



Staff Sgt. Cathy Duttine demonstrates a strong “base,” preventing 1st Sgt. Curtis Mosely from pushing or knocking her off her feet during self-defense training at Fort Drum, N.Y. (Photo by Michelle Kennedy, Fort Drum Mountaineer)

Fort Drum NCOs Teach Self-Defense as Part of SHARP

By Michelle Kennedy

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FORT DRUM, N.Y. — As an extension of the Army’s Sexual Harassment / Assault Response and Prevention program, combatives instructors from the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Light Fighter School offered tips and tricks to prevent a possible attack during self-defense classes this week.

SHARP teaches the Army community how to prevent, respond to and report sexual assaults, but not how to defend oneself against a potential attacker, according to 1st Sgt. Curtis Mosely, self-defense instructor and 10th Brigade Support Battalion rear provisional senior enlisted adviser.

The new self-defense classes are an extension of the 10th Mountain Division’s SHARP program, according to Staff Sgt. Joseph Cole, division combatives noncommissioned officer in charge.

“(The Army) teaches Soldiers about sexual harassment response and reporting, and we want to give them examples of what to do before someone attempts to attack or take control of somebody,” he said. “That’s why

we’re trying to implement these self-defense classes. It’s not just for female Soldiers and female civilians; it’s for male Soldiers and male civilians as well.”

Many of the defense techniques taught in the class are based on Brazilian jiu-jitsu. By using simple, joint manipulation and leverage-based techniques, men and women — regardless of how strong — can defend themselves, Mosely explained.

“We teach techniques that have maximum efficiency with minimal effort — using leverage-based techniques to get away and stay safe,” he said. “The self-defense class gives them techniques to get themselves out of a bad situation. It doesn’t require strength. Gracie Jiu-Jitsu teaches that a smaller, weaker person can survive against a larger, stronger person.”

Instructors began the class by explaining ways to avoid becoming a victim, such as showing signs of confidence and being aware of one’s surroundings. Then, students learn how to properly get to their feet from the sitting position before moving on to resisting and escap-



Adriana Fernandez, a military spouse, uses a defensive move against Staff Sgt. Joseph Cole, self-defense class instructor, Aug. 6 at Atkins Functional Fitness Facility. The classes are a new initiative based on the 10th Mountain Division's Sexual Harassment / Assault Response and Prevention program. (Photo by Michelle Kennedy, Fort Drum Mountaineer)

ing different situations.

"Keeping a strong 'base' — not allowing a person to be pushed or pulled a certain way — can be the different in being attacked or not being attacked," Mosely said.

When introducing a new escape technique, instructors ask for a volunteer from the class. The student is asked to use his or her instinct to try to get away.

"Attackers expect (a victim to fight back)," Mosely added. "Once you start fighting back and you can't get away, you start losing control, getting upset and you're emotionally and physically drained because you've

fought so much to get away and you haven't been (able to escape)."

Although combatives instructors primarily train Soldiers to take the enemy to the mat and defeat them in combat, the self-defense classes focus on providing a means of escape, according to Cole.

"It is not combatives-related," he said. "A lot of the self-defense techniques teach people to stand their ground for a short time. That gives people time to escape and call for help.

"We're not going to teach people to take the fight to the ground. We want them to stay standing or get off the ground," Cole added.

Cole stressed that those interested in attending a self-defense class don't have to be super heroes.

"Bad guys will attack anybody," he said. "They're going to attack someone that appears weak and somebody they can gain control over.

"You don't have to come to the class with any knowledge or experience, just the willingness to be able to protect yourself," Cole continued. "Anyone — from Soldiers who sit behind desks to Soldiers who kick down doors — can be targeted."

Staff Sgt. Cathy Duttine, combatives instructor, agreed, saying she encourages people to attend the self-defense classes, especially the women's self-defense class.

"Generally, women are not stronger than men," she said. "Self-defense is a basic way for women to learn how to protect themselves and not panic and keep that confidence."

The instructors separate male and female students, because attackers generally target their victims differently based on gender, Duttine explained. Attackers often will grab a woman's arm or hair, while they may immediately begin hitting a male victim.

"I hope students take away the knowledge that they don't have to be (fighters) to be able to defend (themselves)," Duttine said. "I hope the students come back, build on what they've learned today and build confidence so it becomes a natural reaction (to an attack)."

Cole and the other instructors hope that by learning ways to defend themselves, students will feel empowered, confident and good about what they are capable of doing to protect themselves.

"We teach basic, simple techniques that can be performed at any time and give them an escape route so they can get to a safe place," he added.

For Pam Burris, a military spouse, Tuesday's self-defense class was the first time she had been exposed to this type of training.

"It's easier to get away than I thought it would be," she said. "I really enjoyed it. I feel more confident."

El Easley, also a military spouse, said she had attended a self-defense course at a different installation, but said

she still learned a few new tricks this week.

“This is useful information,” she said. “One move that really sticks out in my mind is how to get out of a choke hold.”

Both Burris and Easley said they intend to continue attending the self-defense classes.

“I think consistency will help me retain what I’m supposed to do (during an attack),” Easley said.



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