

## **AAR- Defensive Edge Tactical Rifle 1 Day Course- April 18, 2008**

Chris Fry

I contacted Greg "Sully" Sullivan of Defensive Edge and SLR15 Rifle fame last fall to inquire about coming to NY to conduct his Armorers course. This course has been written about in SWAT magazine as well as other popular gun rags and I had heard very good things about it from some of my friends and contacts in the training industry.

Sully was/is a hard man to nail down. His intense teaching schedule makes getting in touch with him via telephone near impossible and we communicated mostly via e-mail regarding the logistics of hosting a course. He was very accommodating to my requests for information and quick to answer questions.

Originally we scheduled just the Armorer course for a weekend in February but as the date grew closer I received an email from Sally (Sully's Wife) telling me that Sully was down sick with the flu and was in pretty bad shape. As you can imagine myself and the guys from the Upstate NY training group here were pretty bummed since we were all pretty excited to attend the course. But, these things happen sometimes.

A week or so later I spoke with Sally and Sully and new dates were agreed upon for April. During this conversation Sully informed me he would like to throw in a 1 day Tactical Rifle class for us since he had to cancel on the original date! I wasn't going to argue with him!

### **Training Day 1 – Defensive Edge Tactical Rifle 1 Day Course**

Sully started the rifle class with us right out on the range and made it clear that he preferred to teach on the range instead of in a classroom. The weather was excellent and class started a little after 9am with Sully introducing himself and telling us about his extensive Law Enforcement background and some of the training he had received in and out of LE.



He next discussed range safety with us and his opinion on muzzle down vs. muzzle up admin and movement about the range area. He prefers muzzle down because of the plain fact that if an ND/AD occurs a lower extremity wound will most likely be less threatening than an upper torso/head wound. Next we discussed Col. Coopers 4 Safety Rules and made sure everyone was on the same page regarding this firearm safety. Class introductions followed as well as admin/paperwork and carbine zeroing for those who needed it.

Around 9:30am Sully started us off a very thorough and well presented analysis of bladed vs. squared shooting stances/platforms at about. This was a learning experience for many and some light bulbs went off. Several rounds were fired from a bladed stance to the target two hands on the carbine and with 1 hand on the carbine. Then we worked on foot placement. Next, Sully had us square up with the target and do the same shooting drills on dots that we did from the bladed stance.



In my experience there are some trainers who take the time with students to explain and instruct on the importance of fundamentals, especially the fundamentals of marksmanship. Then, there are those who believe fundamental marksmanship should be glossed over and students should get right to “shootin bad guy reality targets” because THAT’S REAL and we won’t be fighting dots in a gunfight!

Well, trainers like Sully who take the time to analyze students fundamental shooting abilities provide the student with much better instruction and feedback overall. There is a time to shoot dots and precision targets and then there is a time to shoot the reality targets. Sully certainly knows this.

After looking at the different shooting stances Sully explained to us some of the fine points he has learned over the years from friends of his in the industry. Guys like Phil Singleton a former SAS operator and instructor and HK. These suggestions were very helpful to many of the shooters in attendance and I particularly liked his explanation of upper torso management to aid in weapon control for both semi auto and sub-guns.

Somewhere around 10:15 am Sully introduced us to the “Meltdown Drill”. This was 30 rounds rifle and 30 rounds pistol transitioning back and forth from the rifle to the pistol with intense focus on manipulations of each weapon system. An excellent but somewhat fatiguing drill for the shooters this gave Sully a chance to diagnose and analyze students ability to manipulate their tools.

After a short break where we had the chance to fondle a couple of Sully’s excellent rifles. I had the opportunity to shoot them as did several of the students that day and I must say – there is a difference between Sully’s guns and the variety of guns most of us had on hand, a BIG difference. If you get the chance to test run ANY of Sully’s rifles, DO IT! You won’t regret it except you may be a little mad that now you have to start saving to buy ANOTHER rifle!



12pm- We moved out to 15yards and started working "Snap Shots" (2 rounds) and After Action Assessments where students scan the environment for additional threats after having just fired. He worked this into a drill series where we shot and assessed. Next he added side steps to get off the line of power. Move, shoot, Assess and repeat for several evolutions.

Sully presented us next with the "F.A.S.T." After Action Drill. Fight, Assess, Scan, Tactical Load. I first read about this method a few years ago and I think it was in an article written by Andy Standford of OPS Training. I know other training providers like Tactical Response teach it. It is a good format.

Emergency Reloads came next and a discussion about admin downloads of your rifle after firing numerous rounds. In the heat and with a hot gun the chances of a "cook-off" are there. An admin download is a good way to prevent this and it also gives you another chance to work your weapon manipulation skills.

Pizza arrived at the club house and we made weapons safe before taking some time to eat. It was getting hot out and we couldn't have asked for better training weather. Many of you who know me know I don't train in the rain or mud or in any type of uncomfortable conditions so I was happy. 🍕

After lunch was completed we headed back out on the range for the next module of instruction on Malfunction Clearance. Sully categorizes jams into simple jams and complex jams. His simple jam clearance method fixes 95% of malfunctions (Primarily standard Type 1 malfunctions or failure to fire). His complex jam clearance is designed to remediate most all other malfunctions (Type 2 – failure to eject and Type 3- failure to extract). His focus was on providing the student with the fewest methods so as to eliminate having numerous decisions to make under the duress of a gunfight. After covering typical malfunctions we also looked at some odd ones to include a stuck shell case and how to clear that in the field.

2pm- Sully introduced his unique version of the "Failure Drill". Now, I am not going to go into a lot of detail of Sully's drills because frankly I think that if a person wants to learn something they should go to the source and train hands on not read about it online. I will say that Sully's version of the failure drill is based upon his experience from LE and having been involved in the dynamics of a gunfight. It was pretty cool and something I had not seen before having attended numerous tactical training courses from varied training schools and providers. One aspect I enjoyed of Sully's presentation on this was how he utilized a shot timer so each student could see the difference in response time his method made compared to standard methods.

A little before 3pm we started "Positional Shooting" beginning with standard prone position, how to get into and out of this position. We shot from the traditional military prone with bodies angled slightly and then from British Prone with our bodies lined straight up with our target. This position is a little higher than the military prone and it lets the shooter breath a bit easier. Different prone variations were demonstrated and then we shot from each such as SBU Prone, Rollover Prone and Rollup Prone. Sully explained where each position was useful and under what circumstances adding context to our training. Supine, Rice Paddy Prone (Squatting) and Kneeling/ kneeling variations were next and we all got numerous reps shooting from each of the presented positions.

About 4:30 we moved out to 50 yards for a little bit more extended range shooting. Sully explained proper zero methodologies for the fighting rifle.

Everyone was hot and a little tired so Sully woke everyone up with his "El Diablo Drill". Needless to say this drill got the adrenaline pumping prepping all of us for more training since as Sully put it "he would train all night"! Good stuff. The last module of instruction was an overview of shooting on the move. This was an excellent presentation on the various movement methods Sully has picked up from friends such as Phil Singleton mentioned earlier. All of the movement was forward movement and he covered The "Graucho" Technique and "Exercise Walk" as well as methods of throttling up and down while shooting in order to make precision shots. He had us shooting on hostage targets for this one with half or three quarters of a head sized target available for us to hit. Needless to say this was challenging and a lot of fun. Safety was carefully monitored and Sully personally ran each one of us through each evolution of the drills he had prepared.



Around 6pm or so we finished up with a quick range debrief and review of what we covered during the day. Sully answered questions and then everyone made weapons safe and stowed gear before cleaning up the range and collecting brass. It was an excellent one day class in my humble opinion and if you ever get the opportunity to shoot one of Sully's guns, pick his mind for

information or attend a training event with him – **DO IT!** You will not be disappointed. I know the Upstate NY training group will be hosting Sully again sometime in 2009. I hope some of you can come join us.



Check out Defensive Edge and the Sr15 line of rifles-  
<http://www.sr15.com>