

The MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY For HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP

A Curriculum for the French Smallsword July, 2003; Revised November, 2006

PREFACE:

This curriculum is derived from two 18th century sources, namely Fencing Familiarized, or A New Treatise on the Art of Sword Play, by Monsieur J. Olivier and Domenico Angelo's The School of Fencing. References to those two treatises are noted with [Ov] for Olivier's Part and Chapter, and [DA] for Angelo's Pages and Plates. In addition, there are also three attachments that are part of Lesson 9.

The smallsword system as presented here is very concise and comprehensive. This curriculum is designed to take the practitioner through the essentials of fencing with the smallsword in a progressive manner. As such it draws no distinction between novice and more advanced levels.

LESSON 1. THEORY

Goal/Milestone: Getting a sense of the fundamentals of smallsword.

- The weapon.
- The four lines.
- Two tempi actions of parry and riposte.
- Fencing engaged, and the use of disengages.
- The use of the feint.

LESSON 2. THE BASICS [Ov: I-3, DA: Plates 2 & 3]

Goal/Milestone: Learning how to hold the smallsword, the basic stance and guards, and engagements of the blade.

- Stance in Carte and Tierce
- Engagement in Carte and Tierce
- Fencing Measure

LESSON 3. FOOTWORK [Ov: I-4; DA: Pages 8 & 9, Plates 32 & 33]

Goal/Milestone: Learning the basic footwork associated with the smallsword.

- Simple advance and retreat (retire)
- The Extension
- The Lounge
- Passes and Voltes (demi and full)

LESSON 4. HANDWORK: GUARDS, PUSHES, PARADES & RETURNS [OV: I-5 through 11, 14 through 18 ; DA Plates 4 through 9, 15 through 28]

Goal/Milestone: Learning the Guards; learning how to Thrust (Pushing), learning the Parries (Parades) and Ripostes (Returns).

- Thrusting Carte, Parrying Carte, Riposte Cart and Cart over the Arm
- Thrusting Tierce, Parrying Tierce, Riposte in Tierce and Seconde
- The Half Circle Parry
- The Quinte/Octave Parry
- The Prime Parry
- Countering the Parries
- The Flanconade

LESSON 5. OF DISENGAGEMENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS [Ov: I-12,13,23; DA, Plate 29, Pages 57 through 60]

Goal/Milestone: Understanding of blade engagement and disengagements.

- Upon the Blade
- Under the Wrist
- Over the Point (the Coupe)

LESSON 6. FEINTS [Ov: I-19 through 22; DA: Pages 41 through 43, 46 through 50]

Goal/Milestone: Learning this fundamental action, which is key to successful attacks.

- Une-Deux
- Une-Deux-Trois
- Feint Seconde Carte Over the Arm
- Feint Seconde Carte Inside
- Defense Against Feints – The Counter Disengagements [Ov: II-1,2; DA: Pages 41 & 42, 67 & 68]
- The Circle Parade [Ov: II-3]

LESSON 7. ACTIONS ON THE BLADE [Ov: I-24,25; DA: Pages 50 through 56]

Goal/Milestone: Learning how to open up lines of attack by use of actions against your opponent's blade.

- Beating the Sword
- The Glizade
- Crossing the Sword [Ov: II-10; DA: Pages 53 & 54]

LESSON 8. ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

Goal/Milestone: Understanding and executing these special smallsword techniques.

- Of Attacks [Ov: II-4]
- Thrusting, Time Thrusts [Ov: II-6 thru 9; DA: Pages 69 & 70]
- Return with the Wrist [Ov: II-11]
- Parrying Tierce and Quart [Ov: II-13]
- Thrusting and Parrying Feints [Ov: II-14,15]
- Use of the Pass [DA: plates 30 & 31, Pages 60 through 67]

LESSON 9. STRATAGEMS: THEORETICAL COMPONENTS

Goal/Milestones: Understanding the tactical applications of smallsword.

- Of the Assault – See Attachment 1 [Ov: II-16]
- Of Measure – See Attachment 2 [Ov: II-17]
- Of the Left Handed Opponent – See Attachment 3 [Ov: II-18, DA: Page 80]

LESSON 10. OF DISARMS [DA: Plates 34-40]

Goal/Milestone: Learning to disarm your opponent upon his attack and countering.

- Disarm After Parrying the Carte Thrust
- Disarm on the Thrust in Tierce
- Disarm on the Carte or Seconde Thrust, after Parrying Prime
- Disarm after the Parry on the Outside of the Sword