

HOW TO FIGHT LIKE A JAP



World War II Japanese Bayonet Fighting

JAPANESE BAYONET TECHNIQUE

The following is an article from the Volume 2, #5 January 1944 edition of the American Intelligence Bulletin. It is translated from the Japanese regulations on bayonet training. No other army trained so much on the bayonet. Ironically, the Japanese bayonet fighters did not do well against their American adversaries. Numerous after-action reports tell of the poor performance of the Japanese in close combat. Compare the Japanese methods with those taught to Allied troops.

Information of this sort is valuable to the military historian and military miniature maker, both of whom strive for accurate information and representation.

This article is reprinted for informational purposes only. Anyone trying these techniques does so at his own risk.

INTRODUCTION

Japanese training regulations dealing with the technique of using the bayonet are presented below. Although reports to date from theaters of operations show that, as a rule, the individual Japanese soldier has not been very adept at bayonet fighting, all our intelligence sources indicate that the Japanese place considerable emphasis on bayonet training.

THE JAPANESE REGULATIONS

a. Guard Position

The regulations give the following specific instructions for this position: Face the opponent and look into his eyes.

With the toes of the right foot pointing to the right, take a half step with the left foot, toes pointing toward the opponent; bend the knees slightly and keep the body straight (see figure 1).

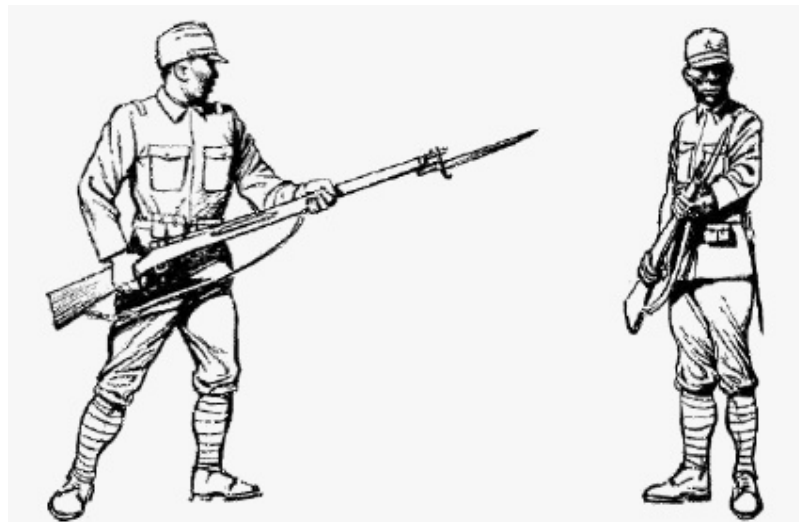


Figure 1: Guard Position

At the same time, throw the rifle with the right hand so that its weight leans toward the left and drops forward. With the left hand held a trifle above the belt line, grasp the rifle just in front of the lower band. With the right hand, palm to the left, grasp the small of the stock, keeping the protruding part between the forefinger and the middle finger. Hold the right fist against the side of the hip. Hold both arms in a natural manner, slightly bent. Point the bayonet at the opponent's eyes.

While Moving Forward. Press lightly with the toes of the rear foot and advance forward with the front foot, following quickly with the rear foot.

While Moving Backward. Execute in exactly the opposite manner from the forward.

The advantages of these movements are that:

(a) balance can be maintained easily, with the soldier ready for instant movement in any direction;

(b) the knees are not strained; and both feet are moved close to the ground, and the toes are always in contact with the ground.

b. Basic Thrust

The basic thrust is a movement executed by driving the bayonet in a straight line to any opening in the body from a crossing position of the rifles, opponents facing each other (see fig 2).

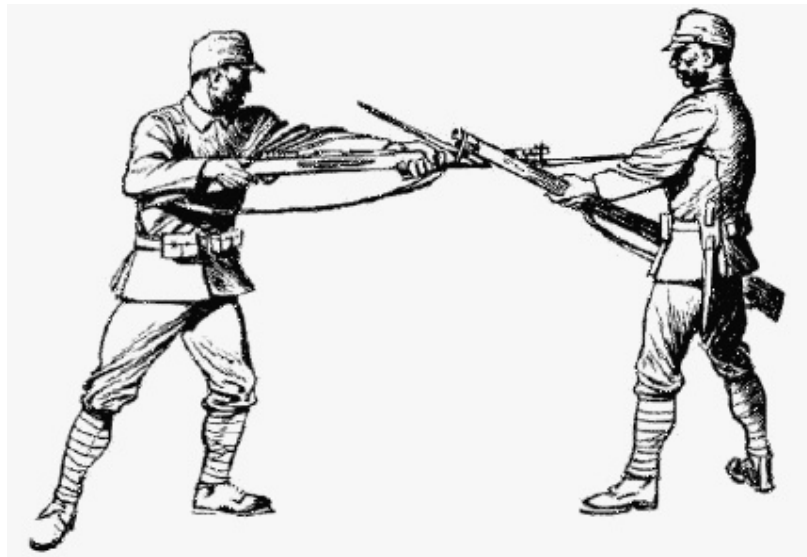


Figure 2: Position for Basic Thrust

The instructor gives the command of "Bear Left" from the crossing position, and the thrust is executed by carrying out the following instructions:

Execute the thrust from the "On Guard" position by stepping firmly with the right foot and then quickly advancing the left foot. At the same time, with both hands grasping the rifle firmly, raise the right hand to the lower front part of the right breast,

raise the left hand forward and a little higher than the right, and bend the waist a trifle; during this movement, drive the bayonet forcefully, with the left hand extended, in a straight line at the opening of the instructor's body. While both legs move forward close to the ground, step with the left foot flat so that it will carry the weight of the body, and quickly move the right leg to the proper position. After executing the thrust, return swiftly to "On Guard".

When the bayonet fighter executes his thrust, the instructor will move his left hand slightly to the left from the crossing position. He moves backward with the thrust and receives it on his body. Then he returns immediately to "On Guard".

Successive basic thrusts are movements in which the thrust is executed several times in succession. In executing these movements, the instructor will give a command of "Rear Left" from the crossing position.

Successive thrusts are executed swiftly. After each thrust, the bayonet fighter retreats, but recovers immediately. Even if he believes that the distance and timing are not just right, the fighter must always try to thrust with determination. If the thrust cannot be executed immediately, he should not give his opponent an advantage. The fighter should be alert for distance and timing, and, at the opportune moment, he should thrust with determination.

The instructor, in order to comply with the main points of reaching the thrust, will move backward swiftly with each thrust, according to the *willfulness of the thrust, and allow the bayonet fighter to thrust his body. Then, as the bayonet fighter becomes more competent, the instructor should vary and lengthen the timing and distance so as to give the fighter practice.

c. Other Types of Thrusts

In executing movements of the bayonet, the different types of thrusts are: side-step thrust, low body thrust, body-contact thrust, knock-off thrust, and parry thrust.

(1) ***Execution of Side-step Thrust.*** To execute the side-step thrust, place the bayonet on the right or left of the opponent's bayonet. Lower the bayonet point by bending both knees and, at the same time, move to the right or left, step in quickly, and drive the bayonet forcefully into the opponent's throat or upper body. Guide the bayonet to the target through the upper part of the opponent's left hand.

Common errors: (a) the tendency to lower the bayonet point too much: and (b) the tendency to withdraw the rifle: a move which gives the opponent an advantage.

(2) ***Execution of Low Body Thrust.*** Execute this thrust in the same manner as the side-step thrust, except that your target is the lower part of the body and you guide the bayonet to the target through the lower part of the opponent's left hand.

Common errors: (a) a scooping-up motion accompanying the thrust, preventing a straightforward penetration; (b) loss of balance, caused by too long a step or improper movement (rear foot not following properly) and giving away your intentions before the thrust.

(3) ***Body-contact Thrust.*** This movement, executed with great speed and power, unbalances the opponent through body contact. Without losing balance or advantage, the bayonet fighter, in executing this thrust, holds the rifle close to his body, with the bayonet point facing slightly to the right; presses his right foot firmly on the ground, and with his abdomen strained firmly, thrusts upward to the opponent's body.

Common errors: (a) loss of balance and (b) slow recovery.

(4) ***Knock-off Thrust.*** This is an offensive blow designed to create an opening by knocking the opponent's bayonet out of the way. The bayonet fighter makes a movement which is both forward and lateral. He hits his opponent near the left fist to knock his bayonet to the right, left, or downward. When an opening is created, he executes his thrust.

Common errors: (a) too much strength put in the left hand, thereby making it difficult to execute a continuous thrust; and (b) failure in the lateral movement to move first the foot on the shifting side.

(5) ***Parry Thrust.*** This is an offensive blow, delivered while in the crossing position and designed to create an opening by pushing away the opponent's bayonet. It is executed in the same manner as the knock-off thrust.

(6) ***Execution of Counterthrust to Parries.*** Counter the opponent's parries by parrying his bayonet to the right or left, and create an opening for a counterthrust.

(7) ***Execution of Counterattack.*** To counter an enemy executing a thrust, follow the direction given for the knock-off thrust, beat the opponent's bayonet out of the way, and execute the counterthrust.

To counter an opponent who is trying to knock off or parry, follow the direction given for the side-step thrust. Just at the moment the opponent executes a thrust, evade it quickly and counterthrust.

d. Close Combat

The purpose of close combat training is to learn the main points of close-in fighting, thereby gaining self-confidence. Securing the initiative by attacking suddenly is the secret of success in this phase of fighting.

(1) ***Vulnerable Parts of the Body.*** When hitting the opponent with the rifle, the most vulnerable parts of the body are the elbows, fists, feet, knees, face, head, solar plexus, sides of the body, testicles, and shin.

(2) ***Execution of Rifle Blows.*** Hit the opponent's head and face by swinging the rifle up and driving home the blow (see fig. 3a) or, by following the direction given for the body-contact.

When the opponent attempts to drive home a blow, advance and block the opponent's rifle with the left arm; at the same time, counter with the right fist or right knee (see fig. 3c).

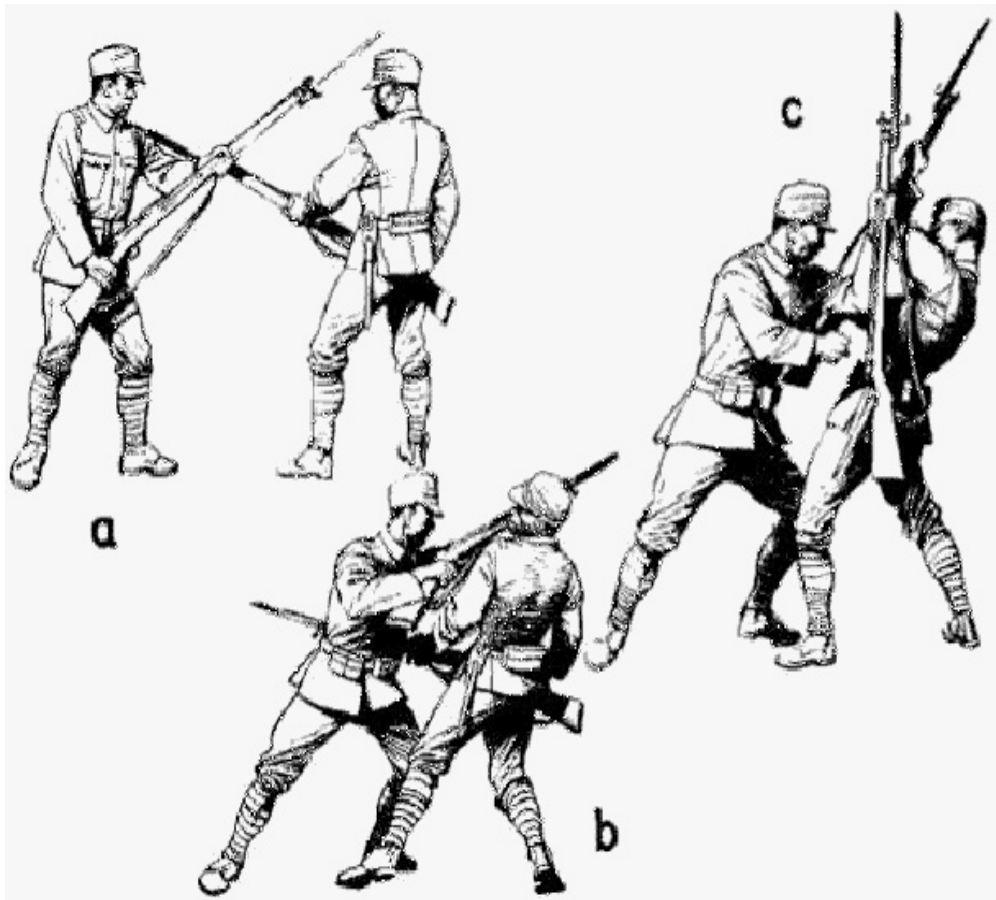


Figure 3: Executing Blows with Rifle

(3) **Execution of Butt Stroke.** To execute the butt stroke from the guard position, step in with the right foot or step back with the left foot, so that the body is sideways to the opponent; at the same time, draw in the left hand, extend the right hand, and drive the butt diagonally upward through an arc to the opponent's face or the side of his body (see fig. 4).

To counter the butt stroke, step in quickly to block the stroke, and, at the same time, hit the opponent with your fist or knee.



Figure 4: Butt Stroke

(4) ***Execution of Right Punch.*** To deliver the right punch. Release the rifle from the right hand; at the same time, step in with the left foot forward, and punch the opponent in any vital opening of his body (see fig. 5).

To counter the right punch, follow the direction given for countering rifle blows; (see subparagraph 2).



Figure 5: Execution of Right Punch

(5) ***Instructions for Hitting with the Foot or Knee.*** To hit the opponent with the foot or knee, hold the rifle with both hands, and unbalance the opponent by pushing or blocking; at the same time, knee him or kick him in the groin or testicles (see fig.6).

To counter such tactics, turn the body sideways, with the right foot forward, and counter with the butt stroke.



Figure 6: Kick

(6) ***Execution of Short Thrust to the Throat.*** To execute this movement, grasp the rifle near the muzzle with both hands, the right hand just above the belt line, and the left hand just above the right, and thrust at the opponent's throat (see fig. 7).

To counter this thrust, carry the rifle forward and upward with both hands, and counter with the butt stroke to the face or head.



Figure 7: Bayonet Jab

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This booklet is for informational purposes only. Any attempt to try these methods is entirely at your own risk. Keep in mind that these techniques did not do the Japanese much good when confronting Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, British or Filipinos. Numerous after-action reports indicate that the Japanese came in second in hand-to-hand combat with the aforementioned troops.

The booklet is for military historical information and to serve as a guide for making more accurate military miniatures of the Japanese Army and Naval Infantry.

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The front cover, headline and slogan are intended solely to convey the feeling of the World War II Era. This is not an attempt at racism. The war ended a very long time ago. The compilers and editors of this booklet feel no animosity toward the Japanese people.