

**YOUR  
SILENT  
PARTNER**



SPECIALLY PRINTED FOR

*John E. E.*  
HAMDEN, CONN.

# YOUR SILENT PARTNER

A BOOKLET ON KNIFE FIGHTING

*prepared by*

*John Ek*



JOHN EK REGISTERED COMMANDO KNIVES

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contained in this booklet.*

## A Word About John Ek

John Ek is another American putting all he's got into winning this war by giving our boys superior equipment with which to fight. He'd be with you fellows in the U. S. Army if it weren't for the fact that years ago he got his hand crushed in an auto accident. Uncle Sam took a look and told him he'd better stay home and do what he could for the war effort here. Johnny isn't the kind of an American who is satisfied to string along with the bunch. He wanted to feel that he was doing his utmost for this war we are in. The result is that today he is putting in sixteen hours a day turning out his John Ek Commando Knives, because, as he has been told time and again, "the boys can always use GOOD fighting knives".

Being a scoutmaster and a Connecticut State Guardsman have opened his eyes to the usefulness of hunting and fighting knives. Shortly after his State Guard bayonet and rifle training almost three years ago, Ek told me that he felt the bayonet was too cumbersome a weapon for hand-to-hand combat when removed from the rifle. This started him thinking and asking questions and he made up his mind that he would experiment until he developed the knife for the job he intended. I doubt that there is a

book on modern knife fighting in this section of the country that he hasn't read. What he couldn't find in books he got straight from the soldiers and sailors themselves. He decided one thing before he had gone very far and that was that this knife couldn't be "just another hunting knife", but had to be a weapon made by hand to exacting specifications and so in January 1942, Ek produced his first knife.

The outgrowth of all this is that today in his modern shop you can see real craftsmen at work producing knives that he knows and we know will do the job. The blades are seven inches long and are made of top quality, tempered steel buffed to a mirror finish. The handles are of rugged Rock Maple which defies checking. Molded, non-corrosive rivets hold the handle firmly to the blade. The treated, top-grain leather sheaths were designed with one thought and that was accessibility.

Despite the enthusiastic reception his knives have been given Ek still reads, asks questions, and experiments in the hope of building an even finer knife. His one thought always is to give you men as good a knife as he would want if he had been able to go with the army.

Stephen E. Madigan,  
Captain, Inf., C.S.G.

## Introduction

This booklet has been prepared for and only for you men in the armed services. The information relating to the technique of knife fighting has been included at the request of my friends now in the war zones. Although this booklet is small, it is my sincere hope that it may be of some use to you who are carrying the load in this war. If it teaches you but one small thing which will help save your life, the efforts we have expended in its preparation will certainly have been more than justified.

*John Ek*

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JOHN EK KNIVES ARE ON EVERY  
FIGHTING FRONT IN THE WORLD

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The Military Service Publishing Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Copyright owners of Major Rex Applegate's book, *Kill or Get Killed*, for permission to use extensive quotations from this fine book.

Howard Curtis and Volney Barchard, for their help in the general preparation of this booklet.

*Through a valley of blood and guts I  
crawled, fifty yards of HELL! A silent mo-  
ment, a pause—my heart pounding my  
chest to pieces, my lungs screaming for  
breath . . . The flash of my knife, the sick-  
ening scrunch of live steel in dying flesh  
and bone, a slashed jugular — — blood,  
BLOOD, BLOOD and death, glorious  
death to a yellow skinned, yellow souled  
Son of the Rising Sun . . . . .*

## Knife Fighting Technique

The knife, as we know, is probably the oldest of all protective weapons with the exception of the rock and club of the cave men of prehistoric times. Early knives were crude affairs fashioned from the stones of the earth. As man's intelligence increased, the Stone Age knives were replaced with the basic knives of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Today with modern steel processing the knife has been developed to the point of perfection. It is now a precision made instrument designed for a specific use.

Utility and fighting knives for the services must have all the good qualities of the common hunting knife and the bayonet. These knives must be extremely sharp yet be able to resist the shock of combat fighting without breaking. To accomplish this I have selected cold rolled steel, which, in its original state, is very flexible. By a process known as carburization it is possible to harden the outer surface of this metal to a glass hardness, yet leave the inside with some of the original qualities of the untreated steel. By doing this one can see that a rigid, keen blade may be produced which will resist breakage to a very high degree.

In addition to the blade, consideration must be given the other components of the knife. For one, the handle must be made of material which will resist checking. I have selected Rock Maple and have been unable to find anything which will surpass it. Of equal importance is the manner in which the handle is fastened to the blade. I have been successful in this score by using a non-rusting metal rivet which is fused to the blade and handle. The final part of knife fighting equipment is the specially

treated sheath which I have designed for split-second withdrawals.

With all these qualities molded together into a scientifically balanced knife there is but one thing more and that is how to use your knife. From Major Rex Applegate's book, *Kill or Get Killed* I quote the following material which I sincerely believe will be of great value to you men who will *HAVE* to use your knives when the time comes.

"As the knife is ideal for close quarter work, in the majority of cases in which it is used, the victim will not see it coming until it is too late. It will usually be used in total or semi-darkness. Thus proper knife technique begins at close quarters when the blade has been drawn for killing. It may be used because it is noiseless and silence is desirable, or it may be used when ammunition for firearms is gone. In any event, the proper approach in close combat utilizes if possible the element of surprise. Carry the knife in the right hand and a handful of dirt in the left. Throw the dirt in the opponent's eyes and stick him in the stomach. Such tactics are certainly not orthodox, but anything to disturb your opponent's mental and physical balance, distract his attention, or confuse his vision, is certainly applicable when he can see the blade coming."

"There are definite psychological considerations in regard to knife fighting which pertain to both the user and the enemy. In the first place, unless the knife is considered a personal weapon by the individual, such as is common in the case of certain racial groups, the untrained user will have a noticeable aversion to thinking of the knife as a weapon to use in combat. This is especially true of the ordinary American soldier who would much rather use his fists in close combat fighting than a knife, be-

cause generally speaking the knife is a little used weapon in civilian life. This affords a very good reason why it is important to train our personnel in using a knife.

This psychological barrier must be overcome and the soldier must achieve skill in handling the knife as a weapon. The average American doughboy when shown a fighting knife for the first time, will have an aversion to its use as a killing implement. This same feeling is apparent in preliminary stages of bayonet training. However, once that infantry man has run the bayonet course and has used the bayonet on dummies, the killing instinct becomes aroused to the point where he has confidence in the weapon and is not adverse to using it. The same thing applies to knife training and the same result will be obtained if individuals are taught to use the knife properly and dummies which can be slashed and cut are used in the course of instruction.

An excellent example of the psychological effect of the knife on enemy troops occurred during the early days of the Lybian campaign against the Italians. Native troops on the allied side were particularly skilled in the use of the knife. They were also excellent stalkers. It was the practice along a certain sector for these natives to slip out into the desert and crawl into the ranks of the sleeping Italians where the knife was used to slit the throat of one of the group only. Upon awakening, the other soldiers seeing a dead comrade with his throat slit would be extremely shaken. This contributed to a general lowering of Italian morale, and in the long run contributed a great deal to their surrender.

To the untrained man, the appearance of a knife in the hands of an enemy causes panic. This is heightened by the use of a bright, flashing blade in

place of a blade of blued steel. There is a definite advantage to the attacker who uses a bright blade instead of a darkened one. The knife with the darkened or blued blade is in reality not much advantage because in a very short time, due to sharpening, wear in the sheath and other places, the blueing wears off, leaving it bright."

Applegate says the proper method of attack in the open, where the opponent can see you is to "attack from a crouch with the left hand forward and the knife held with the handle across the palm of the right, close to the body. The left hand will act as a guard and a foil or parry, which will help in getting the opening for the slash or thrust. The left hand may also be used to distract his attention by waving it in his face, or by making sudden darting motions toward him." "When the man is in the crouch with his left hand forward to parry, he is in a position of extreme mobility, because his knees are flexed and he is in perfect balance. In the crouch he is also protecting his vital mid-section and throat area from possible vital thrusts by his opponent who might likewise be armed with a knife. He is also in a position where he can possibly foil the usual knife defenses, if this opponent is unarmed, such as a chair, a club, or any other object which may be used to strike or to throw.

A man when attacked from the front with a blade has two spots which you instinctively protect. They are the throat and the stomach, or the abdominal section. Perhaps the reason that he instinctively protects these two areas is that they are easy to reach, but in any event, the psychological effect of a knife wound in these areas, regardless of whether it is serious or not, is so great that the victim is usually momentarily mentally incapacitated. The throat area is

susceptible from either the thrust or the slash, the thrust being most effective when driven into the hollow at the base of the throat just below the Adam's apple. A thrust there into the jugular vein or slash on either side of the neck, cutting the arteries which furnish the blood to the brain results in extreme loss of blood and death in a very short time. Thrusts in the abdominal area which can be combined with the slash as the knife is withdrawn have a great shocking effect upon the individual and usually incapacitate him to the point where another blow can be given with the weapon before he has a chance to recover. A deep wound in the abdominal area will cause death if unattended, but is much slower than a good thrust in the throat area. The heart is, of course, a vital spot for the thrust, but the protection of the ribs makes it more difficult to hit. In some cases, knife thrusts directed toward the heart have been stopped by the ribs and the point of the knife broken off by the bony structure without causing a vital wound. Usually, however, the blade will slide off the rib and go into the vital area. The heart thrust is, of course, immediately fatal.

It is possible to get an effective slash across the sides of the throat from the rear, but one of the most effective knife blows in the rear of the victim is that delivered in the kidney or small of the back area. Penetration here in the form of a deep thrust will cause great shock, internal hemorrhage, but not necessarily death. This back or kidney thrust is best used in the sentry attack. The vital areas are still the throat, heart, and abdominal sections, and all other knife thrusts and slashes should be preliminary to the vital killing stroke delivered to these areas. The slash can be effectively used to sever the tendons on

continued on page fourteen



NEW HAVEN REGISTER—NOVEMBER 7, 1943

"Whether a Nazi's throat or a Jap's needs slitting, the above Bomber Squad is well equipped through the generosity of John Ek of Hamden, Conn. The bomber crew shown above, stationed at a base somewhere in New England in preparation for a secret mission, sent out a call for commando knives, and Mr. Ek, who makes 'em, obliged with a dozen on the house.

The knife is not balanced for throwing since Commando Experts told Mr. Ek: "after you've thrown your knife you're unarmed; what then?"

The bomber boys, who claim they don't themselves know where they are going (neither did Jimmy Doolittle's men) wanted some knives but discovered they aren't issued to anyone but Marines. Hence the appeal which was picked up by Oscar Monrad of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce and translated into action through Mr. Ek."



the inside of the wrist. This is most effective against a person who is trying to protect himself from the knife and has his arm outstretched to do so. This slash renders the hand useless. A slash across the large muscle of the biceps has the same effect. A slash on the inside of the thigh or arm will cut arteries, and will also incapacitate if delivered deep enough. The slashes of these areas, in addition to disabling your opponent, cut various veins and arteries and if left unattended, will cause death from loss of blood."

After learning the vulnerable spots, Applegate says to "take a real knife and practice manipulating it facing a dummy. This dummy can be of an old pair of coveralls filled with straw or any other suitable replica of a man's body which has arms and legs. Practice slowly at first executing thrusts and slashes always from the crouch; speed up the tempo as practice goes along and verbally give him spots to hit as he practices. About six hours of such practice will give the student an extreme amount of confidence in his weapon and a skill in its use which will place him well above the average knife wielder.

To cover the various places in which the knife is carried, let us say first that it should be carried in a place where the bearer can with the least possible effort and with the most speed draw it from its sheath. This place where he carries the weapon may vary greatly due to racial and local custom and the type of garment which the knife carrier wears.

Knives have been carried successfully in the following places: in a sheath at the side, down the back of the neck, up the sleeve, stuck in the top of a boot or legging, with the sheath sewn inside the front pocket, under the lapel of a suit coat, in the crown of a hat, between the belt and the trousers, strapped

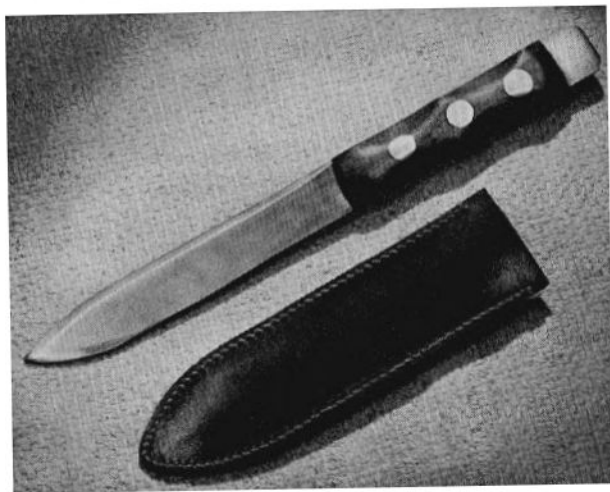
to the inside of the thigh beneath the trouser leg, in a sheath sewn diagonally across the chest, on a vest, and in any other place combining both concealment and the element of surprise to the advantage of the user. As in the carrying of small arms, there is no one best place to carry the knife. Each individual has his own ideas, but once a place has been decided upon, let the knife user carry it there constantly and practice its draw from that location, so that he will be able to use it with the greatest speed and with as much instinctive movement as possible.

With these instructions to go by and six or more hours of hard practice in the execution of these instructions, I feel certain that you men will be able to handle any Jap or German who may get in your way. The importance of practice cannot be over-emphasized.

One parting bit of advice on the care of your knife:

- 1—Keep your knife in its sheath at all times, and never carry it in your belt unsheathed.
- 2—Don't, under any circumstances, throw your knife. Let the vaudeville man do this, as it's not practical in warfare. Once you have thrown your knife you are unarmed, and then what? Throwing a knife will damage the blade and might even break it.
- 3—Keep the blade sharp at all times by drawing it edge first over an oil stone. Keep the stone moistened with thin oil or saliva.
- 4—Treat your knife as you do your rifle—keep it clean and polished at all times. You never know when it may save your life.

In conclusion let me quote Sergeant Rountree of the United States Marines in a "Boot Training" lecture—"Let the other guy die for his country. You live for yours."



(Unretouched Photo)

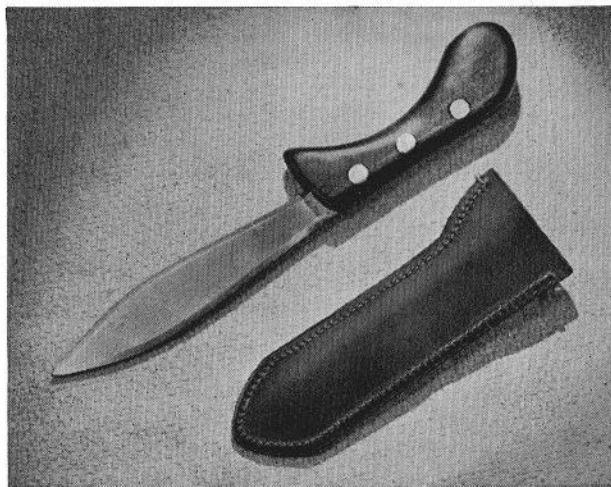
Style 1 (shown above). This most popular knife has a blade 7 inches long and 1 inch wide with a double edged point. The deep finger grip depressions on the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inch Rock Maple handle assure a quick, firm grip. The exposed butt end is used for an up-stroke and is handy for opening field ration cans. This style does not have any guard to interfere when knife is worn under clothing. The overall length of this fine knife is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches. All knives are furnished with hand made leather sheaths.

Style 3 (not illustrated). This knife is the same as above except it has a bolo style handle as shown on the knife on page 19. This knife, if dropped overboard, will sink with a zig-zag motion which gives a chance of recovery.



(Unretouched Photo)

Style 2 (pictured above). This beautiful knife has a double edged blade as contrasted with the single edge of style 1. The 7 inch blade with the finger grip handle gives one of the finest handling knives we have ever made. As in all our knives, the steel blade runs through the handle giving the strongest possible construction. The overall length is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches. All our knives are supplied with hand made leather sheaths.



(Unretouched Photo)

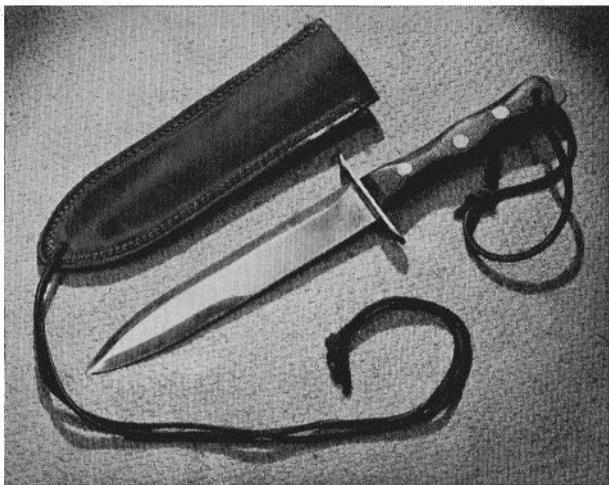
Style 4 (pictured above). This is our New Guinea Brush Knife. I designed this knife at the request of some of our servicemen fighting in the South Pacific jungles. The 7 inch double edged blade, which tapers from 1 inch at the hand fitted Bolo handle to  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches at the wide part of the blade, is most useful for cutting brush and jungle undergrowth. The  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inch Rock Maple handle is bond to the blade by our special rust-proof, fused rivet process. This knife, as all others, is completely hand made. Leather sheaths are supplied with all of our knives.



(Unretouched Photo)

Style 5 (Illustrated above). This is our Navy Knife. We have named it this because the boys at sea like this style for cutting ropes fast as well as fighting. This knife, if dropped overboard, will zig-zag to the bottom giving chance of recovery. The blade is 7 inches long and one inch wide. The bolo handle is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long with the steel of the blade running right to the butt. Leather sheaths are supplied with all our knives.

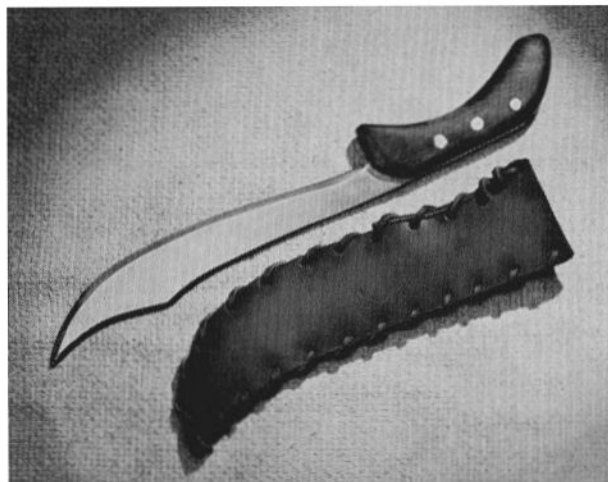
Style 9 (not illustrated). Named by us, our Marine Knife. This is the same as the knife above except it has a style 1 handle with a 1 inch extended butt.



(Unretouched Photo)

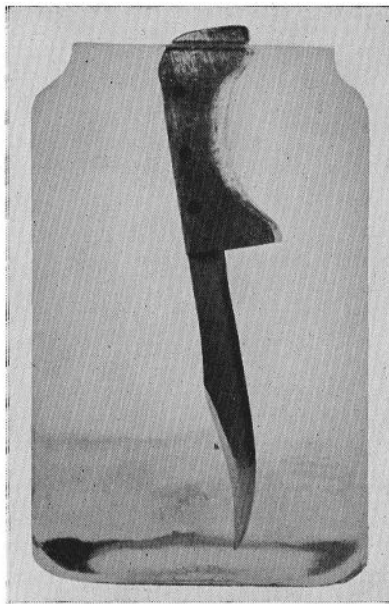
Style 6 (Illustrated above). This hilt knife is a beauty. The blade is 7 inches long and the overall measurement of the knife is 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The 1 inch exposed butt is just the thing for an upstroke to lay your opponent out or else to open a can of your field ration. The rawhide thong in the handle eliminates the possibility of dropping the knife. The hand made leather sheath also has a leather thong for a leg tie.

Style 7 (not illustrated). Is identical to the above knife except it has a double edged blade.



(Unretouched Photo)

Style 8 (Illustrated). You can understand after just one look why we have named this our Paratrooper Knife. The saber type blade is ideal for hacking jungle undergrowth, parachute cords or any Jap who may get in your way. The blade of this weapon is 9 inches long and the handle a just-right 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. With each knife is supplied a hand made, rawhide strung leather sheath.



(Unretouched Photo)

Style 10 (Illustrated above). This knife is truly sensational—IT FLOATS! The  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inch tempered steel blade runs through to the end of the Bolo handle. The 7 inch blade is 1 inch wide and has a  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inch handle. If dropped in water the handle of this beautiful knife will float about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches above the surface giving plenty of opportunity for recovery. Packed with this knife is either our deluxe leather sheath or our new Plastek sheath. This knife is an exclusive John Ek development with all rights reserved.

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