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# FIGHTING WITH A TOMAHAWK

BY LYNN G. THOMPSON

Over the years I've read quite a few articles on the tomahawk — and even three or four books on the subject. But outside of Bill Bagwell's article in *Soldier of Fortune* magazine in the mid 1980s, I've seen very little in print about how to employ this uniquely American weapon in hand-to-hand combat.

That's why I've decided to share a little of what I've learned about its advantages and disadvantages as a weapon and how to actually wield the tomahawk in a fight.

## ADVANTAGES

- **One Shot Kill** - Unlike a stick, machete, knife or even a bullet, one hard hit from a tomahawk is enough to put the biggest opponent down for the count. You see, it's just plain hard to beat a solid tomahawk blow to the head as a certain and immediate fight finisher.

- **Hooking/Trapping** - I believe one of the biggest advantages of the tomahawk as a weapon is that its following edge can be used to trap or control an adversary's weapon or to catch or manipulate his arms, legs, neck and even his torso!

- **Extremely Durable** - It's hard to think of a hand held weapon that's more durable than a tomahawk. The head, when drop forged and differentially heat treated, is virtually unbreakable. Its edge, when convex ground and properly sharpened, will laugh at abuse that would quickly ruin a knife or sword. Even the handle of a tomahawk is extremely durable, especially when made of straight grain hickory, hornbeam (ironwood) or Osage orange. In fact, my favorite game scout in Africa has been chopping away with a Rifleman's Hawk, equipped with the original handle, now for six years without breaking it. How's that for toughness! If your handle should break, it's easily and cheaply replaced even in the field where a reasonable facsimile can be fashioned from a sapling or tree branch.

- **Reach** - Most tomahawks measure somewhere between 18" and 24" in overall length. Granted, this is not as long as the average machete, but it is longer than many other commonly encountered weapons.

- **Easily Obtained** - As far as I know, there are no laws on the books prohibiting anyone from owning a tomahawk (with the possible exception of New York City). They are easily obtained anywhere in the USA. What's more, a reasonable substitute in the form of a hatchet can be obtained from any hardware store in the world!

- **Inexpensive** - Dollar for dollar, I'll bet you'll be hard pressed to find a weapon which offers as much utility and fighting performance as a tomahawk. Many quality tomahawks can be had for \$20 - \$40! At these prices you can afford to stock up and get one for every member of your family, plus stash one in every car, truck, boat, trailer or plane you own!

- **Hard To Stop** - The heavy mass of a tomahawk generates tremendous force and will often crash right through the defenses of an opponent who is blocking with a cane, stick, knife, machete or the like.

- **Can Be Thrown** - A tomahawk is one of the easiest weapons to learn to throw. It can be hurled in combat from a distance of just beyond arms reach to clear out to 50 feet or more. As in anything, practice makes perfect. Expect to make quite a few thousand practice throws before counting on your skill in combat, and always think three times before throwing your only weapon.

- **Versatile** - When you think about it, almost every part of a tomahawk can be used as a weapon. For instance, let's take a look at a Cold Steel Norse Hawk. Here you have a sharp edge for chopping and slashing which terminates on top and bottom in two points which can be used for stabbing, gouging and ripping. What's more, opposite the blade there's a solid steel butt which can deliver a terrifically effective blow. Finally, let's not overlook the top of the eye where the Hickory handle protrudes. How would you like to get smashed in the face with that?

## DISADVANTAGES

- **Head Heavy Balance** - The single greatest disadvantage of using a tomahawk in hand to hand combat is its extreme head heavy balance. This characteristic makes it almost impossible to redirect a stroke once it is launched. It also severely retards your recovery time after a missed stroke, as your wrist, forearm, and shoulder struggle to regain control. This in turn leaves you momentarily vulnerable to your enemy's counterattack.

- **Cuts a Small Swath** - Unlike a 12" kukri blade or 25" cutlass, the edge of the average tomahawk is quite short (seldom more than 4½" long) and thereby cuts a relatively small



A. Butt or Poll  
B. Cutting Edge or Bit  
C. Eye  
D. Face  
E. Following Edge  
F. Leading Edge

## CHOOSING A FIGHTING HAWK

The basic rule of thumb when buying a fighting tomahawk is to get the heaviest head and the longest hickory handle you can comfortably swing.

Go ahead and try a bunch of different hawks. Weigh the heads and play around with different handle lengths. Don't be afraid to experiment, but before deciding what's right for you please remember this single piece of advice. Never overmatch your own physical strength. You will always fight more effectively with a tomahawk that is a little too light than one that's a bit too heavy.

Now that we have the length and weight of your tomahawk out of the way, there's really only one thing more to consider — what blade shape you want to use.

I realize, of course, that tomahawks come in all shapes and sizes, but in my opinion there are two shapes that are best suited for combat.

One tomahawk blade type is what I call the

Eastern American Indian style, which features a long narrow blade with a short cutting edge. This type of blade shape acts like a chisel and concentrates the force of a hard blow in a very small area. It is ideal for the "one shot kill" and lends itself to surprise attacks and ambushes in which the contest is decided very quickly or when facing heavily protected opponents with extra thick skulls.

The tomahawk blade which I favor is what I call the Viking style. The blade resembles the ancient Norseman's battle-axe and is long, broad and wide with a big cutting edge which terminates in two sharp points. Its long suit is the fact that it will cut and chop a wide swath through flesh and bone with almost equal aplomb. In a general melee where there's little room for full armed swings, its dual pointed edge can be put to good use in mounting a stabbing, gouging or ripping attack.

—Lynn Thompson



swath. This means a person wielding a tomahawk must be very precise in his targeting. If he's not, he can easily overstrike his target and hit with the handle or strike short and miss it altogether.

- **Hard To Hold** - If you attempt a heavy blow with your tomahawk and miss your target, you will immediately notice two things. One, the handle is hard to hold. Two, recovery from the stroke is difficult and slow at best. Why? Two reasons - design and centrifugal force. You see, a tomahawk handle is designed for throwing as well as chopping, so there is no hook, "return" or guard on the end to aid your hand in resisting the pull of the heavy head and centrifugal force. Instead, you must rely solely on your grip strength to retain control of your weapon. The end of the handle, by reason of its dual mission, must be straight and smooth in order to glide easily from the hand when thrown.

- **Semi-Vulnerable Handle** - While highly unlikely, it is possible that your tomahawk handle could be severed or broken by multiple blows from a big Bowie knife, kukri or sword. However, you can take some comfort in the fact that I was unable to put a Cold Steel tomahawk handle out of action even after giving it 5 good smacks within a 6" area with a Trail Master.

## LET'S FIGHT

Since this is an article, not a book, I have only enough room to make some general comments about fighting. If you have questions, most answers can be found by sparring it out. A few hundred hours actually fighting with a practice tomahawk made of PVC pipe, foam, tape, etc., will go a long way toward making you a real expert.

## GET A GRIP

I suggest you grasp your tomahawk with a hammer grip near the bottom of the handle. Be careful to leave about an inch of wood sticking out of your fist because it may come in handy for use in a butt stroke if you are forced to fight at extremely close range.

## CHOKING UP

Modifying your grip on the handle of your tomahawk is often a good idea. Here are some common reasons why you should be familiar with choking up.

- **Heavy Head** - Sometimes you may find yourself forced on to the defensive with a tomahawk, hatchet or even an ax that is just too heavy to control in full arm swings. Or, maybe you've been wounded or are so exhausted that your tomahawk feels like solid lead in your hand. At times like these it often pays to choke,

switching your grip from the end of the handle to the middle where you will immediately gain improved control. Of course, there's no free lunch, and better control will cost you about half your reach.

- **Limited Space** - If you are attacked in a tightly enclosed or confined space, you may find that there is not enough room to use the full length of your tomahawk without banging into walls, ceilings, furniture, etc. If this is the case, it's helpful to choke up on the handle and "shorten" your tomahawk to better fit your environment.

- **Grappling** - The tomahawk is not well suited for fighting at extremely close range, such as in a clinch or grappling situation because there simply is not enough space to deliver normal blows. However, all is not lost. The best tactic here is to take a lesson from the cavemen and employ our tomahawk just as they did a sharpened rock. To make your tomahawk effective at short range, choke all the way up until your hand rests just under the head. Then use your shortened "hand ax" to smash, slice, gouge and rip your opponent into submission!

## FIGHTING STANCE

I use two basic stances when fighting with a tomahawk. One is strong side forward, and the other is strong side back. Each stance has its own advantages, and the appropriate one for your situation is determined by several factors. Let's take a minute to explore these stances briefly.

### STRONG SIDE FORWARD

To assume this stance, take up a basic boxing position with your right hand forward (to you right-handed boxers, this is a southpaw stance). Grasp your tomahawk in a hammer grip near the bottom of the handle and extend it straight from the shoulder until your upper arm and lower arm form an L shape. Your gripping or strong hand should now be close to level with your right pectoral muscle, and your tomahawk blade will be about level with the top of your head. Make sure your weak shoulder is pulled back well to the rear. This will help in aligning your body so it presents a narrower target to the enemy. Also, remember to keep your left elbow in close and



(Left) Strong Side Forward Stance  
(Right) Strong Side Back Stance

## STANCE

tight to your short ribs with your left or weak fist held just to the side of your jaw. Finally, bend both knees slightly and get up on your toes to assure rapid mobility. Often, your best defense against an attack is to simply get out of the way!

### ADVANTAGES OF A STRONG SIDE FORWARD STANCE:

- **Longer Weapons** - Putting your strong side forward will bolster both your offense and defense when facing longer weapons like a machete, steel pipe, baseball bat, ax or sword. Why? Because it forces longer weapons to come through a substantial offensive or defensive zone, as defined by the full length of your arm and tomahawk, before they can reach your head or the trunk of your body.

- **Better Offense** - The strong side forward stance will improve your offense for two reasons. One is obvious. This stance dramatically increases your reach when compared to the weak side forward stance. The other reason may be a little more elusive until you have spent a few hours sparring. But, after you have a little

experience under your belt, you'll soon understand that the strong side forward stance provides great freedom of movement, making it possible to strike forehand and backhand blows with almost equal force and accuracy. This in turn facilitates the ability to advance or retreat while striking blows in combination or even the ability to deliver a continuous barrage of blows.

## STRONG SIDE BACK

Assume a conventional right handed boxing stance with your left or weak shoulder forward. Grasp your tomahawk in your right hand with a hammer grip near the bottom of the handle. Bring your right hand up to your ribcage until it's about level with your right pectoral muscle and keep your elbow bent and pointing back so your arm is in a cocked position. Make sure your right shoulder is turned well back to narrow the target your body presents to your enemy. Now, move your left elbow to just in front of your left short ribs and keep it in tight as you bring up your left hand. Depending on your size, your left hand will extend 8" to a foot or more from your left shoulder. When viewed from the left front, your weak arm should resemble a big V shape with the shoulder and fist at the tops of the V and the elbow at the bottom. Next, bend your knees slightly and get up on your toes so you can move quickly.

### ADVANTAGE OF A STRONG SIDE BACK STANCE:

The only advantage of fighting with your strong side back is the ability to put your full body weight and muscular strength into a blow. The result with a heavy, sharp tomahawk is devastating. Nothing that walks on two legs, and little on four, can continue to fight after being struck with a blow delivered from this

stance. An opponent must fear and respect you when you adopt this stance. The slightest mistake or miscalculation on his part will, in all likelihood, prove immediately fatal (more on this later).

## OFFENSE

I am a firm believer in the saying, "The best defense is a good offense." So, please pay special attention and learn the following attacks.

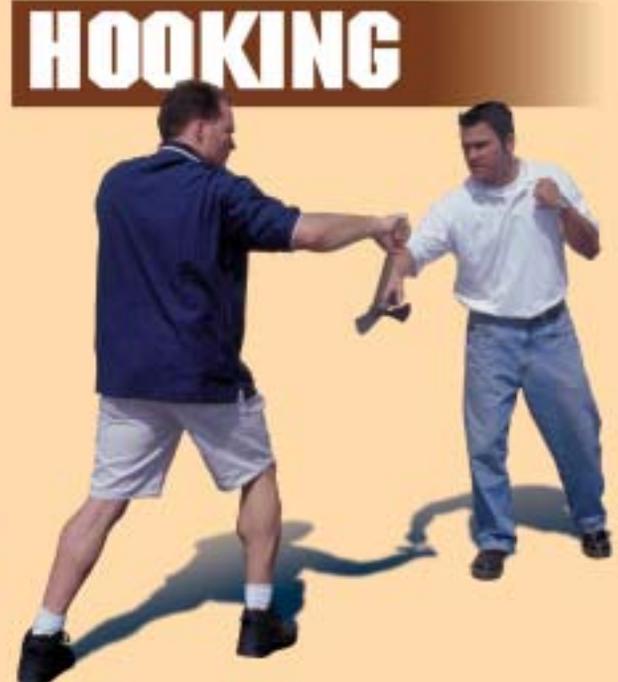
- **Punch Attack** - From a strong side forward stance, punch your right or strong hand forward. At the last moment, swing your wrist down, driving the blade of your tomahawk full in the face of your opponent. The emphasis in this attack is on all out speed with no concern for power. The weight of your tomahawk head and its sharp edge will do all the work. Be careful not to over-train when practicing this attack. It can be hard on your elbow.

- **Drop Stroke** - This is one of the most powerful and effective blows you can deliver with a tomahawk. When done right, it can be accomplished without the slightest warning or telegraphing of your intention. To execute it, start with your strong side forward and pick a target such as your opponent's weapon hand. Fix the position of his hand in your mind's eye. Without looking directly at his hand, begin your stroke by moving your strong shoulder toward your target as far as you can without upsetting your balance. Next, extend your arm and drop the edge of your tomahawk on to your target. Now, here comes the hard part. It takes practice to perfect. As your arm begins to descend toward the target, you must also simultaneously bend both knees, drop your butt straight down and drive your body weight behind the blow. When done right, the drop stroke uses coordination, speed and the sudden transfer of body weight to get the job done.

- **Power Or Kill Shot** - As any good boxer will tell you, it's hard to take out a tough opponent with a single blow. The problem is, to get the power one needs it is often necessary to "load up" by digging in with the feet. This in turn telegraphs your intention and lets your opponent know a knockout blow is on the way. The same situation occurs preparing for a power or kill shot with the tomahawk. There just doesn't seem to be a way to harness all of your power behind a blow without "telegraphing". So, make sure you have a clear opening before launching this fight finisher. To execute a power shot from the strong side forward stance, move your front shoulder, hip and arm well to the rear and assume a cocked or loaded position. Next, drive forward with your legs, hips, shoulder and arm in a mighty chopping motion and drive your tomahawk straight through the target. As you can imagine, this blow requires the total commitment of your body. If you miss, recovery will be slow and difficult at best.

- **Stabbing** - Many opponents become so mesmerized by the danger of your tomahawk's edge and its chopping potential that they forget you can deliver a straight, non-telegraphed stabbing attack as well. To execute a stabbing attack from a strong side forward stance, extend your right shoulder without warning. Then, drop the head of your tomahawk into line with your target and fully extend the arm while simultaneously bending the front knee to help put body weight behind the blow. For best results, drive the pointed tip or leading edge of your tomahawk into your opponent's throat, mouth or eye, although any stab to the neck or face with a 24-ounce tomahawk is going to be pretty effective don't you think?

- **Hacking** - The goal of a hacking attack is to substitute power for speed and repetition.



You see, in a melee or at close quarters there often isn't enough space or time to deliver power or kill shots. Instead, you might have to use a hacking attack and deliver a series of short, light, quick blows to get the job done. To execute a hacking attack from the strong side forward stance, drive your tomahawk toward your target in a quick snappy manner using just your arm, elbow, and wrist for strength. As soon as your edge penetrates or "bites" into the target, concentrate on retracting your arm just as quickly as possible and striking again in the same spot. Keep this up until either the target is destroyed or the dynamics of battle force you to change or adapt. One hint to make your hacking attack more successful is to refrain from putting a lot of body weight or shoulder power into each blow. This keeps your commitment to each blow at a minimum and really speeds up recovery time for successive blows.

- **Hooking** - As previously mentioned, one of the biggest advantages of the tomahawk is the curved underside of its blade. It can be used to hook your opponent's body, thereby allowing you to momentarily incapacitate or control him. To execute a hooking attack from the strong side forward stance, use the curved portion of your tomahawk's blade to suddenly reach out and snag or capture your opponent's weapon, wrist, arm, ankle, leg, shoulder or neck. Then, either pull down, back or to the side as appropriate. Of course, your goal is to either jerk him off his feet, destroy his balance or momentarily incapacitate his weapon, giving you a huge advantage.

- **Throwing** - Most people believe you can throw a tomahawk from 20 or even 30 feet away and strike an enemy edge first every time. The truth is, if you make ten thousand practice throws like the Master of the Blade, Bob Karp,

has, you actually can. However, most of us mere mortals will never obtain Bob's phenomenal skill and will have to be content with throwing a hawk in combat from extremely close range.

One close-up throwing method which has worked well for me over the years is to advance on your adversary until you are just out of arm's reach (3-4 feet away) and then, without telegraphing your intention, hurl your hawk directly into his face. Make sure to keep your wrist locked when you throw and that your arm is straight and fully extended when you let go. When done correctly, your hawk should fly straight as an arrow for three or four feet without rotating in its flight and impact the target with the top of its head.

A variation of the above technique is to move in even closer on your opponent. Before you throw, line up the cutting edge of your tomahawk with your target. Next, punch your arm suddenly forward. Just before it's fully extended, let go. If you keep your wrist locked at the moment of release, your tomahawk should fly straight for two or even three feet and land edge first on the target. Of course, throwing your tomahawk in a fight is always risky and borders on downright foolish unless you are desperate or armed with another weapon and prepared to take advantage of the opening created when your enemy receives a 24-ounce tomahawk full in the face.

## DEFENSE

While I prefer to use footwork as my primary defense against my opponent's blows, there are definitely times when it pays to be skilled at blocking and parrying with your tomahawk as well.

## FOOTWORK

Using footwork to avoid an opponent's attack is almost always a good idea. It leaves you with both hands free to counter and eliminates

the possibility of a much heavier weapon crushing through your block. However, this is a huge subject and I can't even begin to cover it adequately here. I can, however, give you the following hints...

- **Stay On Your Toes** - When practical, get up on your toes and stay there throughout the fight. I guarantee it will vastly improve your mobility.

- **Avoid getting tangled up in your own feet and losing your balance.** This is accomplished by first moving the foot that is closest to the direction you want to travel. For instance, if you are in a strong side forward stance and you want to move laterally to your right, step off with your forward or right foot first. Then, recover your stance by moving your rear foot.

- **Concentrate on learning how to sidestep attacks.** Learn to escape the onrush of a sparring partner by moving to the side, not backwards.

- **When forced to retreat in the face of an attack, avoid taking one or two steps backward before moving to the side.** If you move backward exclusively when retreating, you'll be overrun. Remember, no one can move backward as fast as his opponent can move forward.

- **Don't give your opponent an easy target.** Keep your profile narrow and don't stand directly in front of your adversary, but rather to the side.

- **Don't let an opponent get a "fix" on your position.** Practice constantly changing the distance that separates you and mess with his mind so he never really knows your range or when you will move.

- **Always try to take an opponent's unprotected flank.** Move from side to side and circle him. Always look for a momentary opening. Break him up by changing the speed and rhythm of your movement.

- **Learn to set traps and ambushes.** For instance, retreat a few steps backward in the face of an attack and let your attacker really commit to his rush. Then, suddenly switch directions and attack him. I guarantee this tactic will take many opponents by surprise.

*Continued on the next page.*



Face Throwing

Up Close Face Throwing

# THROWING

## A FRAME BLOCK



"A Frame"  
Block

"A Frame"  
Block Left  
Side

## BLOCKING

The stout hickory handle and forged steel head of a tomahawk are very sturdy and will stop attacks from most weapons. For the purpose of illustration, we will choose to employ them against a typical street weapon known around the world as the machete. All blocks and parries will be executed from a strong side forward stance. Remember, it is often advisable to step "off line" from an

incoming attack when blocking and parrying.

- **A - Frame Block** - This simple blocking method is easy to learn and can be employed against attacks directed at either side of the head and upper torso. To protect yourself from a slash at the right side of your head, move the blade of your tomahawk forward a few inches until the head of the hawk is centered just above the middle of your forehead.

Next, lift your strong, or right elbow and shoulder up and away from your body until the head and handle of your tomahawk assume an angle of approximately 45 degrees and present an appropriate barrier to the incoming slash from the machete. Be sure to push forward slightly as you make contact with the incoming weapon to prevent any possibility of its crashing through your block. (Note: It is almost always a good idea to push forward or into an incoming weapon when blocking. To block a machete slash directed to the left side of your head (your weak side), move your strong hand (right hand) all the way across your body until it is approximately lined up and even with your weak, or left shoulder. A foot or more of space should be separating your strong hand and shoulder.

Next, as the slash comes in adjust the angle of your tomahawk head and handle as appropriate (generally about a 45-degree angle is preferred) and push into the blade with your handle to stop it.

- **Vertical Block** - This blocking motion is used against horizontal cuts directed at your body from mid-torso level to the top of your head. To execute a vertical block to stop a cut at the right side of your neck, keep your tomahawk head up and use your right, or strong hand to push your hickory handle into the path

of the blow. Keep both the handle and your hand vertical. Don't forget to push into the cut just prior to impact to stop it dead in its tracks.

To employ this block to stop a cut aimed at the left side of the neck, do the following. Push the handle of your hawk across your body, keeping the head and handle vertical. Just prior to contact, exert forward pressure into your opponent's weapon to keep it from crashing through your block.

- **Drop Block** - This type of blocking technique is almost a strike. It is usually employed to stop an attack directed at your lower torso and legs. Your goal, when executing this block, is to knock, or slam your opponent's weapon, or weapon hand right into the dirt. To stop a cut directed at your forward thigh, gauge the incoming blow with your eye and quickly take a step back with your forward leg. This gets it out of the path of the oncoming cut. At the same time, drop your tomahawk down on the incoming machete and smash it harmlessly into the ground. Try and make contact with your enemy's blade with the portion of your tomahawk handle that lies just under the head. When done correctly, a drop block gets the leg being attacked safely out of the way and reliably stops the attacking weapon, giving you a chance to counter.

- **Roof Block** - This block mimics the sloping rafter of a roof and is derived from the Filipino martial arts as well as Western saber fencing (as are all the other blocks discussed here). It can be used to stop attacks to the middle and left side of your upper torso, neck and hand. To execute a roof block to protect yourself from a slash to the left side of your head, push your strong hand forward and up until well above your head. At the same time the end of your handle is rising, drop the head of your tomahawk until it is about

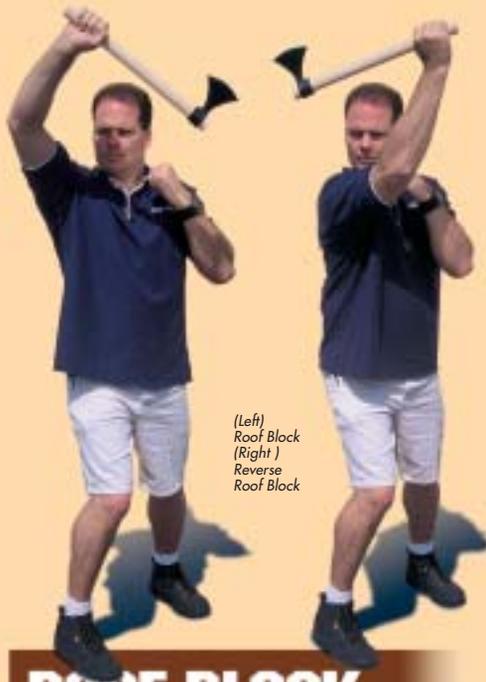
## BLOCKING



Drop Block

## PARRY





(Left)  
Roof Block  
(Right)  
Reverse  
Roof Block

## ROOF BLOCK

level with your left shoulder. The thick shaft or handle of your tomahawk should now be sloping at a downward 45-degree angle from strong side to weak, to present a barrier just like a roof rafter to the incoming slash. When done correctly, this block is superbly effective in harmlessly deflecting the hardest blow.

• **Reverse Roof Block** - It takes a little practice to become proficient with this block. When I started sparring I swore it wouldn't work, but now I find myself using it all the time.

To employ a reverse roof block against a slash or cut directed at the right side of your upper torso, neck, and head, do the following: First, judge the angle of the incoming blow and, as appropriate, drive your strong hand up and across your body until it rests well above and to the left of your head. At the same time, relax and bend your wrist, letting your tomahawk head fall until it rests about 8" off and slightly below your right shoulder. The handle of your tomahawk should now slope downward at a 45-degree angle with its highest point beginning on your left side, above your head, and its lowest off your right shoulder. Since this is a weaker block, it is always a good idea to simultaneously take a step to your left, away from the force of the incoming cut or slash.

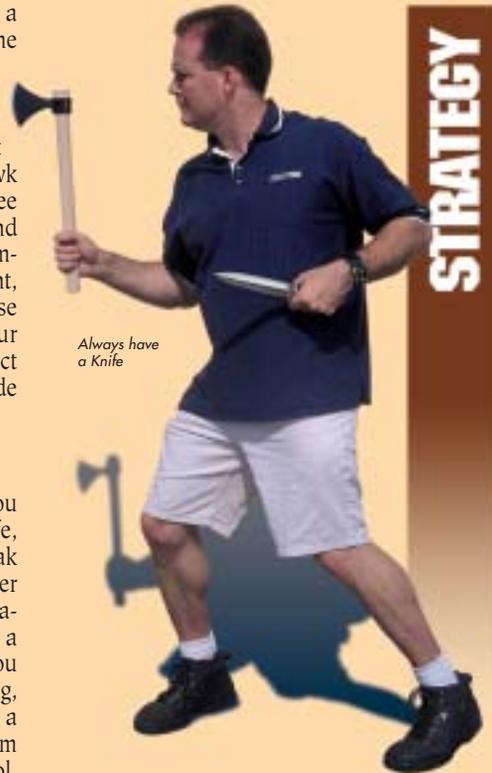
• **Parry** - A parry is used to deflect to the side an incoming thrust or stab directed at your torso, neck or head. To parry a stab at your face, keep the head of your tomahawk up and push the handle forward at a 45-degree angle until it intersects the oncoming blade and knocks it harmlessly offline. Do not over-commit to a parry. It is a light, quick, deft movement, not a ponderous, heavy one. Remember to use forward pressure when you contact your opponent's blade and then immediately retract your tomahawk into your on guard, strong side forward stance.

## STRATEGY

• **Always Have a Knife** - Make sure you always have a fighting knife, hunting knife, lockback or even a kitchen knife in your weak hand. There is no excuse for not having another weapon at the ready when fighting with a tomahawk. If you absolutely can't get hold of a suitable, ready-made blade, improvise one! You can easily use your tomahawk to put a long, sharp point on a 12" piece of tree branch, a sapling, driftwood, mop handle, or broom handle and make it into a lethal stabbing tool. You see, the one big weakness of fighting with a tomahawk is that a highly skilled and courageous attacker might be able to "shoot in" under your guard and grapple with you. As I have said before, grappling and ground fighting are not the strong points of fighting with a tomahawk. But, if you have a blade or improvised "stabber," grappling becomes an extremely dangerous proposition for even a world class fighter.

• **Be Aggressive** - As I have mentioned earlier, when you are armed with a mass weapon like a tomahawk, any opponent must fear you. No one can take even a single power shot from a tomahawk and continue as an effective fighter. No one can afford to use his shoulder or forearm as a shield and absorb your blow in the hope of returning a better blow of his own because the tomahawk destroys any muscle or bone it comes in contact with. Use your opponent's fear to your advantage. Menace him constantly with the threat of a power

or kill shot. Move on him and exert forward pressure as you look for an opening to exploit. Don't fall back into a defensive posture and go on the run. This tactic doesn't suit the tomahawk. Instead, watch your opponent, and when he or his weapon hand is stationary for even a moment, attack! Always try to attack in a straight line with powerful, repetitive blows. If one is blocked, your next swing may crash through and give you victory. Avoid low line attacks to your opponent's legs unless deliberately setting a trap because they will leave you in a undesirable defensive posture if they are unsuccessful.



Always have  
a Knife

## STRATEGY

Don't forget to use your tomahawk to stab and thrust. Most people have absolutely no experience in dealing with a hard, straight stab in the face or throat and will definitely not expect it from a tomahawk. Finally, if you are forced to block an attack with your tomahawk, try to twist or turn its blade and hook or trap your opponent's weapon or attacking hand. Then, while momentarily controlling it, step in and stab him with your knife or dagger.

It is my sincerest hope that this article has given you some insight on how to properly employ a tomahawk. There is, of course, much more that could be said on the subject, however, the limited space of this catalog makes it necessary to conclude here. As I said at the beginning of this article, most of your questions will be answered by simply "sparring it out," because the only way to really learn how to fight is to actually do it. Get a reliable training partner, put on a three weapons rated fencing mask, and body "armor" as appropriate and fight it out! I guarantee you'll have a new appreciation for the tomahawk as a weapon and a tool.

