



DEFENSIVE EDGE'S ARMORER/INSTRUCTOR

◎ STAFF REPORT

In addition to shooting and tactics, a typically overlooked element of training is learning how a firearm operates and how to maintain and repair it if necessary.

While you do not have to be an armorer to shoot well any more than you have to be a mechanic to safely operate a motor vehicle, knowing the fundamentals is a good thing. Being able to make repairs or modifications when (not if) your gun stops running can pay big dividends in the long run.

Early this year two S.W.A.T. staff members, Denny Hansen and Rob Pincus, attended a two-day armorer course on AR-15-type rifles, followed by a three-day instructor course. The course was conducted by Defensive Edge

Training (D.E.T.), and hosted by Valhalla Training Center (where Pincus is the Director of Operations). D.E.T.'s Chief Instructor Greg "Sully" Sullivan and Master Instructor Marc "Fritz" Fritzier taught the course.

ARMORER'S COURSE

The static indoor range at Valhalla was temporarily converted into a classroom for the Armorer's Course. Day one began with a short lecture on nomenclature of the AR-15 family of rifles. Sullivan started at the butt and worked toward the flash hider on the left side, and went from the flash hider back towards the butt on the right to make sure everyone fully understood the basic controls of the rifle.

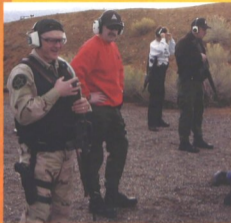
After providing armorer tools for those who did not bring their own, Sullivan and Fritzier guided the students as they stripped the lower receivers of their rifles to the following assemblies:

- Magazine catch
- Bolt catch
- Pivot pin
- Trigger
- Selector
- Pistol grip
- Fixed and telescoping stocks

Sullivan explained how to remove the trigger guard assembly, but this was not performed in class. He explained that the small "ears" that contain the roll pin at the rear of this assembly may be the frailest part of the AR-15, and he did not want to take the chance that



Students engage
in target training from the
position of their
choice.



clockwise, from top left: Marc Fritzier assists Rob Pincus. © Denny Hansen discusses the hammer and trigger sear engagement with Fritzier. © Greg Sullivan (in red) talks with students during a break. © Denny Hansen gave high marks to the Sully stock, shown here on his AR-15.

1*

Defensive Edge

RSE

anyone would break their personal or department issued rifle.

After the rifles were stripped, Fritz and Sully ensured each student understood how the hammer and trigger (and the burst fire parts where applicable) worked together. The class then reassembled the thirty-two parts (not counting the trigger guard and complete butt plate assembly). When finished, we stripped and reassembled them again—and again.

The last exercise of the day was removing the bolt and bolt carrier from the upper receiver and completely disassembling the bolt (with the exception of the bolt carrier key and the two screws which are staked in place on top of the carrier). The eleven pieces which make up the bolt were taken apart and put



Use the right tool for the job. Using the wrong size punch has damaged this extractor roll pin.

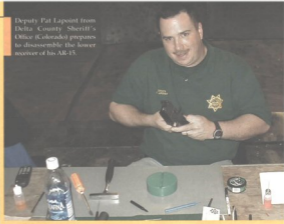


back together a couple times to ensure students not only knew how to install them, but how each part properly functioned with the other parts.

On the second day it was time for the class to tear into the upper receiver by first removing the handguards. Next up was disassembling and reassembling both the front and rear sights several times. Although students disassembled both, students working with the earlier A1-type sights quickly appreciated the simplicity of the design with seven parts, as opposed to the A2-type sights which has sixteen parts, including a couple very small ball bearings. As he did throughout the armorer's portion of the course, Sully passed around special tools available from Brownells and gave helpful hints for getting very small parts back together.

The dust cover was removed next, and students were exposed to the world's smallest "C" clip, which holds the dust cover's rod in place. This was adventure, especially for those with older eyes, and most members of the class lost at least one of these small clips either in the process of removing or replacing it.

Deputy Pat Lapson from Delta County Sheriff's Office (Colorado) prepares to disassemble the lower receiver of his AR-15.



Next the flash hider, gas tube and entire front sight were removed by drifting out the two taper pins (and one small roll pin for the gas tube) which hold the assembly to the barrel. Finally the split ring, handguard (Delta) ring, barrel nut and barrel were removed.

This segment resulted in my only complaint of the armorer's portion of the class. There were only two vises for more than fifteen students to use to remove and reinstall the barrels in the upper receivers. The result was a lot of "butt" time waiting for a chance to use one of the vises.

Rob Pincus took the opportunity to build a new rifle using a DPMS receiver, an A3 upper and a free floating M4Rail 9.5FSP forend from Daniel Defense Inc., and one of Sullivan's "Sully" stocks (see S.W.A.T., December 2003). Denny Hansen took a simpler approach, installing XS Sights same-plane rear aperture sight and a "Sully" stock on his Olympic Arms carbine.

INSTRUCTOR'S COURSE

Since the walls of Valhalla's indoor shoothouse are not rated for rifle/carbine ammo, the instructor's portion of the course was held at the San Juan Range located a few miles down the road from Valhalla.

As everyone had taken their sights apart several times the day before, the first order of the day was to establish new zeros with the iron sights and, if applicable, optical sights.

Next, Sullivan addressed the fundamentals of marksmanship including the firing stance, trigger control, aiming, breathing and follow through.

The class split up into two-man teams, with one shooting while the other acted as a coach. This would remain in effect for the remainder of the course.

The Bushmaster .308



.308 Flat-top 20" Rifle
With Izzy Brake & Standard Stock

.308 A2 16" Carbine
With Izzy Brake & Standard Stock

Bushmaster's newest models are chambered in the .308 Winchester (7.62 NATO) caliber! A 16" Bbl. Carbine, and 20" Bbl. Rifle are available, and can be ordered in either the A2 solid carry handle, or the A3 "flat-top" receiver. A carry handle designed especially for the "flat-top" can be purchased separately. These firearms are built with the accuracy, durability, and quality Bushmaster customers have come to expect. Check out our new .308 models on the web, or visit your local FFL dealer!

BUSHMASTER FIREARMS, INC.

999 Roosevelt Trail • Windham, Maine 04062
Orders: 800 998 7928 • Fax: 207 892 8068
www.bushmaster.com • info@bushmaster.com





Pincus built an AR-15 from the ground up using the parts discussed in the text.

The first firing drill was interesting in that it served to promote familiarity with both the carbine and pistol. At approximately the seven-yard line, each shooter would fire one round from his carbine and then transition to the pistol and fire one round. This was repeated until thirty rounds from both weapons had been fired. This is an excellent drill to increase familiarity with both weapons with very little ammunition expenditure.

Malfunction clearance drills were discussed next. Students were shown several techniques to clear the carbine in the event of a malfunction.

Most of the remainder of the third day was consumed with shooting from near point-blank range back to approximately fifty yards. The class practiced firing single rounds, "hammers" and dedicated pairs.

The fourth day of the class was devoted mostly to positional shooting and shooting on the move, with a few tactics being taught.

Positions taught included kneeling, braced kneeling, reverse kneeling, two-legged kneeling, squatting (rice paddy prone), and several prone positions.

Instruction on shooting on the move included right, left and 360 degree pivots, shooting and stepping to either the left or the right, and stepping to either side and then firing. Walking and shooting incorporated both the walk and drag techniques, as well as two variations of the "Groucho Walk."

The final day of the course the class returned to Valhalla for work in the

indoor shoothouse. Students were issued 9mm AR-15 type carbines and PMC's Green, non-toxic, frangible 75-grain 9mm ammo. Both individual and team tactics were utilized, and later critiqued by one of the instructors.

While some class members were

involved in the simulator runs, others assembled in the static range/classroom. Here they gave a short talk, usually about three minutes in length, to other students on what they had learned during the prior four days.

Overall, both S.W.A.T. staffers felt that the armorer's portion of the course was superb. The instructor segment, however, was not met with equally high marks.

First and foremost, since the course's goal was to certify instructors, both felt that the students should have spent more time "teaching" their peers. While it was a very good basic carbine course, very little instruction was done by anyone other than D.E.T.'s staff.

Second, class did not start promptly on most mornings and was often delayed coming back from lunches and breaks. "Take five minutes" should mean to take five minutes. While we understand an instructor's reluctance to get started without everyone present, it is not fair to hold up the entire class due to the tardiness of a few.

Finally, everyone in the class was a seasoned shooter. Unfortunately, it is often veteran shooters who get too

**Be prepared. Be protected.
Products you can bet your life on!**



Full line of
flashlights,
accessories &
parts in stock



SureFire
RBR Armor
Pro-Ears
EOTech
Savox
Comm,GG&G
Columbia River
Emerson Knives
Crimson Trace
Lasergrips
Blackhawk
Tactical Gear/
Hydration
Systems and
more!

RBR Tactical Armor Inc.

Integrated Armor Systems

- Lightweight comfort
- Heavy duty protection



Contact us Toll Free at 1-888-511-7322
7 days a week, 6 am—9 pm PST
or visit us anytime at www.LPStactical.com

Quality Equipment
Reliable Brands
Excellent Service



Tactical & Personal Security Supply

comfortable and cause accidents through complacency. Denny Hansen was more than a little uncomfortable the first day of the Instructor's Course due to safety concerns. At one point the firing line resembled a snake more than a line, with at least one student being a yard in front of most of the line, and the most rearward student two yards behind the most forward student. Calling a cease-fire, Hansen asked Fritz to have the line straightened up.

These last few remarks are offered only as constructive criticism. Overall, both Sullivan and Fritzler are good instructors and the course is recommended—especially the armorer's portion. ©

SOURCES:

Defensive Edge Training & Consulting, Inc.

Dept. S.W.A.T.
P.O. Box 682
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 712-0123
www.thedefensiveedge.com

Brownells, Inc.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
Dept. 865
200 S. Front St.
Montezuma, IA 50171
(641) 623-5401
www.brownells.com

Daniel Defense Inc.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
6002 Commerce Blvd
Savannah, GA 31408
(866) 554-GUNS
www.danieldefense.com

DPMS
Dept. S.W.A.T.
13983 Industry Ave.
Becker, MN 55308
(763) 261-5600
www.dpmsinc.com

Valhalla Training Center
Dept. S.W.A.T.
97 Elk Walk
Montrose, CO 81401
(970) 240-0433
www.valhallatraining.com

XS Sight Systems.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
2401 Ludelle Street
Fort Worth, TX 76105
(888) 744-4880
www.xssights.com

AN EXTREME DUTY GUN...
AN EXTREME DUTY HOLSTER...
AN EXTREME DUTY COMBO.

SIDEARMOR
www.sidearmor.com

7810 N. HIGHWAY 89, SUITE 320 • FLAGSTAFF • ARIZONA • 86004 • 928-526-4379 • WWW.SIDEARMOR.COM