battle. The poem, "Into Battle" by Julian Grenfell, which I have placed as the dedication to this book, is an example of a kind of poetic writing seldom seen today: a poem that speaks of the "joy of battle." Here is another poem with a similar theme:

I shall not die alone, alone,
 but kin to all the powers,
 As merry as the ancient sun
 and fighting like the flowers.
 How white their steel, how bright their
 eyes!
 I love each laughing knave,
 Cry high and bid him welcome to
 the banquet of the brave.
 Yea, I will bless them as they bend
 and love them where they lie,
 When on their skulls the sword I swing
 falls shattering from the sky.
 The hour when death is like a light
 and blood is like a rose--
 You have never loved your friends, my friends,
 as I shall love my foes.

"The Last Hero"
 G.K. Chesterton

All this might be dismissed as mindless romanticizing by those who have never been in combat, but those who *have* been there often express their desire to go back into harm's way. It is politically correct to say that there is nothing good about war and no one who has seen it would want to do it again. This is the obligatory nod that everyone must give when talking about the possibility of going to war and from one perspective it is completely true. But I know many veterans who disagree. Some Vietnam veterans stayed for two, three, four, five and (in one

case that I know of) six tours, and every one of these individuals that I have information about is a perfectly healthy, functional human being who does not appear to have paid any significant psychological cost for their years of combat. They are the sheepdogs that we examine in greater detail later. They *liked* it.

It is not uncommon for police officers who have been in gunfights to compete for a position on their SWAT teams where they have the greatest chance to see even more action, and it is common for SWAT team members to spend decades in those dangerous positions. Many of the SWAT and military special operations forces (SOF) I have worked with are sincere and open when communicating the pleasure they derive from

combat.

These elite SWAT and SOF operators have dedicated themselves to a lifetime of combat because they *like* it and they are good at it. Few sane people would want to be in the trenches of World War I (to name just one example), but many individuals wanted *very* much to go to Afghanistan with the Special Forces to get some payback for the terrorist attacks on September 11. As Bob Posey, a veteran police officer and trainer in Washington state, put it, "They are looking for a just, good fight. Sniffing the breeze, pissing on the trees: being the sheepdog." Or, as Sir Walter Scott put it, they are seeking:

...the stern joy which warriors feel

**"... the stern joy
 which warriors
 feel
 In foemen
 worthy of their
 steel."**

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In foemen worthy of their steel.

I received an E-mail from Monte Gould, a career cop, a SWAT operator and trainer who is also a sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserves. (We met when we were both training the Helsinki Police Department in Finland.) He put it this way when he found out that he was "too old" to be accepted into U.S. Army Special Forces.

Damn the bad luck, I wanted time on target. Trust me I'm like a goddamn peace maker. Every time I show up in the [theater of operations] peace breaks out and I get sent home. I feel like Mother Teresa instead of some kind of action hero. I'm going to start carrying a bible and Jehovah witness handouts. They need me in the Middle East, all hostilities would cease overnight, the Arabs and the Jews would be friends and I would get an express ticket home.

This was my response to him.

There are people who say that no one wants to go to war, and that "A soldier hates war more than anyone." And I'm sure they are sincere. But I know a *lot* of people who would beg to differ. And best I can tell, there ain't nothin' wrong with them.

John Keegan, in his superb, classic book, *The Face of Battle*, stated that, "We must take account of the undoubted willingness of some men at all times to risk, even apparently to enjoy, extreme danger." Keegan used as an example, "Corporal Lofty King" a British commando in World War II. King's commander wrote that "He genuinely enjoyed fighting and looked happiest, indeed inspired, in battle." Keegan says that "Lofty King is a significant figure whose outline can be discerned in the thick of the fighting on many battlefields," comparing Lofty King to the French Lieutenant, Legros, who was nicknamed "the enforcer" at the great gate of Hougomont during the Battle of Waterloo:

...whose power to impose his superior will on his comrades lends support to one's suspicion that, after all, battle is to the strong; that without the presence of the Lofty Kings and the Legros most battlefields would empty of soldiers at the firing of the first salvos.

Keegan goes on to say that, there are:

...moral consolations with which battle compensates the soldier--it would be foolish to deny that there are compensation-for its cruelties: the thrill of comradeship, the excitements of the chase, the exhilaration of surprise, deception and ruse de guerre, the exaltations of success, the sheer fun of prankish irresponsibility.

This is not intended, in any way, to speak ill of those veterans who would violently disagree with these warriors who have found a degree of pleasure in battle. Indeed, those who were willing to point out that "War is hell," in General William Tecumseh Sherman's words, were once the individuals who were being politically incorrect in their time. As Henry Van Dyke put it in a poem about Sherman:

*This is the soldier brave enough to tell
The glory-dazzled world that "war is hell."*

The point here is simply that there are conflicting opinions on this matter

As to the "lets get it over with" attitude, I would submit that this is also a mature, level headed and healthy response. Most people faced with a dirty, unpleasant job that has to be done

would have a similar attitude.

Wanting to go, or wanting to get it over with, I think that either response is fine and it is not for us to judge them. Either way, these are *warriors* who are willing to answer the summons of the trumpet and enter into the realm of combat.

Taking hits and driving on: Do they make them like that anymore?

Once you have made the decision to enter into combat, one of your worst fears is getting injured. Let us confront this fear.

I want to share with you one of my favorite stories of survival, a true tale about a mountain man named Hugh Glass, from back in the early days of mountain expeditions.

Glass was badly mauled by a bear, and it looked like he was not going to make it. The others there that day decided to leave young Jim Bridger with Hugh to wait for him to die. But the old cuss was just too mean to die, and it was a long time before he slipped into a coma. Bridger figured then that Glass was dead, so he dug a shallow grave, piled a few rocks on him, and left.

Hugh Glass was still alive, though, so you can imagine that being buried angered him a bit. After he managed to crawl out of his grave, he worked his way down stream, eventually making it to the Missouri River, where for months he floated along clinging to chunks of wood and living off the land. Finally, he made it to St. Louis, where he told stories about wolves coming up to him and licking maggots off his wounds.

The first thing old Hugh did after he was rested and recovered was to buy a gun (one version of this story says he bought a knife), then he sat back to recover from his ordeal, and to wait. When Jim Bridger and the other men showed up, Hugh caught up with Bridger and held the gun on him. Hugh thought for a while about the situation, and he came to the conclusion that Jim Bridger was too young to die. So he let him go.

Do they make warriors like Hugh Glass anymore? Here is man mauled by a bear, left to die and buried alive. He climbed out of his grave, crawled from Montana to St. Louis, and when he finally got the person in his gun sights who had made his life so miserable, he decided the man was too young to die.

Do they make them like that anymore? Yes, they do. Every day.

Consider a gunman in Florida who shot a law enforcement officer in the eye. The eye popped like a grape, and the officer fell on the ground. Though he had powder burns in his good eye and a bullet in the other, he drew his sidarm and emptied his magazine into the perpetrator. Later at the inquiry, the officer was asked why he fired all the bullets in his gun into the man. He replied, "Because that's all I had!"

The officer may have had a bullet in one eye and powder burns in his other, and he may have been down, but he was definitely not out. Do they make them like that any more?

Consider also Officer Stacy Lim from the Los Angeles Police Department, whose story is legendary among professional police warriors. It began when she pulled into her driveway after an enjoyable evening of softball practice. When Lim got out of her personal car, she was immediately confronted by a group of gangbangers who had followed her with the intent of carjacking her vehicle.

Her first response was to call out that she was a police officer. They responded by firing a .357 magnum round into her chest, which penetrating her heart, and blew a tennis ball-size exit

wound out her back. Stacy Lim stayed in the fight. She not only returned fire, but she also became the aggressor as she pursued the shooter, and shot him four times. The remaining gangbangers very wisely fled for their lives.

After she dealt with her attackers she turned around and headed up her driveway toward her house to call for help. She does *not* recall doing it, but as she was losing consciousness, she stripped the magazine out of her pistol and threw it 20 feet away where it was found the next day, because in the academy she had been taught, "Don't let them use your weapon against you."

Two of the attackers died and Stacy Lim died twice on the operating table. She survived, though, returning to duty eight months later. Today, she still works uniform patrol on the streets of Los Angeles. Do they make them like that any more?

Although Lim was the victim of a surprise attack by deadly predators, she not only stayed in the fight, she took the fight to them. She was victorious because she was both physically and mentally prepared. Lim had a competitive attitude that refused to lose, and she had a plan, a visualized determination to win. Always to win.

Some of the greatest heroes that our nation has seen in years, our law enforcement officers, patrol our streets on a daily basis doing things that make the Old West pale by comparison, heroic deeds that never even make the 5 o'clock news. Such is the case of a decorated Detroit police officer named Jessica Wilson who was shot in the chest and neck with a shotgun at a neighborhood disturbance call. With only seconds of life left, she was able to shoot the assailant with a single shot at 40 feet before she fell. A fireman was on the scene within minutes, but she was already dead.

Warriors like these do not just happen: They are built; they are crafted; they are nurtured every day. Common among so many of them is their ability to suck up gunshot wounds and drive on to accomplish their mission. Read the Medal of Honor citations, and you find that the one commonality in almost all of them is that though the recipients were physically damaged, they drove on. *They drove on.* Shakespeare's King Henry V said, "All things are ready if our minds be so."

If you are shot, step one is, *do not panic.* The fact you are alive to know you are shot is a good sign. Think of it as a very emphatic warning shot. Say to yourself: "I've been better, but I could be worse." Know that a mission, a goal, can keep you going. Okay, you have been hit, so now your immediate goal is to prevent getting hit with another bullet.

Let's say the person who shot you no longer represents a legitimate lawful threat because he has fled, surrendered, or been shot, *or* there are plenty of other people present who can take care of him. Your mission now it to crawl, walk, wiggle, run, writhe or drive to medical support. Get yourself back to medical support so that your friends don't have to expose themselves getting you back to safety. Your friends have better things to be doing at this time. Understand that you can take a bullet through the heart and have five to seven seconds left. What are you going to do with them?

Loren Christensen worked a case when he was assigned to Portland's Gang Enforcement Team where a gangbanger broke into a gun store. As the man exited out the broken front window, he confronted a police officer and raised his newly acquired rifle, but the officer fired first and hit him in the heart. To the officer's amazement, the banger did not die, but ran along the front of the

store, around the corner and continued for another 150 feet before his ripped-open heart terminated its host's life force.

In another case, an officer was wrestling with the husband at a domestic violence call when the man managed to disarm the officer's police baton and commenced beating him with it. Seriously injured from the multiple blows, the officer pulled his firearm and shot the assailant through his heart. The man dropped the baton and ran across the large living room, yanked open the door, and fell dead a few steps out into the hall.

Stacey Lim (the LAPD officer with the bullet through her heart) is living proof that it is entirely possible to survive after being shot in the heart. Some people assume that a headshot will stop them, but we have seen that you can even take a bullet in the eye and keep fighting.

Let's say the person who shot you continues to represent a lawful, legitimate threat to your life, and there is no one there to help deal with him. What are you going to do? Getting back to medical support is not the answer now. Your mission now is to stop him from shooting you again. There is nothing you can do about the bullet in you, but you can stop the next bullet, by shooting him back! It's only fair.

Understand deep in your being that though you are shot, even in the heart or the eye, you can still function: You can call for help, shoot the perpetrator and/or get yourself to safety. Know that with today's incredible medical technology you have a greater chance of surviving than at any other time in history. The key is to stop him from putting any more bullets in you. And in most cases that means killing the SOB who just shot you.

Deterrence and the will to kill

As a cop or a peacekeeper, your job is not to kill, but to first deter and then stop the threat. The most effective way to stop someone is to fire a bullet into his central nervous system. It is up to God and the paramedics as to whether the man dies. Your job is to stop the deadly threat and, unfortunately, the most effective way to do that is to make the threat die. Whether you are a warrior in the Mid East, a peacekeeper in Bosnia or a law enforcement officer patrolling our mean streets, there are rules of engagement in which deadly force can be used under authority. When you do it right, as you have been trained, the threat dies, a possibility you must accept as a warrior.

As a soldier or a marine in active combat, there is far less ambiguity. Your job is to *kill* the enemy. If he surrenders first, that is fine, that is what we *want* and you *will* play by the rules, and accept his surrender. However, the best way to convince him to surrender is to kill sufficient numbers of his friends and leaders. You must accept the fact that your job is to kill.

As a cop, a peacekeeper or a combat soldier, what will you gain by accepting this dirty, nasty, four-letter word: kill? First, you will not respond with panic to a deadly threat. The worst thing in the world is Barney Fife with a bullet in his gun. "Oh God! I might have to kill him!" Is that the right response? No. The correct response is this: "I think I'm going to have to kill this guy. I knew it might come to this some day." By completely accepting the possibility, you maintain control of yourself and are better able to *deter* your opponent. Deterrence is something that law enforcement officers do over and over as peacekeepers in the streets of America, and it is something that soldiers

“Understand deep in your being that though you are shot,, you can still function..”

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do in the volatile streets of foreign lands. When people know that warriors are present, they slow their cars, they do not rob convenience stores, and they do not commit deadly acts in the name of politics and religion. Warriors deter. Their very presence can save lives and stop killing.

Here are two case studies in deterrence: One is a tragedy and the other is a famous success story. First the tragedy.

One summer day in August of 2000, I volunteered my time to train a major city police department that was experiencing a crisis of confidence as a result of a recent, violent incident. A man had fired a rifle at his girlfriend and then fled with officers in close pursuit. The suspect screeched to a stop in a driveway with one police car pulling up behind him, and the other stopping about 50 meters back. The officers in both cars got out and took cover behind their vehicles.

The suspect, armed with a 30-caliber M-1 carbine rifle, began advancing on the closest officers. As he got near their car, the officers shouted, "Police, drop the gun. Police drop the gun. Stop. Stop." The officers in the car that was farthest away shouted to the closer officers, "Shoot him! Shoot him! Shoot him!" But no one shot, and the suspect continued to advance until he moved around the police car and came upon one of the exposed officers. "Don't hurt me," that officer said, setting her weapon on the ground.

What do wolves do to sheep? They rip their throats out. That is what happened in this case. The suspect fired, and the .30-caliber round blew out the officer's spinal cord, leaving her paralyzed from the neck down. Sadly, she died of her wounds two years later. Only after the officer fell, did her partner open fire and drop the suspect.

As a warrior, you might one day face the single most difficult task any person will ever have to face: to decide whether to use deadly force and take a life. Most likely, you will have to make that decision in a split second, in the most toxic, corrosive environment known to man: combat, the realm of the universal human phobia. If you chose to take a life when you should not, *or* if you *fail* to take a human life when you should, a world of hurt will come down on you.

This is not an impossible task; it is a hero's task, a warrior's task. It is immensely difficult, but if we did not have men and women willing to walk out the door and face that challenge every day, within the span of a generation our civilization would no longer exist.

The time to decide whether you can kill another human being is not in the middle of combat. The time to decide, to the utmost of your ability, is right now. Understand that no one can ever be 100 percent certain. We all exist in a state of uncertainty, even those who have been there before do not know for sure whether they can do a good job the next time. But to the utmost of your ability, you must resolve *now*, in your heart and mind, that you *can* kill.

In 2002 I received the following E-mail from a law enforcement officer.

A young man set fire to his X-wife's house... and ran on foot. The officers arriving in the area heard gunshots and reported them on the radio. As I arrived on the scene, the suspect ran out in front of my car, no more than three feet away, shooting at the other officers. For some reason he ignored me, though I was the closest to him. He charged the officers, shooting multiple times; I received two rounds of friendly fire through my front windshield, missing my head by less than a foot.

I drew my weapon and fired four rounds through my

windshield, evidently hitting him at least two times, because he fell to the ground 25 five feet from me. He realized I was the one hitting him and he turned and fired approximately eight rounds into my car. Still sitting, I fired eight more rounds at him until he stopped firing at me. He was hit nine times.

After the shooting, I found out that he had shot [a deputy who had been pursuing him] eight times, killing him. He had also entered a residence and killed an 85-year-old man by shooting him 12 times.

There was absolutely no hesitation in my firing, though I had difficulty drawing my weapon as it was tangled in the seatbelt. But once out and on target, I did my job well. Your lecture "The Bullet Proof Mind" and your book *On Killing* had assisted me in removing all doubt from my mind that I could take a life in defense of myself and others. My lack of hesitation and no second thoughts proved that to me. I have served as a police officer 27 years and although I have come close many times this was my first shooting.

In considering your lecture and book, I had already dealt with the religious aspects of taking a life, and I knew what emotions to expect after the shooting. Your insight into these areas was most helpful to me.

As I attended the deputy's funeral, I found it difficult to grieve for him because I was so glad the funeral was not for me. Because I had considered all this prior to the shooting and because I knew to expect it ... it was much easier to deal with.

There is a growing trend in this country of "active shooters" attempting to take multiple lives quickly. It is important that we train our officers to understand and be prepared for these people, because the only way to survive these incidents is to act without hesitation. They have to be prepared in advance to accomplish this.

It is truly an honor to be of service to warriors such as this, and the greatest service I can provide is to help them prepare, ahead of time, to kill in need be.

Every human on Earth is insecure. Those who can admit it are a little more secure than those who cannot. The finest baseball pitcher in the world and the greatest football quarterback on the planet wake up in the morning, and are not sure if they are going to play a good game. They are determined to do their very best, but they know from experience that they will have good days and bad days. They learn from the bad days and rejoice in the good days, but always they know that they can never be sure. This is simply being human, and it is why we have superstitions. It is why there are baseball players who insist on wearing their lucky socks, actors who never whistle backstage, and why in Vietnam our soldiers would leave the death card on their fallen foes, a symbol feared by the superstitious North Vietnamese. To the utmost of your ability, you must face your insecurity and resolve the issue of using deadly force in your mind. Look deep into your self and ask, "Can I do what my society calls upon me to do?"

Who decides how much force the warrior has to use? Who ultimately makes the decision that deadly force is needed? The suspect does. The enemy does. The threat does. He fights, you fight. When he uses deadly force, you use deadly force. He makes that decision for you. He has the option to surrender, and your job is to respond with what society says is your right and responsibility to do. This is why it is paramount that you resolve

in your mind whether you can do it ahead of time. Only when you know you can respond will you have the ability to truly deter people. That is the great paradox of combat: If you are truly prepared to kill someone, you are less likely to have to do it. That person will look in your eyes and see the steely determination to kill him, and he will be more likely to surrender.

There is a statue of a Texas Ranger in the main lobby of the Hobby Airport in Houston, Texas. He wears a hat, boots, a gun on each hip, and a little tin star. The statue commemorates the Texas Rangers, and it commemorates the warrior spirit.

The story began when the mayor notified the Rangers of a riot in his city and that he desperately needed their help. A couple of hours later, one lonely ranger stepped off the train, the man whose image is now depicted in the airport. Shocked, the mayor asked, "They only sent one ranger?"

The ranger shrugged and replied, "You only got one riot." The big Texas Ranger walked into the middle of the mob wearing his hat, boots, little tin star, the hog legs strapped on each hip, and carrying a shotgun. All it took was one look at this man, and every one of those rioters went home. They left because they had looked into the eyes of a man who was playing the game for real. His posture, his bearing, his demeanor, his voice, his reputation, and his organization all said one thing: He was fully prepared to kill them if that's what the job called for. The rioters knew that the stakes were too high, and they took their marbles and went home. Engraved at the base of that statue in Houston's Hobby Airport are these words: "One riot, one ranger."

Someday I would like to make a statue to the American law enforcement officer, and at its base it will read: "One crime, one cop." Now, an officer, or any warrior, doesn't *want* to be the lone ranger; he wants all the backup he can get. However, if the situation is one in which there is only one lone warrior at the scene, then that can be enough *if* that warrior is armed mentally, emotionally and spiritually. If he has prepared himself and invested himself as a warrior, he will be ready. Here again is the great paradox of combat: When you are truly prepared to kill someone, you are less likely to have to do it.

The will to live

One of your primary goals as a warrior is to train and mentally condition yourself to keep going when you have been shot. You must understand and accept that you might get wounded, and understand deeply and intensely that you will keep fighting until the threat is no longer present. You can do it and you *must* do it. Control and direct the power of your adrenaline.

One law enforcement officer shot a perpetrator five times with his .45-caliber handgun. He was an undercover narcotics officer and had just made a buy from a drug dealer. The backup officers swooped in to make the arrest, only to be met with a hail of gunfire from the drug dealer. What would you do if you were this warrior and suddenly the perpetrator was shooting your friends? You would shoot him, and as a result of that action, you would probably kill him. Remember, it is really up to God and the medics whether he lives or dies. In this case, the undercover officer shot the perp with multiple .45 rounds, killing him. Later, the officer expressed his amazement that it had taken so many

bullets. "I always thought when you hit someone with a .45 they just kind of flew away like on TV. I shot the guy five times before he dropped."

Later, the same officer got into another gunfight. This time the officer got hit and he went down. As he lay there, he says that he thought back on his first shooting where it took five big rounds to drop the perp. The officer said to himself, "Get up! Get up! If he can do it, I can too!"

That is exactly what you need to tell yourself. Every time you hear about a gangbanger sucking up rounds and driving on, every time you hear about some Medal of Honor recipient sucking up

damage and driving on, every time you hear about a cop taking a bullet through the heart and driving on, I want you to say to yourself, "If that person can do it, I can to."

On getting shot

Should a bullet slam into you, what can you expect? Sometimes in the heat of battle warriors are not aware that they have been shot until later. But those who *are* aware of it usually experience the normal stress responses: dry mouth, sweaty palms and a racing heart rate. We know that sometimes our sense of pain can shut down so that tissue wounds do not hurt, but those who have been shot say that bone hits can be extremely painful. While that is important to know, it is also important to understand that no one dies of broken bones.

A law enforcement officer lay on the floor in the back of a bus after being shot twice. One round hit a leg bone and a second went in his chest. From where he lay, he could look under the seats and see the feet of the shooter coming to finish him off.

He said that he was bleeding his life out in this dirty bus and all he could think of was, "Why does the bullet in my leg hurt so bad and this one doesn't hurt at all?" After a moment, the officer realized, as he watched the suspect's feet get closer and closer, that maybe he had something more important to worry about right then. He had become distracted at this critical moment because no one had told him how different types of wounds could hurt. It is all about prior preparation.

You must also be prepared for blood loss. If you get holes punched in your body, blood will come out. On rare occasions, the contents of your intestines may come out, too, but do not worry about that because someone will clean it up. But most of the time *blood* is going to come out. How much? Well, your body holds approximately one and a half gallons of blood, and you can lose 40 percent, over half a gallon, without losing your hydraulics. To see what that much blood looks like, take a half gallon of strawberry milk and pour it on the ground. Yes, it is a large puddle, but tell yourself that that is the volume of blood you can lose and *still* fight. Erase all doubt that you can keep going and keep fighting, and know that if you do stop before you lose that much blood, it is your will that failed, not your body.

Sucking up damage and driving on. *That* is what great warriors do. Consider this narrative of special operations soldiers in Afghanistan, from the online column of that great warrior-author, Col. David Hackworth:

"Can I do what my society calls upon me to do?"

"One of your primary goals as a warrior is to train and mentally condition yourself to keep going when you have been shot".

Earlier, the platoon [1st Platoon of Alpha Company, 1/75th Rangers] had been spread across the battlefield on separate missions. When word came down to find MIA Navy Seal Neil Roberts, the lead element air-assaulted, its chopper shot to smithereens upon landing, and the Rangers and aircrew were stuck on a rocky ridge surrounded by a large, well-dug-in Al-Qaida force.

Because of blistering enemy incoming fire, a 1st Platoon reinforcing element landed by chopper at the base of the mountain, about a mile from the besieged warriors. The 10 men began clawing their way toward the top - loaded down with 100 pounds of kit - on what would prove to be a 5,000-foot, almost-vertical three-hour climb. And throughout this near mission-impossible feat, they were battered by enemy rifle and mortar fire that wounded several of these elite warriors.

When the Rangers got to the top, they busted through the enemy's bunker line and linked up with their surrounded mates. But they soon found themselves waist-high in snow, the thermometer hovering around zero, in an increasingly hotter frying pan - with incoming RPGs, recoilless rifle fire, mortars thumping in and bullets snapping like angry bees across the open plain at 12,000 feet.

An SAS commando who watched the fight said, "These blokes, along with their tactical aircraft and chopper air support, killed a bloody lot of them."

Apart from their own incredible guts, the air support - virtually on top of them - is what kept them alive. If USAF air controller Kevin Vance wasn't on the ground bravely directing the fire, it would have been taps for all these good men.

Ranger Marc Anderson said, "This is where all the training pays off" before catching one with his name on it while bounding toward the enemy.

Ranger Bradley Crose was hit in the head by a round that smashed under his helmet and out the back of his head, and Ranger Matthew Commons went down for the count as well.

Air Force warrior Jason Cunningham was hit by two rounds in the gut and lay out in the bitter cold - slowly bleeding to death.

When the Ranger rifles were shot up, had malfunctioned, or the men ran out of ammo, the Rangers policed up al-Qaida weapons and waded into the fanatics, wasting them with their own bullets.

For almost 18 long, blood-soaked hours, it was often hand-to-hand fighting with knives, pistols and rifle butts. That terrible night, the Rangers were supported by USAF C-130 Specter gunships that, according to an Aussie SAS commando on a nearby knob, lit up the hills around them. "It was bloody amazing, the most beautiful - yet fearsome - sight I'd ever seen," he said.

... those who were hit never faltered, continuing to put heavy fire on the enemy in the fiercest kind of combat and freezing conditions our forces haven't seen since the Korean War.

Right now you have to develop the will and the resolve to

live. Know that if you keep going until medical help arrives, you probably will survive, *if* you stop your attacker from shooting you again. Understand that with every passing day our evacuation, communication, and medical technology progresses by leaps and bounds. Today, warriors survive horrific gunshot wounds that would have been fatal only 10 years ago. *Accept* that you might get hit and *know* that you will survive it.

Consider these anonymously written words found on the wall of a bunker in Saigon: *You've never lived until you've almost died. For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected will never know.*

At the end of the day when you go home and hug your loved ones and taste that meal prepared with love, it will have a flavor the protected will never know. The sheep spend a lifetime eating grass, but you taste the flavor the protected will never know. That may be the warrior's greatest reward.

Fight for it. Fight for it. Fight for it. Never, never give up. Consider this powerful narrative of survival and determination from a great warrior trainer, Pete Solis:

As I was in the process of drawing my weapon and ordering the driver to show me his hands, I stepped to the right instead of stepping back and away from his vehicle, thus placing me in what we refer to as a "fatal funnel." I was no more than two feet from his passenger window and looking into the eyes of a smiling cold-blooded killer... that's when he took advantage of my stepping where I had no business being. While seated in his vehicle, the suspect lunged toward the passenger side firing one of two handguns he had concealed... the first round struck me in my vest, causing me to stumble backwards...

Although I knew the suspect was still firing rounds at me, I no longer could hear the shots. Everything was moving in slow motion and my peripheral vision was nonexistent. All I could see at this point was the driver now standing outside his door with a two-handed grip on a black semiautomatic handgun. The slide was recoiling back and forth in slow motion, ejecting spent rounds over his right shoulder. I knew if I were going to survive this attack, I would have to fight through this state of mind and seek cover immediately.

No sooner had that thought entered my mind that I felt a second round impact my left arm just above the wrist, then a third round strike my left forearm causing me to drop my flashlight. Then another round struck my left thigh.

I fell to my knee, now returning fire at the driver who was still smiling at me as if he were enjoying the target practice. Apparently, several rounds I fired hit their mark and caused the driver to seek cover, as he continued to fire.

I sprinted toward the rear of my car, but just as I was reaching it I felt a bullet impact my left shoulder. I saw the material on my shirtsleeve blow open as the bullet passed through my shoulder and exited the left biceps.

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The gunfight continued with a volley of rounds exchanged with both of us using our vehicles for cover... The wound I had sustained to my left thigh was now pumping blood onto the trunk of my cruiser. Fearing that a major artery may have been struck, I feared that I was probably going to bleed to death in a short time.

A relative calm came over me. I made the decision to end this deadly confrontation now, regardless if I had to take more rounds to do it. The driver was not leaving this parking lot to hurt anyone else. He had been the predator up to this point and now it was my turn...

I dropped the magazine from my weapon and inserted a fresh one. Apparently, he saw the empty magazine hit the ground and figured I was out of ammunition, or maybe he assumed I had succumbed to my injuries and knelt behind my cruiser to die. Regardless the reason, he left his cover and was coming to finish me off. I was now crouched low behind the left rear bumper of my car. I distinctly remember telling myself to wait; wait until he is closer. I could clearly see the driver's feet as he slowly approached. I waited until he got at least three or four feet from the front of my car before I made my move.

Staying low, I lunged from around my car, firing accurately into the suspect's chest and continuing to fire as I advanced. I remember the smile leaving my assailant's face as he stumbled backward toward his vehicle. He turned, gun in hand, and dove over the rear of the car landing out of my sight. He entered and started his car in an attempt to flee. I stumbled forward, firing through the rear windshield of the suspect's vehicle until it came to a stop, and the suspect sat mortally wounded.

Pete Solis now trains warriors world-wide, using his experience to teach others.

Survive! Get on with life, and live it to the fullest, savoring every day. That may be a warrior's greatest reward. As David Revore, Second Chance Body Armor Save #777 put it:

That short span of five minutes... felt like the longest five minutes in time. Those five minutes have given me the new perspective that Christmas is every day. It has been said that we only get one spin at life, but once in a while we may get another. What we do with it will determine whether or not it is deserved.

Perchance to Dream

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams.

Tennyson

After you have been in a combat situation it is normal to have nightmares about that experience. Slowly but surely those nightmares should fade away. Years later they may pop up again, sometimes for no obvious reason, and that too appears to be a fairly common part of the healing process. But there is a kind of dream not associated with any real world event. I call it the "universal warrior nightmare."

The most common version of the universal nightmare is to dream that you cannot get your gun to fire. The gun jams, the bullets dribble out the end of the barrel, or they bounce impotently off the bad guy's chest. I have interviewed many World War II and Vietnam veterans who had nightmares that their rifles do not work. I asked an audience of SEALs and Green Berets who had just returned from Afghanistan how many had ever had the gun-doesn't-work dream, and nearly all of them raised

their hands. When I ask that question of my law enforcement audiences, usually around half of them raise their hands.

The dream can take other variations. People who have spent time training in the martial arts and officers who train extensively in defensive tactics, might consistently dream that their techniques or their blows do not work. People who have been in traffic accidents may dream that their brakes don't work. Usually, though, it is the gun that fails.

This is called a performance anxiety dream. You are a warrior and when you go into danger it is reasonable to be worried, and the puppy, your midbrain, your unconscious mind, sends a message in your dreams that says, "Boss, I'm worried." Your handgun, rifle or empty-hand fighting techniques are representative of your ability to deal with the daily danger. "Boss," your puppy whines, "I'm afraid it might not work. I'm worried." Well, who would not be worried?

There is peace in simply understanding that you are not alone, that these kinds of dreams are common among warriors. Many of your brother and sister warriors have such nightmares and there is nothing wrong if you are having them now or you get them in the future. But there is one thing you can do that has helped many warriors to make the dreams go away: train. The puppy is worried, so to calm him you teach him a few new tricks or polish the old ones. Train hard so that he feels confident.

I know an officer who is a member of one of our nation's most elite SWAT teams. He goes into harm's way on a daily basis and is confronted by deadly force encounters on a weekly basis. He tells me that every six weeks, like clockwork, his nightmares return. To make them go away, he goes out to the firing range on a Saturday and fires hundreds of rounds. He particularly likes to shoot at steel targets, the kind that produce an audible clank when struck and then drop down. "My weapon turns into a magic wand. Wherever I point it, things fall down, and my nightmares go away."

For some people, the nightmares pass when they are no longer in danger. However, if the nature of your work is that every day you face combat, or the possibility of combat, one possible solution is to train.

The midbrain or the mammalian brain truly is like having a "puppy" inside. The only way to communicate to your puppy is to train him. I have two dogs, a poodle and a German shepherd: my elite, crack security team. I cannot talk to my dogs, and tell them, "All right, I'm going to be gone for a week, so you guys are in charge. You've got the front door, and you've got the back door." It's not like Scooby Doo where they say "Rr-all right boss!" and go do it. In the real world the only way you can communicate to your dog is to train him. The same is true with the puppy inside.

The one quality all good police dogs have in common is confidence, verging on cockiness. This is because they have been highly trained and they *know* that there is nothing the world can throw at them that they cannot handle. Have you ever seen a person that just exudes confidence under stress? You can't fake it, it is a product of training and experience. If you are having performance anxiety dreams, it may mean that the puppy doesn't have that confidence, and the only sure way to get it is through training. The warrior masters his realm. He does not flee from his fear, he conquers it.



**“You can’t
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