

# The MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY For HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP

## Drills for Use in the Training of the German Longsword And Other Companion Weapons

September, 2006

**PREFACE:** The following drills are to be considered foundational. Over time, other variations of these drills, as well as new drills, will be added. These drills come from a variety of sources. Many were developed by MASHS instructors. Others come from Christian Tobler's book Fighting with the German Longsword, and are credited as such. Drills from other sources are also credited. Unless noted otherwise, all drills are with weapons.

**NOTE:** For two-person drills the Agent is the one who initiates the action (the attacker), and the Patient is the one who responds to the action (the defender). During training sessions, the solo drills will be performed in a group. Away from training, the solo drills can be done individually.

### **LESSON 2: MOVEMENT**

#### **DRILL 1: FOOTWORK, LINEAR MOVEMENT, SOLO, WITHOUT WEAPONS**

1. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's count, and at a moderate pace, the participants take passing steps forward until impeded. Participants turn. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
2. At the instructor's count, and at a moderate pace, the participants take passing steps backward until impeded. Participants turn. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
3. Participants begin with the left leg lead. At the instructor's count, the participants take gathering steps forward until impeded. Participants turn and take a right leg lead. Upon the instructor's count, the participants take gathering steps forward until impeded. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
4. Repeat No. 3 gathering backwards.

#### **DRILL 2: FOOTWORK, MOVING OFF LINE, SOLO, WITHOUT WEAPONS**

1. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the participants take a slope pace forward and to the right. At the instructor's second count, the participants recover back to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
2. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with right leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the participants take a slope step forward and to the left. At

- the instructor's second count, the participants recover back to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
3. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the participants take a slope step backwards and to the right. At the instructor's second count, the participants recover forward to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
  4. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with right leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the participants take a slope step backwards and to the left. At the instructor's second count, the participants recover forward to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation: increase the pace between repetitions.
  5. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the line takes a compass step forward with the right foot, pivoting on the left foot. At the instructor's second count, the participants recover back to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation 1: Switching to right leg lead, participants will compass forward by stepping with the left foot while pivoting on the right. Variation 2: Increase the pace between repetitions.
  6. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's first count, the line takes a compass step backward and to the left, pivoting on the left foot. At the instructor's second count, the participants recover back to their starting stance. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation 1: Switching to right leg lead, participants will compass backward by stepping with the left foot while pivoting on the right. Variation 2: Increase the pace between repetitions.
  7. Participants face the instructor, in the proper stance with left leg forward. At the instructor's first count, participants take a transverse step to the right. At the instructor's second count participants take a transverse step to the left. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.
  8. Repeat No. 7, however at the start of each count, the participants do a change step before each transverse step. Variation: Increase the pace between repetitions.

### **LESSON 3: THE PRIMARY GUARDS**

#### **DRILL 1: THE GUARDS, SOLO**

1. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in right Vom Tag. At the instructor's count, the participants take passing steps forward, alternating from left Vom Tag to right Vom Tag. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation 1: Increase the pace between repetitions. Variation 2: Repeat stepping backwards.
2. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in right Ochs. At the instructor's count, the participants take passing steps forward, alternating from left Ochs to right Ochs. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation 1: Increase the pace between repetitions. Variation 2: Repeat stepping backwards.
3. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in right Pflug. At the instructor's count, the participants take passing steps forward, alternating from left Pflug to right Pflug. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Variation 1: Increase the pace between repetitions. Variation 2: Repeat stepping backwards.

**DRILL 2: CHANGING GUARDS, FOOTWORK FIRST, SOLO**

1. Participants are set in lines facing the instructor, in right Ochs. The instructor calls out passing steps or changes in weight distribution. Participants determine what guard to shift to based on the footwork.
2. Weight forward, shift to Pflug.
3. Weight back, shift to Ochs
4. Pass forward, shift to same guard on other side.
5. Variation 1: Start in Vom Tag with left leg lead. Pass forward results in Alber with right leg lead. Variation 2: Pass backwards.

**DRILL 3: WORKING THROUGH THE GUARDS, SOLO**

Use Christian Tobler's Drills No. 1, 2 & 3, found on pages 37 and 38 of Fighting with the German Longsword.

**LESSON 4: THE SECONDARY GUARDS**

**DRILL 1: THE GUARDS, SOLO**

Use Christian Tobler's Drill No. 4, found on page 48 of Fighting.

**LESSON 5: THE THREE WOUNDERS**

**DRILL 1: CUTTING, SOLO**

1. Participants are set in a line facing the instructor, in right Vom Tag. At the instructors count, the participants take a passing step forward and cut an Oberhau to the left to Alber, then recovers into left Vom Tag. At the next count, the participants will be cutting from left Vom Tag to Alber and recovering into right Vom Tag. Repeat at the instructor's discretion. Repeat the same drill cutting Unterhau. Repeat the same drill cutting Mittelhau. Variation 1: increase the pace between repetitions. Variation 2: repeat stepping backwards.
2. Repeat all three cuts from Nebenhut and then from Schranckhut.

**DRILL 2: CUTTING AGAINST A PELL. SOLO**

1. Participants line up in front of a pell, in right Vom Tag, in measure (one step back). Participants then take a passing step forward to strike an Oberhau. After the strike the participant recovers backward into right Vom Tag. Each participant should do at least five repetitions, then move to the back of the line. The drill can be repeated at the discretion of the instructor. Repeat the drill starting from left Vom Tag.
2. Repeat the drill cutting an Unterhau, from both right and left Vom Tag.
3. Repeat the drill cutting a Mittelhau, from both right and left Vom Tag.
4. Repeat the drill, performing all three cuts from right and left Nebenhut.
5. Repeat the drill, performing all three cuts from right and left Schranckhut.
6. Variation: The Participants can strike making multiple cuts into different quadrants.

**DRILL 3: STRIKING WITH THE SWORD**

Use Christian Tobler's drill No. 5, found on page 65 of Fighting.

**DRILL 4: THRUSTING WITH THE SWORD**

Use Christian Tobler's drill No. 6, found on page 70 of Fighting.

**DRILL 5: SLICING WITH THE SWORD**

Use Christian Tobler’s drill No. 7, found on page 73 of Fighting.

**DRILL 6: ‘PUTTING IT TOGETHER” MOVEMENT DRILL, SOLO**

*NOTE: At this stage of training, it is important that the participant to be able to move into all the actions with fluidity and mobility. This is an important drill that will help achieve this goal.*

Participants are asked to spread throughout the training area making sure they have ample room to move around without interference. At the instructor’s command, each participant should move freely, moving from and into all the guards, cuts, and thrusts, using all the footwork patterns. They should move from defensive positions into offensive actions, and visa-versa. All this should be done without stopping. During this drill, the instructor should observe each participant carefully to ensure that they are moving in multiple directions with their footwork, and that their sword work maintains proper form. Instructors should stop the drill periodically to share general observations. Start this drill slowly at first and then speed up the pace at subsequent repetitions.

**LESSON 6: INITIATIVE**

**DRILL 1: FUHLEN**

Use Christian Tobler’s drill No. 8, found on page 81 of Fighting.

**DRILL 2: “TIC-TOC” TWO PERSON DRILL**

1. Participants pair up in two opposing lines. Select one line to be the Agent and the other to be the Patient. The Agents assume right Vom Tag, while the Patients assume right leg lead Alber.
2. Start slowly. On the instructors count, the Agents throw an Oberhau with a passing step forward. At the same time the Patient responds by cutting upward from Alber, with a passing step backwards. The blades should make contact with each other.
3. Since the Patient is now in right Vom Tag and the Agent is now in right leg lead Alber, the roles are reversed and at the instructors next count the drill is repeated.
4. Repeat at the Instructor’s discretion.
5. Variation 1: Both the Agent and the Patient switch to left Vom Tag.
6. Variation 2: Repeat drill cutting Unterhau, with both the Agent and the Patient in right Vom Tag.
7. Variation 3: Both the Agent and the Patient switch to left Vom Tag.

**LESSON 7: DEFENDING WITH ATTACKS, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

**DRILL 1;**

Use Christian Tobler’s drills No. 9 through 16 starting on page 85 of Fighting.

**DRILL 2: DEFENDING AGAINST A SELECTION OF ATTACKS, IN ROTATION**

1. Participants pair up in two opposing lines, in right Vom Tag. Instructors select one line to be the Agents and the other to be the Patients. Start slowly.
2. On the instructor’s count, Agents throw one of five possible attacks: Vertical Oberhau, diagonal Oberhau, Mittlehau, or Unterhau, or leg cut at their choice without announcing it.

3. Passive agents must recognize the attack and provide the appropriate defense; Ochs, Pflug, or Schranckhut.
4. After five repetitions, rotate clockwise to give new partners. Do this until everyone has had a chance to be a Patient 3 times.
5. Variation 1: Patients may start in the guard of their choice.
6. Variation 2: Start with all participants in a left side guard.
7. Variation 3: Constrain the Patients to start in Ochs, Pflug, Nebenhut or Schranckhut.

### **DRILL 3: DEFENDING AGAINST A SELECTION OF ATTACKS WHILE MOVING.**

1. Participants line up in pairs in close measure, with room for the Patient to move backward. This drill must start slowly, with the more experienced person being the Agent.
2. Starting in right Vom Tag, at the instructor's count, the Agent steps forward while the Patient steps backward. The Agent throws one of four attacks; a vertical Oberhau, diagonal Oberhau, Mittlehau, or an Unterhau. The Patient must determine which attack is presented and provide the proper defense; Ochs, Pflug, or Schranckhut.
3. At the instructor's next count, the Agent recovers into the over the head version of Vom Tag and then attacks to the other side. Again, the Patient must identify the attack and provide the proper defense.
4. When impeded, change directions so that the Patient becomes the Agent.

## **LESSON 8: THE FIVE MEISTERHAU, SOLO AND TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE: The solo drills would be very effective against a pell.*

### **DRILL 1: ZORNHAU:**

Use Christian Tobler's drills No. 17 on page 96 of Fighting, and No 18 on page 104 of Fighting.

### **DRILL 2: KRUMPHAU**

Use Christian Tobler's drills No. 19 on page 108 of Fighting, and drills Nos. 20 and 21 on page 117 of Fighting.

### **DRILL 3: ZWERCHHAU**

Use Christian Tobler's drills No. 22 on page 120 of Fighting, and No 23 on page 124 of Fighting.

### **DRILL 4: SCHIELHAU**

Use Christian Tobler's drills No. 24 on page 131 of Fighting, and Nos. 25 and 26 on page 135 of Fighting.

### **DRILL 5: SCHEITELHAU**

Use Christian Tobler's drills No. 27 on page 138 of Fighting, and No. 28 on page 142 of Fighting.

### **DRILL 6: THE WALLER-DUCKLIN DRILL**

*NOTE: This is a drill based on a stage combat scenario developed by John Waller and Keith Ducklin, authors of the book, Sword Fighting: A Manual for Actors and Directors (Applause Books, 2001). This drill gets the participants moving around each other as opposed to just moving linearly, incorporates many of the cutting actions, and many of the primary and secondary guards. It also enhances the concepts of measure and tempo, and introduces some half-sword techniques.*

1. The Agent (A) stands in right Vom Tag, while the Patient (P) assumes right Nebenhut.
2. A takes a slope pace to the right and proceeds to cut at P's leading leg.
3. P blocks A's cut with a left Schranckhut. P takes a passing step forward and cuts at A's leg.
4. A blocks P's cut with his own left Schranckhut, and counters by taking another slope pace cutting an Oberhau towards the left side of P's head.
5. P blocks A's Oberhau with a hangen guard (Ochs with tip very low) on the left side so that the Oberhau glances off P's blade.
6. P counters with a Mittelhau from the right.
7. A pivots and blocks the on-coming Mittelhau with a low Kron. A counters by pushing P's blade away, pivots so that he is facing P and thrust to P's chest.
8. P passes back, performs a Krumphau catching the inside surface of A's blade and sets the thrust aside to the outside. Continuing the action without stopping P attempts an Oberhau to the top of A's head.
9. A quickly blocks the on-coming Oberhau by bringing his sword up to his head into a modified 1<sup>st</sup> guard of the Half-sword (aka, St George). A counters by quickly snapping his sword to the left, setting aside the blocked Oberhau and thrusting into P's face with the pommel.
10. P performs a passing step back. P stops the pommel strike by extending his left arm and catching the elbow of A's right arm, in the midst of the pommel strike. At the same time, P brings his sword up to thrust A in the torso.
11. Partners reverse roles.
12. Repeat at the instructor's discretion.

### **DRILL 7: ATTACK/COUNTER-ATTACK, TWO PERSON DRILL**

*NOTE: This drill requires the use of padded masters. Participants must wear the minimum safety equipment which includes a mask, hand protection, groin protection for the men, and chest protector for the ladies. Extra padding such as a jacket, tunic, or gambeson is recommended.*

1. The instructor chooses the Agent and the Patient.
2. The instructor gives the Agent specific area to attack. Likewise, the instructor gives the Patient a specific target area in which to counter-attack. These instructions are given so that neither participant is aware of the other's assigned targets.
3. At the instructor's the Agent commences to attack to his/her assigned target area. The patient must defend (using any of the techniques in the Hierarchy of Defense in Lesson 1), and if successful can counter-attack at his/her assigned target.
4. Depending on the number of participants, this can be repeated. The roles are then reversed with different target areas assigned.
5. The entire drill is repeated until all participants have had an opportunity to perform this drill as both Agent and Patient.

**LESSON 9: THE SPRECHFENSTER, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Chapter 15 of Fighting.*

**LESSON 10: THE EIGHT WINDINGS, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Chapter 16 of Fighting.*

**LESSON 11: WRESTLING, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Chapter 14 of Fighting. Also refer to Section 3 on wrestling in Secrets of German Medieval combat.*

**LESSON 12: HALFSWORD, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Chapter 14 of Fighting. Also refer Section 4 on armored combat in Secrets.*

**DRILL 1: FUHLEN**

Use Christian Tobler's drill on page 206 of Fighting.

**DRILL 2: USING THE THIRD GUARD**

Use Christian Tobler's drill on page 217 of Fighting.

**DRILL 3: USING THE POMMEL**

Use Christian Tobler's drill on page 223 of Fighting.

**LESSON 13: THE SPEAR, TWO PERSON DRILLS**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Chapter 19 of Fighting. Also refer to Section 4 on armored combat in Secrets.*

**DRILL 1: THRUSTING**

Use Christian Tobler's drill on page 196 of Fighting.

**DRILL 2: FUHLEN**

Use Christian Tobler's drill on page 199 of Fighting.

**LESSON 14: THE DAGGER**

**LESSON 15: SWORD AND BUCKLER**

*NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Have participants practice and perform the techniques shown in the photographic illustrations in Section 2 in Secrets.*