

CHAPTER 6

TRANSITION TECHNIQUES

In battle, when a combat soldier closes with the enemy to within small-arms and grenade range, and he has exhausted his ammunition or his weapon fails to fire, the fluidity of the battle may dictate that he will become engaged in hand-to-hand combat.

6-1. COMBAT SCENARIOS

In some combat scenarios, innocent noncombatants may be present. Firing of small arms, grenades, and so on, would needlessly endanger them. Therefore, the soldier may need to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat in such situations. In other scenarios, the enemy may make a surprise attack at close quarters or confront the soldier in an area where firearms are either out of reach or impractical to use.

6-2. BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RANGES

An imaginary sphere of defense extends all-round a soldier and spans the length of his arms. In hand-to-hand combat, the space and distance between opponents, known as the *interval gap*, is the primary factor in the soldier's ability to interpret and react to the enemy's movement. Within the interval gap is a zone of safety, *the reactionary gap*, which allows time for the soldier's reaction to the enemy's movement.

a. The average reactionary gap to an unarmed attacker is 6 feet—that is, the zone of safety that allows him time to observe and to react to an attack from an unarmed opponent. The average reactionary gap to an attacker armed with a weapon is 10 feet, plus the length of the weapon.

b. A soldier must be able to maintain constant control of his sphere of defense by interpreting the timing and rhythm of the enemy's movements and the interval gap during the attack. Having control gives him an opportunity to bridge the gap and enter the enemy's sphere of defense at will. *Timing* and *distance* are the keys to controlling the situation.

c. In hand-to-hand combat, an attacking enemy has only one intent—to kill his opponent. To survive, the combat soldier must not allow the enemy to penetrate his sphere of defense. He must stay mentally alert and be aware of an all-round perimeter of defense. He must visualize the nine basic angles of attack. His best reaction to the enemy is to strike first or counterattack before the enemy has a chance to develop his offensive. Surprise increases the chances of success. The soldier must be physically mobile, react to the enemy's movement with the proper response, and counterattack according to the enemy's rhythm, timing, and distance. He must also control the tempo of the fight with consecutive and successful attacks, seizing the momentum and winning. A memory aid is, "Win or Die!"

d. When the enemy bridges the soldier's interval gap, the soldier must defend his personal perimeter. He has six options.

(1) **Avoid the attack.** This option calls for the soldier to disengage by increasing the separation and by staying out of range.

(a) He can retreat to influence the enemy to pursue, then counterattack when his position is more favorable.

(b) He can move his body out of the line of attack of the enemy or his weapon. A simple, economical, and effective reaction to a straight-line attack is to sidestep off the angle of attack at a 45-degree angle. Then, the soldier can penetrate the enemy's sphere of defense at an offset angle. He is now in a position where he is both safe and strong, but the enemy's vital targets are exposed and his balance is weakened.

(2) **Lead the force of the attack.** This option involves receiving the enemy's attack and making him extend or travel farther than he intended. To take control of the attack, the soldier uses his own weight and body mass and the enemy's onrushing weight to cause the enemy to lose his balance.

(3) **Redirect the force.** The soldier changes the enemy's direction of attack by directing it off its original line or angle. This causes openings in the enemy's defense so the soldier can counterattack.

(4) **Absorb the force.** In this option, the soldier receives the enemy attack, but he absorbs the impact so that the effect is harmless. The enemy is deceived into thinking his attack is successful, and his momentary lapse in defense allows the soldier to react with the right counterattack.

(5) **Meet force with force.** The soldier can meet the incoming attack and burst through the enemy's defense by sheer brute force. When using this option, an effective reaction is to step off the line of attack just enough to avoid being struck and meet the enemy with a suitable body weapon (or other weapon if available). The two forces meet with combined body masses in motion, but the enemy is damaged. A superior mental attitude (the will to survive) is essential for the soldier to accomplish this option.

(6) ***Use the momentum of the force against the attacker.*** With this option, the hand-to-hand fighter uses the attacker's momentum against him to gain control of his balance or to expose weaknesses in his defense. The soldier can add his own force to that of the attacker to increase the power and damage effect.

e. A soldier must develop the intuitive ability to change counterattack techniques according to his range from the enemy—that is, long, medium, or close range. He is then more likely to sense weaknesses in the defensive sphere of his opponent and to respond instinctively with the most effective body movement and weapon for the range—moment by moment. The soldier using any of these six options, or combinations of them, to react to an attack with proper timing and distance, as well as swift counterattack will emerge victorious in a hand-to-hand confrontation.