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Special Edition:
Blade Series
Part 1

November 2012

Martial Arts USA is an organization dedicated to bringing martial artists regardless of style under a single banner to promote learning and fellowship. Promotions are currently provided for a variety of martial art systems.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Mr. Lones holds the traditional ranks of Black Belt Sixth Dan-Karate, Second Dan-Jujutsu. He also holds Black Belts, advanced ranks and Instructor certifications in several other arts ranging from the traditional to the more modern combative methods. Integrated Martial Concepts Academy offers three tracks of martial arts training ranging from a comprehensive traditional non sport program to more modern training programs for the general public and security professional community to include specialized training in the blade arts.



MAUSA SPECIAL EDITION: The Blade Series Part I

Over the next couple of months, I thought I would take a different course with the Voice. Starting with this edition through the next several months the topics will solely be about bladed weapons. There will be a lot of articles related to knives but also other more traditional bladed weapons. I will also look at some self defense scenarios and other tid bits regarding the topic.

With that said, I am calling on all potential authors to help out. Do you have a traditional bladed weapon you would like to write about? Maybe a specific defense scenario or kata, you would like to share in writing and picture? Bring it on.

And with all due respect, I am calling out the Senior level of the organization. Our “brain trust” so to speak. Without your knowledge and guidance, none of us would be able to grow as martial artists. If you have some insight you would wish to share please do so.

Future Series are in the plans. I am thinking about a focus on a specific art or traditional weapon, even on general nutrition and fitness. As part of all these series, you may see reprints of past articles that fit the specific topic of the series. I hope you enjoy and help out along the way.



QUOTES AND WORDS OF WISDOM

“Mercy is very important in a fight, be in a position to give it, not ask for it!”

“I hope and pray that you never have to be in one (knife fight), but don’t take on conventional wisdom that says expect to be cut. Sure there is a high likelihood of that happening but why go into a fight with a defeated attitude. Don’t go into a knife fight expecting to get cut, go into a knife fight determined to win!”

“Steel seeks flesh! Stick seeks bone! Fighting especially with a weapon is a last resort. Once you have hurt someone, regardless of the situation, there are no take backs. Move with conviction, certainty, and no remorse in all things”

“The blade is just a tool, nothing more. The power (or lack of) lies within the one who holds it”

“Self Defense is NOT a matter of style but one of determination”

“Jozai Senjo! –Always present on the battlefield (of life)”

-the above words of wisdom are brought to you by Ken Lones. Note: Passing along words of wisdom that I have picked up from past instructors and mentors. I give all credit to those who came before me. As martial artists it is our responsibility to take what they give us and make it our own.



Disclaimer: The following articles are provided for informational purposes only. Martial Arts training is a potentially dangerous activity and should only be conducted under a qualified instructor. The possibility of serious injury exists. Any use of information within this article is at your own risk and the author has no responsibility or liability for any injuries or losses that you may incur as a result of acting upon the information provided.

That's not a knife by Kenneth Lones (reprint from VOICE 02/2012)

“What type of knife should I carry?” is a question I receive a lot as I travel from place to place. It most often gets my standard reply, “It depends”. ☺ When choosing what type of knife to carry, you should ask yourself some basic questions to start.

What do you intend to use the knife for? Given the nature of this newsletter, the obvious answer is for self defense. Right? I am sure this is the case but is it the only reason? Of course not. We have to look beyond the obvious to determine what knife will best suite our day to day life.

The knife is both weapon and tool. It can be used as a weapon to take a life but it may also be used as a tool to make life easier. An example from a tactical perspective may be the Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) who carries a knife as a secondary weapon*. Is the LEO capable of using the knife as a weapon? Of course he is, however, it is not the only purpose. Is the blade capable of cutting through a seatbelt to save the life of a trapped wreck victim when seconds count? I personally use mine to cut an apple now and then. ☺

(*Note: I use the term secondary as in it may not be the primary weapon not that it is truly the second line of defense. In my experience, my blades have rarely been the primary “go to weapon” or the second for that matter. However, there have been occasions where my blades have been the first choice to draw. Again, it depends and it is relative to the purpose and circumstance.)

2. **What is the purpose of the knife itself?** Not all knives are created equal. Certain blades are better suited for certain tasks. Once you have answered question number one, you now want to look for a knife that will meet as many of the “intended purposes” on your list as possible. Again, look at the knife as a tool and not just a weapon. The more tasks the blade is able to “check off your list” the more useful the knife is to you as a whole. Note that it is also important to take into account what the knife will not do.

3. **How do I want to carry the knife?** This is an important factor in what knife you should carry. Where do you want to put the knife on your person? Do you want to carry it in your pocket or clipped to your belt? Do you intend to carry the knife in an overt or covert method (open carry vs. hidden)?

4. **Fixed blade or folder?** Once all the above have been answered, you will find several knives that will meet your needs. In order to narrow the field of choices, ask the question “fixed blade or tactical folder?” The folder is often the choice as many people view fixed blades as intimidating and more violent. Which is better? ... **WAIT FOR IT....**It depends. ☺ It depends on all the above. The reality is that it is just a tool and is only as good as the user in choosing the tool for the project. A fixed blade is faster in deployment for the simple fact that a folder requires an extra step before being used. You must open the blade. Since the average knife carrying person does not practice the art of opening a folder, a fixed blade will make it to the fight faster than a folder. It is even more important to note that even for those of us that trains opening a folder still consider a fixed blade to be faster, again for the simple fact of one less step. I have carried both under varying circumstances, sometimes at the same time. What works for you?

5. ***Is it legal?*** The final step goes beyond your personal needs and choice of blades. You now have to determine does the knife I have chosen to meet my needs fit within the rules of law where I live or intend to carry the knife? I am asked this question the most and I rarely answer directly....**Can you guess my answer ©...**Correct, it depends. It depends on the rules of your local city and state. For the most part, a basic small bladed knife is acceptable; however, you must not skip this step. Just like concealed carry gun laws, the rules are not universal. In fact, there are places where although it is okay to carry a knife in the city, it may not be permissible in a specific area of the city like a school or office building.

Ultimately the choice is yours. Use these steps as a guide to making that choice. If you have an question regarding a specific knife or brand, I will be happy to help research and offer an opinion (worth what its price – free). Just keep in mind in the end you're the one carrying the knife. What would fit me may not fit you.

If you have a specific type of knife you would like to see discussed here, please send a note to the author at imca@knology.net.



“Shoot the Marble” by Ken Lones reprint VOICE 01/2012

I have been asked many questions regarding the use and carry of knives. What is the best knife to carry? How and where should I carry it? What is the best defense against a blade? These questions are just a few of the many I receive and are all valid questions. Truth is they all fall under the answer, “it depends.” It depends on the form, fit, and function of what you intend for the knife to be. How does it fit you and your circumstance is key to your decision making. Over the next several newsletters I will attempt to provide my humble opinion to answer some of the questions I receive. Take them for what they are worth and remember what you paid for the advice. ☺ Absorb what is useful and discard the rest.

This month I would like to take a brief moment to discuss the carry and deployment of a tactical folder. The tactical folder is becoming quite common in public. I see many people carrying them in their pocket ready to access. But I have to ask, is it really that accessible? Any weapon you carry is only good if you can get to it. We train drill after drill, flowing from one technique to another but all that training is for nothing if you cannot even get the blade out of your pocket and ready for action.

I spend a lot of time personally and with my students working drills solely focused on deploying the weapon in a stable and ready posture for action. The faster the tactical folder can be opened and ready for use, the less time for your opponent to seize the opportunity between thought and action.

For the purpose of this discussion, let us take a look at the most common carry for the tactical folder, the front pants pocket. If I asked for a show of hands of who has seen someone walking around with that highly visible clip of the tactical folder showing in the lower corner of their pants pockets, I can envision almost everyone raising their hand.

Here are my thoughts on the subject.

The tactical folder being used in this carry fashion should have a “tip” up when closed position relative to how it clips to the pants pocket. This allows for a quicker opening response as you do not have to fumble to reposition the folder before deploying the blade.



The ideal placement of the tactical folder in the pocket is not at the lower corner but rather more forward of the hip, more centered to the body than not. The reason for this is threefold. First, it is a matter of defending the opening. The lower corner position forces you to isolate your arm to the other muscle groups as you move your arm to the side and raise the elbow to “clear” the pocket. This puts the arm in a weakened state and is more acceptable to counter or disruption during transition from pocket to fight. By positioning the folder more centered to the body and pocket you create a stable base



using your hip against the hand and folder as it deploys. If you are rushed and grabbed you may use your core body muscles to help wrestle the blade into a more advantageous position. Second, the more forward carry within the pocket allows you to reach the weapon with both hands. Yes, we do have a strong hand and a weak hand but the attack often dictates which one we may use. It also helps reinforce the idea that we must train the opening of the folder and fighting with a blade with both hands. And third, this position allows us to take a non-confrontational defensive posture by putting

a thumb in each pocket and letting the hand rest over the top of the pocket. This appears to be a laid back posture, relaxed and not threatening. The truth is that the hands are quickly deployed to the fight and one hand is covering and prepping a surprise (the knife).



For deploying the blade, let us look at the body mechanics and hand positioning.

The thumb is placed inside the pocket behind the tactical folder. The weak hand in some applications may be used to pull clothing such as a shirt or jacket up and out of the way.



The tip of the deploying hand's middle finger is placed at the bottom of the clip. As you begin to grip the tactical folder between the thumb and fingers, the middle finger will be used to help open the clip and pull the folder from the pocket and into the hand.



Once the tactical folder has cleared the pocket, it is brought to a forward pointing position securely in the hand with the thumb resting on the opening mechanism usually a stud or opening within the blade. The bottom of the fist should rest on or in close proximity of the hip to help reinforce the hand if disrupted during transition.

The blade is brought to an open position by using the thumb against the opening mechanism in a firm manner. I often hear the term “shooting the marble” when opening a tactical folder. This is a good analogy. You should use your thumb to open the blade much like shooting a marble, firm and directly to the target. You should not flick the blade open with a side motion. This is wasted motion and a delay to bringing the weapon to defense. By “shooting the marble”, you are able to open the blade directly at the target. Once opened it may be brought into the fight.



This is by no means an all inclusive tutorial about the deployment of a tactical folder. It is a start to training and words for thought. Please remember that you should only train, empty hand or weapon, under the guidance of a qualified instructor. Most importantly, remember training with a weapon can be unforgiving. Steel seeks flesh and given the opportunity will cut deep without regard to who is the good guys or the bad guy.



Just one example of a fighting folding knife: The Spyderco Military LH folder

What is the best survival knife? By Ken Lones

I received a message from a MAUSA member stating, “I have been researching survival knives. I have some ideas, but would like to see a discussion about “what is” a survival knife (Theory, practice, and actual suggestions such as BK-2, ESEE, etc.)?” There are a lot of questions to answer in that simple message, so I will start with “what is” a survival knife and go from there and yes it gets my standard reply.... “It depends”. ☺

Truth is one has to go back and ask the basic questions noted in past articles regarding what type of knife to carry.

What do you intend to use the knife for? Given the topic of this article, one may assume the intended purpose is for survival, but in what context? What do you think you will need the blade for? Remember, the knife is both weapon and tool. In the case of a proper survival knife, the optimum word here is tool. One cannot discount the ability of the blade to be used in a self defense scenario, this is of course a topic on survival, but you must take into account what tools you will need to have in order to survive in a specific environment. You want to ensure that the tools and resources that are carried are multi-functional (have more than one purpose). This reduces the number of items you have to keep up with as well as what you have to carry. A lighter load to carry is one of the factors to take into account when concerns of fatigue are at play.

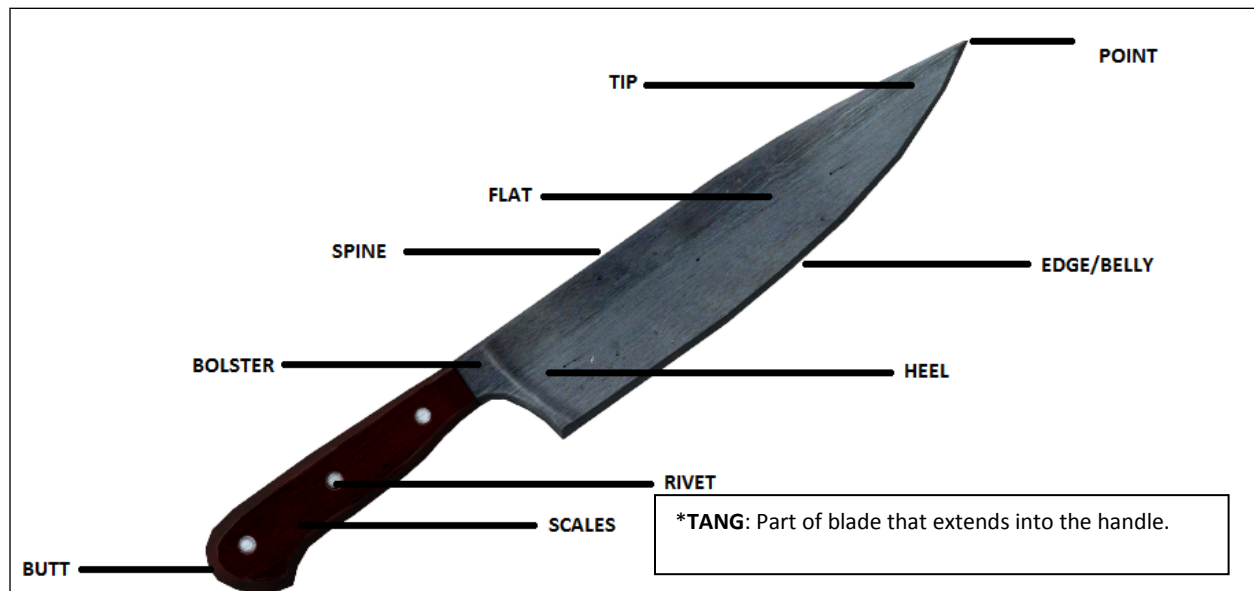
What is the purpose of the knife itself? Sounds redundant I know, but a survival blade has to be looked at in its entirety, “stem to stern” as I say in class. Knowing the intended purpose of the blade itself helps us understand what type of knife we need. The reverse is true as well. What usefulness may be found in the other parts of the knife? Remember, the more tasks the blade and knife as a whole are able to “check off your list” the more useful the knife is to you as a whole.

How do I want to carry the knife? You really have to look beyond just assuming that “clipped to my belt” is the answer and decide what makes best sense for you, your clothing, to include pack or accessories, and the level of accessibility you may require.

Fixed blade or folder? Since we are on the topic of survival knives, I will make this an easy one. Fixed. I will discuss that more in a bit.

Is it legal? This is another easy answer...it depends. ☺ As survival knives go, this really is not a fair topic. Then why bother asking the question? Well it goes back to what you intend to use the knife for and where. Out for a hunt or backpacking is one thing, but carrying it around town ala “Crocodile Dundee” is a whole other story.

Now that you have the “basic five” answers that fit your particular need, Let us look at the physical aspects of the knife itself. The following picture provides some insight into the general parts of the knife. Please keep in mind that this is a basic interpretation and there are many more parts and explanations for those that care.



Point: the point the sharp thing at the end. ☺ The point is used to pierce.

Tip: The tip is the most forward part of the blade to include the point. This is the part that does the fine motor skill/detail cutting work.

Edge/Belly: The edge is the full length of the cutting edge of the blade. It is used for gross motor skill cutting (hacking, chopping, heavy slicing).

Flat: The flat is the side edge of the blade. (The “non-cut’ya” side, comes in twos ☺).

Heel: The heel is the rear part of the blade close to the handle. It is usually the thicker part of the blade.

Spine: The spine is the back of the blade when held in a standard position. Note some blades are sharp on both sides, thus two edged.

Bolster: The bolster is the point at which the blade and handle join. It is designed often to help balance the weight of the knife as well as create a protective barrier between the hand and the edge. It helps keep the hand from sliding up onto the blade.

Scales: The scales are the parts used to create a handle. Some knives do not have a traditional scale pack but are rather wrapped with cord or another material.

Rivets: The rivets are pins of wood or metal that joins the scales to the tang to form the handle.

Tang: The tang is the part of the blade that extends into the handle of the knife.

Butt: The butt, also known as the pommel, is the bottom end of the handle.

You now have the first two components of choosing the right survival knife for use. You have asked the “basic five” and determine your purpose. You know what the general components of a knife are so you can look at your choices more intelligently. Now that the hard stuff is out of the way, what do you look for in a survival knife? The following list is some of the things I recommend but keep in mind, “It depends”. It depends on what your purpose is to how you will decide. Remember form and function drives the decision process.

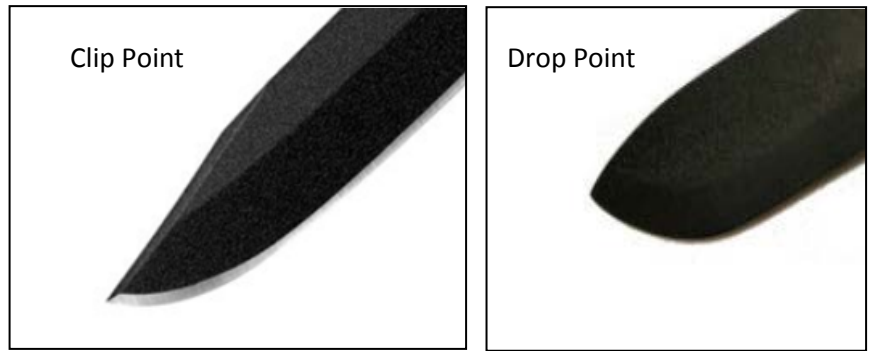
Fixed blade vs. Folding Blade: A fixed blade is a must have given a choice. They are simple in that there are no extra steps to deploy it for use and they are more durable than folding blades having no moving parts which have a tendency to fail. Its durability also offers you more options for use as a tool.

Full vs. Narrow Tang: A full tang is another must. What this means is that the blade and handle are constructed from one continuous piece of metal. If you removed the handle cover (scales), the blade and tang would still look like a knife ready for use. A narrow tang is more or less a thin insert that goes into the handle. A full tang also allows you to maintain the utility of the knife if and when the scales fail or break. Just wrap it with cord or cloth and keep on going. On the surface both would look great but the full tang has more durability and strength for rugged use. It is less likely to break under stress. Forget about the “Rambo knives” with hollow handle and fishing lures in it. It is a big knife and looks pretty but is not very functional. Think about chopping a small tree with it. The only thing keeping it together is a small pin or weld at the top of the handle. With a full tang, the impact goes through the entire tool rather than focusing on a single point of failure.

Big vs. Small: It depends on the intended purpose. A machete has a specific purpose in the jungle but is not as functional when it comes to being used as an intricate cutting utensil. Think again about your purpose and how many things you can “check off your list” with the selection you make. The blade should be small enough for the fine motor skill tasks that you may encounter (food prep and simple prying tool are a couple of examples) but it should also be large enough to be used for those gross motor skill/caveman encounters as well (chopping/splitting wood, shelter building, digging). Weight is also a factor. Remember this is something you have to carry with you. A heavy pack makes a weary traveler. If clipped to your belt it should feel natural and not overly burdensome. If you look at the majority of real survival knives on the market, they are generally only 4 to 6 inches in blade length. Again, a far cry from the “Rambo Knives” we see in film.

Quality, Quality, Quality: What makes up the knife is very important and the cheapest on the market is not always the best. You get what you pay for. For example, not all steel products are equal. The quality of the blade determines its strength and durability, the ability to sharpen easily, and how long it holds that razor’s edge. Is carbon steel better than stainless steel? It depends. They both have their pro’s and con’s. Stainless steel is less prone to rust than carbon steel but the same characteristics that help in that case also make it more difficult to sharpen and can make the blade more brittle. On the reverse, carbon steel is easy to sharpen and is great for chopping or wood splitting techniques due to its durability however it requires more maintenance or it will rust and also become brittle. In short, buy a good quality knife and understand how to take care of it. The tools you carry can only take care of you if you take care of them.

Shape is crucial to purpose: This falls back into what is your purpose. Knives come in a variety of shapes and sizes. What makes a good fighting knife is not always a good utility knife. My suggestion here is a drop point or clip point blade. Both have good utility aspects to them for those fine motor skill cuts but they are durable enough for the tougher jobs in the field. They also serve well as make shift spears for hunting by tying your knife to a stick.



Flat back vs. Serrated Back: The spine of the blade is just as important as the sharp edge. A flat back is my choice here. A serrated edge looks cool and can be used for sawing and the like; however, it limits overall functionality and is simply too difficult to maintain its sharp edges in the primitive wild. A flat back allows you another option for a tool. Whether it is using the flat back to press with your thumb for intricate carving tasks or as a striking surface while using a wood splitting technique (Blade is chopped into top of small log, then you use a stick to strike the back of the blade to force into the wood until it splits).

Razor's Edge: Your blade should have a keen edge stem to stern. You should be able to use any portion of the belly of the blade for whatever task is at hand. A sharp point is also crucial for those piercing requirements from poking a hole into a shelter canvas to its use as a makeshift spear for hunting. Remember, you eat what you kill. There is no Starbucks or McDonald's in the bush. ☺

Solid Butt: Save the jokes for the cheap seats. A flat bottom of the handle is important. Again, it helps "check off" survival utility items on your list. It can be used as a makeshift hammer to be used for light pounding and hammering around the campsite. In reverse, it makes a solid striking surface for hitting with a stick or rock when you need to drive the blade into something. (With the cold air approaching, a good example here is using the blade like an ice pick to chop into the lake ice to open up a fishing hole).

What is the best survival knife? I hope that this information helps in the decision making process. In the end the choice is yours to make. You have to decide based on the knowledge you have about purpose and knife components; you have to decide what you want it to be able to do for you and what you are willing to give up if you like one feature over another. The most important information I can give is that a survival knife is just a tool, nothing more. Its ability to save you in the wild is not contained within it but with in you. Jozai Senjo!

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HEADS UP!! I will be making the rounds in the upcoming months recruiting and volunteering unsuspecting help for the VOICE. As part of the SERIES format I have contemplated, I will need help with self defense methods and scenario training. I want to use this as an opportunity to open up the ranks of MAUSA so we can get to know one another better. It will also give us an opportunity to open our minds related to comparative styles. What I envision is providing a set number of people with a specific attack. You then will have to write a short response to that attack with 5-6 pictures walking through the steps of your defense while staying true to a specific art. Whose game?

DID YOU KNOW?

The British Commando Knife (excerpt from www.macdonaldarms.com/armoury/FairbairnSykes.php)

There is something about a weapon that is both functional and pleasing to the eye at the same time. Where the weapon possesses admirable qualities of both form and function, then its appeal is all the greater overall. This martial elegance can be found in all finely crafted weapon types through the ages, from longbows to long swords, rapiers to broadswords, small swords to pistols and rifles to aircraft. When the proportions of all individual parts work together in a perfect balance to create an aesthetically pleasing but functional weapon or machine, then emotionally contrasting elements speak volumes such as aggressiveness with beautiful form and grace with deadly purpose.

The Fairbairn-Sykes Commando knife is the Spitfire of the knife World, and is still regarded as an all-time combative classic. The FSC knife was employed on the battlefields in one of the greatest conflicts the World has ever known. It was and is beautiful to behold in its own right and is a highly effective killer in trained hands.



The British Commando knife was first designed in 1940 by close combat legends William Fairbairn and Eric Sykes, who established and taught the combative training methods for wartime special forces such as the independent companies, SOE, Commandos, U.S Rangers and OSS.

Though known as the FS Fighting knife, this was not designed to be a *knife fighting* knife, but primarily designed to be used in silent killing actions such as sentry take-outs. The techniques of effective use were taught to various special forces at Highland training centers such as Lochailort Special Training Center (STC) and Achnacarry, which was the Commando Basic Training Center (CBTC) from 1942-1945.



The first pattern knife was originally manufactured exclusively by Wilkinson Sword Company, and was in great demand from first production. Original first pattern knives are highly collectable and sought after today with top quality examples selling for thousands.

The second pattern was manufactured by many companies throughout the UK, and has often been regarded as the most effective pattern of Commando knife ever made. The diamond knurled brass grip provides excellent purchase wet or dry. The hand-ground 7 inch high carbon steel blade carries both edges for the full length of the blade. The scabbard features an elastic retaining band for silent drawing, and rear tabs for stitching the scabbard to any piece of clothing or kit. Commandos were advised to carry their knives wherever they might find most convenient for access.

SAYING OF THE MONTH

“That’s not a knife!”
-Crocodile Dundee ☺

