



Report by
Sevim Necati

Pain and Drills and more Pain

A Self Protection Association training day

IT WAS GOING to be a warm day with a clear bright blue sky and sun shining, at a time on a Sunday morning when most people were having their second piece of toast or pulling the blankets over for another ten minutes. Time was getting on and I was waiting for Tim who had said that he would pick me up at 9am, so we would have lots of time to pick up Al (Alan Charlton, Chief Instructor of the Self Protection Association (SPA)) to all go to the seminar together. I was looking forward to the training, as I hadn't trained with the Self Protection Association for about four months. Al had mentioned that some of the old crew would be there from our days of training at the old school in Enfield, so I was excited that I would be seeing some of my old mates again. We were cracking jokes in the car and as we arrived at the Cheshunt Judo Club we thought, "Wow, this is a nice place to train, plenty of car space and easy to find." We took the equipment in and were greeted by the familiar face of Tony Falconer and some of his students. *Pete Robins* and Paul Child from CODA had a great turnout of support from their group.

I could see that Alan was pleased with the turnout because of the long distances that many had travelled to take part in the day. The hall looked excellent, it was large enough to hold a good sized group of about fifty people. The floor was covered in judo

mats, and quite a few people had brought their own equipment to help out. It was surrounded by natural light which made the training enjoyable. From the start I knew it was going to be a great training day.

As the hall quickly started to fill up the air was buzzing. There was no testosterone flying just real individual characters that knew what they would learn from this inspiring teacher would be invaluable to them. Having known Al for a number of years not only is he a strength for me but to many others that have had the pleasure of training with him. People started chatting and having a laugh, catching up; everyone was raring to

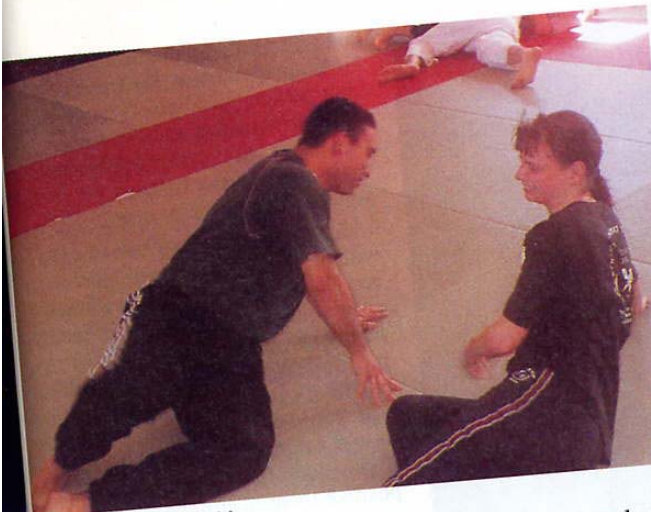
go. I knew that the training drills would be hard but there was no doubt that Al would inject humour into the training as he always did.

Al called us all onto the training area and told us to enjoy the day. The idea of the open SPA training day is to enjoy yourself, the only person under pressure is yourself. The drills are meant to push you physically and mentally, to keep going when you want to stop and to show you how little of what people think will work doesn't work under pressure. This helps to find out your weakness on the mat and not on the pavement.

So we began and before we knew it we had started warming up. It was



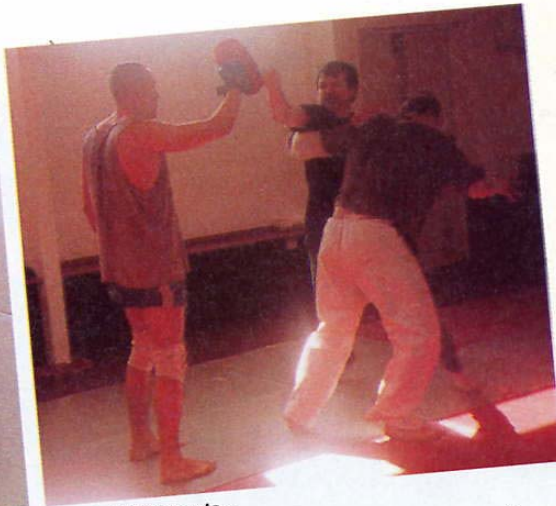
Sevim are you sleeping?



Still have time to laugh!
hard but felt good.

The SPA training days are geared to stretch individuals not only physically but more importantly mentally. Many a time when people are confronted with fear it's not the physical side that defeats them, it's their mental picture of what could happen and their internal negative dialogue talking to them. I (Sevim) am a woman and I have the mental strength to beat anyone that would want to harm me for no good reason. Many of the women taking part at the training day like Sharon, Amanda and Tracey are all very strong women and their punches and strikes would explode all over someone that tried to harm them. These women are not big in size but their strength lies in years of training and a dedication to overcome fear and what it can do.

Fear is a natural instinct and shouldn't be seen as a negative. The more relaxed you become as an individual the more powerful you

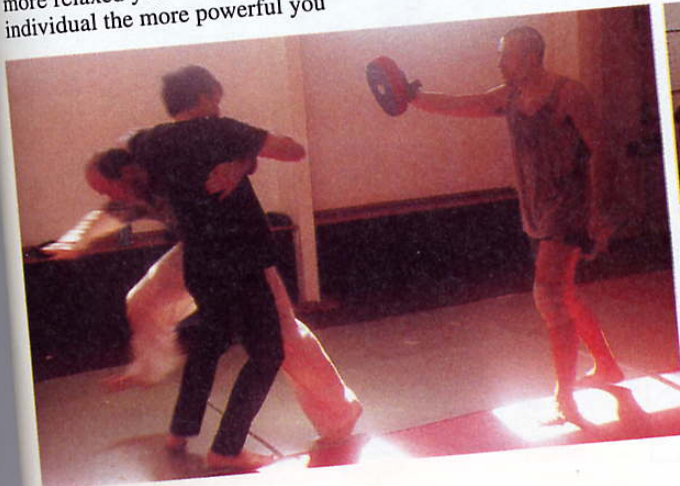


A pad drill that gets...

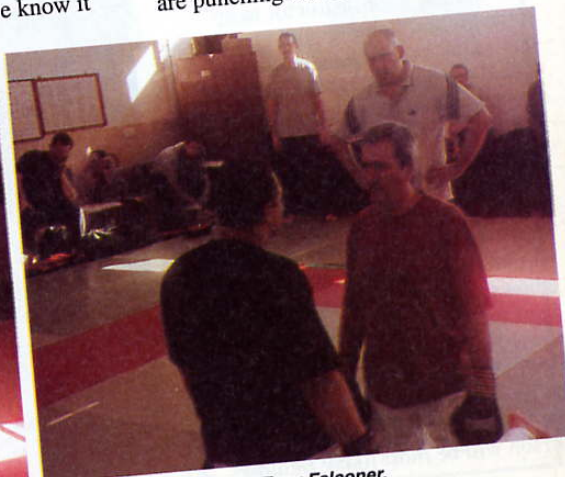
become, most people walk around in fear or a trance a lot of the time. Their mind drifts and they go into different states of feeling or thinking they are confident then vulnerable etc. They wind themselves up about things that will most likely not happen; with all this tension and stress held in the muscles, it's more likely they will harm themselves than if they were relaxed more. Be fearful when you have to be, like if someone is coming towards you and no, they don't always come waving an axe. Use fear as power and not an excuse to give up on yourself. Ask yourself, how hard would you fight for a loved one? The SPA has always prided itself in pushing individuals so they felt a level of discomfort to simulate real life situations on the street. This allows individuals to push themselves to their maximum and allows them to understand fear and/or confront it. We are always learning from other systems and never think we know it

all. Being open to another way of training helps us all deal with conflict.

Right, getting back to the drills, try this one for a pain factor of eight. Have your partner put on one focus mitt. You have a glove on one hand and then grip your partner's other hand (if you punch with your right grip with your left), keep your fingers so your partner's hand is on top gripping your fingers underneath. Your partner is pulling your arm away from you and you're pulling your hand away from them; the other hand is used to punch the focus mitt. Whilst you're pulling your arm back your partner feels like they are pulling you all over the place, so stand your ground and use the strength in your arms and legs, but don't forget to keep hitting the pad. Now the next part of the drill is to place your arm straight up in front of your eye level and get your partner to do the same. You place your hands together and whilst you are punching the focus mitt your



...harder and harder.



Level 5, Pete Robins and Tony Falconer.



Going through the rules (NO RULES).

partner is pushing your other arm down towards the floor. Your arm must stay straight throughout the drills and not bent at the elbow.

Do all drills for one minute each on both sides then change over the glove and pad and repeat the whole drill again for your partner. The whole drill takes twelve minutes so see how you feel. These types of drills continued and Al was still just warming up, he could see the adrenaline running through us and the atmosphere was electric. We did many other drills that included a pain factor of 10+.

Try this next drill on the floor, if you feel uncomfortable fighting upright then you will quickly lose your confidence on the floor. To really push yourself and your system I beg that you ask your instructor to do some ground fighting with you. If you don't knock the person out first it will quickly end up being scrappy close combat and within seconds you will be pushed to the floor.

When you train you must push your system to the limits and ensure that you are learning as much as you can about street awareness. Have your partner lie on the floor and use your elbows to put pressure on their body. Start from the ankles and work towards their face putting pressure from your elbows onto their legs, body and then face. Work quickly to get to the top as in real life the other person will be most likely fighting

back with their legs kicking, trying to push you off so they can get on top of you. So, as you quickly work your way to the top either punching their face in (remember, this is only a drill), try to choke them or put a face bar on your partner. Face bars may not be easy to put on when someone is fighting back, that's why its done under pressure, but once on they are very effective and a good pain factor 9+. Using your elbows and forearms, bridge the cheek, nose, and chin etc.

any area really on the face. The softer the tissue the better. Switch around after you've had about 3-5 goes and allow your partner to have a go, remember with all these drills have the utmost respect for your partner, if you don't they will be next.

SPA seminars allow you to train with all types of people of all sizes and shapes, this allows you to really push yourself and prove to yourself that your system works under pressure. With fatigue setting in after two hours you can imagine many men that would use purely strength or size to win a fight and deteriorate rapidly if they don't have the right mental and positive focused attitude. When you train, train with as many people as you can, not just the people you like. Choose the people you don't like the look of, they may be bigger and look stronger than you and some people look as hard as nails, just standing toe to toe and training with them can really have you feeling the adrenaline rush.

The last drill of the day was pain factor 100+, oh yes; Al asked us all to sit at the edge of the mats and told us that the next drill was only for people who want to do it. He commented, "The Self Protection Association has five fighting levels — this is number five. Wearing boxing gloves you will kneel in front of your partner, with the sound of the whistle off you go.



Punch Rule 1.

Anything goes, you punch as hard and as fast as you can, when we train this we do it in threes and keep going one after each other, but today we will do the drill in fixed pairs, Tony and Tim will go first to demonstrate”.

Looking around I could see the peoples faces change when Tony and Tim demonstrated the drill, it was hard as the sound of the punches bounced around the room. Both of them were a good match, you could hear the punches more than see them. Tony got a good punch to Tim’s right eye but Tim would just not stop. The whistle went and they finally stopped as a round of applause went up from everyone sitting around the mat.

“Thanks Tony and Tim for a great demo. Well that’s level five, who wants to have a go? Remember anything goes, but if you can get on a wrist lock or find a pressure point, try it” Al said.

We paired off and those who wanted to tried out level five did so, it was a real adrenalin buzz. Looking around everyone seemed to be bushed. It was funny; as Al hadn’t even started to do many of the other

drills he had planned for the day, the hard man he is.

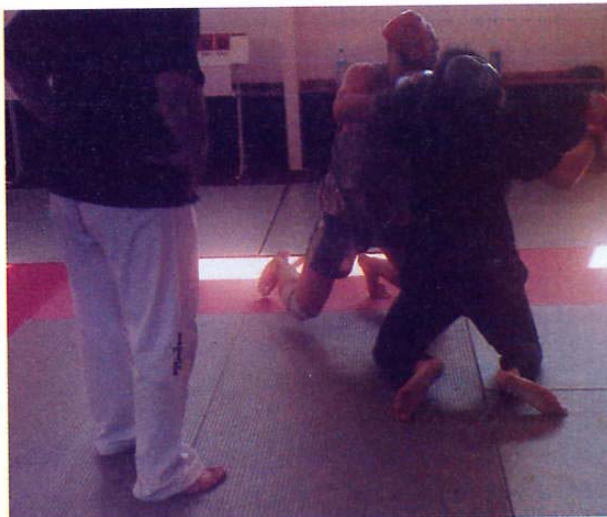
With time running out Al called us all onto the mat for a group photo and asking Tony to come forward they surprised some of Tony’s students by giving out some well earned grades, so well done to Bradley Stuart, Duncan Storr, Roger Kirkham, Brandon Gold and Alan Hannah. Al thanked everyone again for coming and gave a big thank you to Alan Ferrary, Club Chairman at the V & E Judokwai for letting us use the centre.

It was a nice end to an amazing day, it was hard work and I

felt fit, fit to drop but inside I felt good. Remember the main thing is that your system works for you and your belief system believes it.

Stay strong, Sevim Necati.

Sadly Pete Robins passed away before this article went to print. Our condolences to Pete Robins’ family.



Punch Rule 2.

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