

# Professor Okazaki's Influence on World War II Military Combat Training Manuals

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We have heard for years that Professor Okazaki, after a brief detainment immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, trained the US military in hand-to-hand combat. In particular, he was supposed to have contributed to Basic Field Manual FM 21-150: *Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier* [1]. For example, martial arts historian Joseph Svinth, says that:

*"Danzan Ryu methods were shown in the US Army Field Manual 21-150, "Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier," dated June 30, 1942. Sig Kufferath and Lono Ancho probably contributed to the preparation of the base document, and people shown in photographs include Steve Byzek and Marion Anderson" [2].*

However, other evidence indicates that Professor Okazaki's contribution was not to FM 21-150. For example, none of the people Svinth mentions above are identified by name in the book, and Professor Ancho was only 14 years old in 1942.

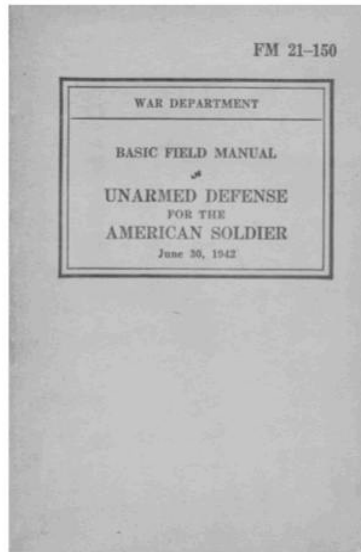
Instead, Professor Okazaki's contribution was probably to another book, *Combat Conditioning Manual: Jiu-Jitsu, Defense, Bayonet Defense, Club Defense*, issued under the auspices of Major R. E. Hanley, USMC, in 1942. In this article, I summarize the evidence on this question.

## Field Manual 21-150

Again, according to Joseph Svinth, Field Manual (FM) 21-150, *Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier* (Figure 1), was "the Air Force's first prescribed training manual" [3]. [Author's note: Different branches of the service often adopted Army manuals for its own purposes. Thus, although the manual was developed by the US Army, the reference to the "Air Force" could be to the US Army Air Forces, which was established in 1941, or to the US Air Force, which was established in 1947 but that implemented a judo program a few years later.] The manual presents dozens of techniques that

resemble *Yawara* and *Goshinjutsu* techniques, although most are not performed particularly well, especially by today's standards.

Remember that these techniques were commonly taught throughout North America and Europe in the late 1800s, as well as in Japan; they did not necessarily have to come from Professor Okazaki, even though many are included in *Danzan Ryu*.



**Figure 1. Field Manual (FM) 21-150, *Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier*. Professor Okazaki has long been believed to have contributed to the development of this manual. In fact, he probably did not influence the writing or content of FM 21-150.**

The Field Manual explains that the method of unarmed defense was developed by Chinese monks in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and goes on to say that:

“ . . . the Japanese became aware of the art and, characteristically, they copied it and claimed it as their own. They named the art ‘*Jiu Jitsu*’ and established a genealogy for it which they claimed extended back to their mythological age” [1].

The Manual then describes how Americans in New York adapted *Kodokan judo* for combative purposes:

“[The Kodokan] sent out branches throughout the civilized world. One branch, founded in 1921, had its headquarters in New York. It was called the “New York Dojo,” and while catering mainly to Japanese, admitted Occidentals who were

interested. However, progress of the Occidentals was slow, due to the fact that their instruction was mainly in competitive work. The holds were ineffective because correct principles were not taught. Very little of the defensive or protective tactics was taught. Since this was the type of *Judo* in which the average American was not interested, he soon dropped out of the school. [Author's note: presumably, the Americans were interested in training for combat, not for competition.] A group of Americans, disgusted with this procedure, set out to develop a system of self-defense suited to the American temperament and needs . . . They produced as good a system as the Japanese and far outstripped it in the effectiveness of method " [1].

In other words, the Japanese stole what they had, but it wasn't very good, and we Americans developed better techniques anyway. (Philip Snowden was right: "The first casualty of war is truth.")

## The New York *Dojo*

The Manual says that the development described above took place at "a branch of the *Kodokan* . . . founded in New York in 1921, called the New York *Dojo*" [1].

The New York *Dojo* is located on the East Side, Uptown, at 424 East 71st Street. The *Dojo* has an interesting history, one that predates 1921. In the early 1900s, it was run by Tsunejiro Tomita, who had been Kano's first training partner in 1882. Tomita returned to Japan in October 1910. In December, 1912, on his return to Japan from the Olympics, Professor Kano demonstrated *judo* for some New York sportswriters. According to the *New York Times*, Professor Kano's partner in a second demonstration in December 1920 was Ryoichi Taguchi. Taguchi, a graduate student at Columbia University, spent most of the next decade in New York, so probably it was his arrival that was interpreted as the *dojo* being established in 1921 [4].

Several famous people trained at the New York *Dojo* [4]:

- **George Yoshida**, a member of the New York *Dojo* in the early 1900s. A direct student of Professor Kano, for decades he was the only instructor outside Japan with the authority to promote to black belt.
- **T. Shozo Kuwashima**, the instructor at the *Dojo* in 1936, is remembered today mostly for his book, written with A.R. Welch, *Judo: Forty-One Lessons in the Modern Science of Jiu-Jitsu*.
- **Misuyio Esai Maeda**, a student of Professor Kano, was one of five *ne-waza* (grappling) experts who Professor Kano sent overseas to teach judo in the

West. After teaching in the New York *Dojo*, Maeda moved to Brazil in 1914 and taught jujutsu to Carols Gracie Senior, the grandfather of the Gracie brothers who introduced “Brazilian” *jujutsu* to the US in the 1990s.

- In 1944, **Raymond (Duke) Moore**, who eventually became an accomplished martial artist, first studying *jujutsu* under Professor Ray Law and later training under George Yoshida at the New York *Dojo*, where he received his *shodan*.

Students from the New York *Dojo* are believed to have contributed techniques to FM 120-51.

According to Ralph Grasso (personal communication [5]), the Field Manual had no single author but was compiled with information from several students who trained at the New York *Dojo*, probably **Charles Yerkow** (a prominent *judo* player who wrote several books on judo), **Brooks Mendall** (a New York police officer and author of *Protect Yourself*), **Roderick H. Sigward** (the author of *Modern Self-Defense*), and **Cliff Freeland**, who introduced judo competitions to the military in 1940 and taught hand-to-hand combat to thousands of US troops during the War [4].

The manual appears to be a combination of methods promoted by authorities at the time [5]:

- **Allan Corstorphin Smith**, the fifth Caucasian promoted to *shodan* at the *Kodokan*). He taught *jujutsu* to the US Army during WWI and wrote *Secrets of Jujitsu: A Complete Course in Self Defense* [6].
- **Sven J. Jorgensen** (1890-1974), a Seattle policeman who taught police officers between 1920 and 1950 and published a popular book on police techniques.
- **Francois D'eliscu**, a Lieutenant Colonel in the infantry who ran the Army's Ranger School and who in the early 1950s wrote a book titled *Hand to Hand Combat*.

## Evidence for the Source of FM 21-150

Carl Cestari makes the case that FM 21-150 came from the New York *Dojo* [4]:

- The New York *Dojo* is specifically mentioned in the Manual, the *Kodenkan* is not.
- The Manual specifically mentions the methods of *Kodokan Judo* as developed and taught by *Jigoro Kano*, not the methods of the *Kodenkan* developed by Professor Okazaki.
- If the *Kodenkan* and Professor Okazaki were the source, why not say so?

- If the *Kodenkan* and Professor Okazaki were the source, why even mention the New York *Dojo*?
- The Manual mentions that “the methods taught at the NY *Dojo* were believed to be ineffective for American use and that the ‘American Judo Club’ [the New York *Dojo*] was responsible for re-working the *Kodokan* methods into an effective “unarmed defense” system.”
- The Manual uses the term “*Stahara*” (“*shita hara*,” the lower abdomen), a term often used in the *Kodokan* but never in *Danzan Ryu*.

## The Combat Conditioning Manual

Richard P. Rickerts, Professor Okazaki’s first Caucasian student and one of the founders of the AJFF, taught *jujutsu* at the Army-Navy YMCA in Honolulu. On May 30, 1939, Professor Okazaki promoted 17 people to *shodan*, 8 of whom were from the Army-Navy YMCA. Among them were Marion Anderson and Tony Muran, who continued to have a presence in *Danzan Ryu* for many years, as well as a man named J. Swearingen (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The man on the left is probably J. Swearingen, a student of Richard Rickerts, who is believed to have contributed the *Combat Conditioning Manual*, where this photograph appears. Swearingen is also probably one of the instructors shown in a WW II Marine Corps training film titled *Combat Conditioning Series 3: Club and Knife Fighting* [5]. In fact, the man in the photo strongly resembles one of the instructors in the film (author’s collection).

Again, according to Ralph Grasso (personal communication), when the War started, Swearingen became a hand-to-hand combat instructor with the Marine Corps. He and

his instructor, Professor Rickerts, evidently came to the attention of one Major R. E. Hanley, USMC. Major Hanley had some responsibility for training and evidently recruited Swearingen, and perhaps Rickerts as well, to teach hand-to-hand combat and possibly to help develop the curriculum.

Major Hanley's curriculum was put into print by Irvin Cahn, BB [black belt?], another Marine Corps instructor, who wrote the *Combat Conditioning Manual* (Figure 3) [7-10]. This book appeared in at least four versions, each with some of the same simple line drawings and photographs but some with more photographs and techniques than others. (For PDF copies of these and other martial arts book, see: [http://www.safeism.com/blog/index.php/texts/.](http://www.safeism.com/blog/index.php/texts/))



**Figure 3. The *Combat Conditioning Manual* [7], issued under the direction of Major R. E. Hanley, was probably the manual to which Professor Okazaki and his students, probably J. Swearingen and Dick Rickerts, contributed. The book was probably written by Irvin Cahn.**

I. C. King received a brown belt from the *Jiu-Jitsu* Institute of Chicago in November, 1938, from Shozu Kawashima [Author's note: the correct spelling is probably T. Shozo Kuwashima), a 5th-degree black belt from the *Kodokan* and an instructor at the New York *Dojo*. In 1944, he published *How to Use Jiu Jitsu for Men and Women: Army-Tested Methods of Self-Defense* (Figure 4) [10]. The Introduction says "The Techniques in this pamphlet are part of his 160-page book entitled "Combat Conditioning Manual, Jiu Jitsu Defense," used by Major R. E. Hanley in combat training of the United States Marines. [Author's note: I never found out what I. C. King's first and middle names were, but "Irvine Cahn" is an interesting coincidence.]

## Other Training Manuals

Another Okazaki student, Steven Byzek, was a Major in the Army who later joined the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) and its successor, the Central Intelligence Agency [11].

Byzek taught *jujutsu* or hand-to-hand combat both inside and outside the Army, most notably at the Ewa Beach Marine Judo Club with Prof. Jack Wheat. Byzek apparently also contributed to a hand-to-hand combat manual developed at the Fort Benning Army Base (not to FM 21-150; Figure 5) and to another developed by the CIA [12]. Professor Okazaki may also have influenced some other military publications, such as Colonel Anthony Flores's manual on "Hand to Hand Combat." [4]

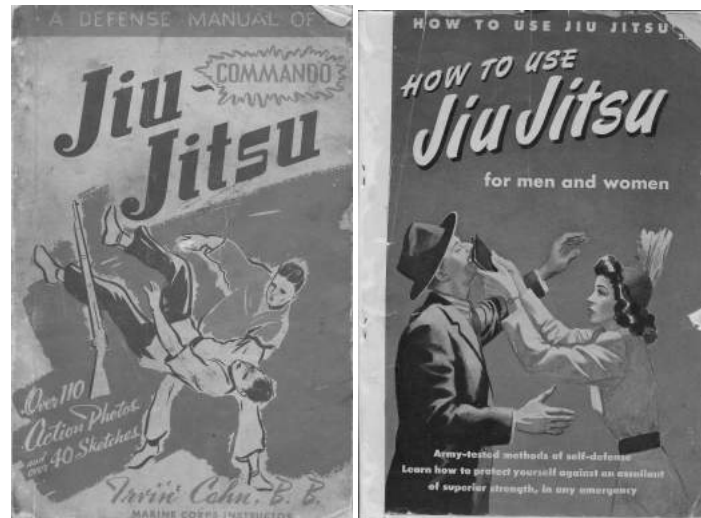


Figure 4. Two “civilian” versions of the *Combat Conditioning Manual*. These versions were probably also written by Irvin Cahn, although his name appears only in the frontispiece of *A Defense Manual of Commando Jiu Jitsu*



Figure 5. Steven Byzek, a student of Professor Okazaki, helped develop this manual on hand-to-hand combat. Reprints are available from George Arrington on his excellent *Danzan Ryu* website, <http://www.danzan.com/>

## References

1. Basic Field Manual FM 21-150: *Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier*. War Department, June 30, 1942, 315 pages. (See: [http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart\\_FM21-150a\\_0800.htm](http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart_FM21-150a_0800.htm).)
2. Svinth J. [http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart\\_FM21-150a\\_0800.htm](http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart_FM21-150a_0800.htm) Cahn Combat Conditioning Manual. Accessed 30 March 2014.
3. Svinth J. The Fairchild Air Force Base Judo Club, 1951-1960. *Journal of Non-lethal Combatives*, Feb 2001 [http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart\\_svinth\\_0201.htm](http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart_svinth_0201.htm)
4. Cestari C. [CombativesResearchGroup] Re: 120 Commando Technique list <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CombativesResearchGroup/message/1456>. Accessed 30 March 2014.
5. Ralph Grasso is a retired New York police officer who has trained in hand-to-hand combat and combat jujutsu for many years. His instructors were from the famed New York *Dojo* described in the article. He is also a historian on the topic of hand-to-hand combat and has one of the most extensive martial arts libraries in the world. He was gracious enough to share much of the information in this article with me.
6. See: Bowen R. [http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart\\_bowen\\_0603.htm](http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart_bowen_0603.htm). Accessed 29 April 2014.
7. [King IC.] *Combat Conditioning Manual: Jiu-Jitsu Defense, Bayonet Defense, Club Defense as used by Major R. E. Hanley, United States Marine Corps*. Chicago: Gordy Service Co., 1942.
8. Cahn I. Cover text: *Jiu-Jitsu Military Manual Self Defense*. Title page: *Jiu-Jitsu as used in Combat Training by Major R. E. Hanley, United States Marine Corps*. Chicago: Gordy Service Co., 1942.
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11. See: <http://www.danzan.com/HTML/PEOPLE/byzek.html>. Accessed 30 March 2014.
12. See: <http://www.budoseek.net/vbulletin/showthread.php?19247-Okazaki-WWII-question>; <http://www.danzan.com/HTML/BUY/buyh2h.html>. Accessed 30 March 2014.