

MDTS CQT- Close Quarter Tactics 8/25/07, Buckeye Gun Club, Barnegat, N.J.
By JoelK

Last Saturday I got to take Chris Fry/MDTS's CQT- Close Quarter Tactics training course (MDTS). Before I get into the AAR let me tell you a little about myself. I am not military or LE, just a regular guy who enjoys shooting at the range and is concerned with my, and my families, safety. I have taken a several other MDTS courses over the last few years, and that is the extent of my serious training. I would like to take more courses with MDTS, and try some other trainers as well. After hearing Chris' good reports on SouthNarc and Progressive F.O.R.C.E. Concepts they are at the top of my list. Well that is probably more than you cared to know about me, so on with the review.

This was an 8 hour course which Chris and Ray were kind enough to come down and give at Buckeye Gun Club in Barnegat, NJ. Out of the 15 people taking this course a little more than half had taken at least one course with MDTS before but for several people this was their first formal training course.

We started off inside (and let me interject here that it was a HOT and HUMID day) with a brief intro from Chris. We then went over the safety rules for the day and began the classroom portion of the course. Now everyone wants to get right into shooting, striking, or some such, but I have to say that the discussion in the classroom may be the most important part of the course. In the discussion (Chris uses the Socratic method of teaching and the class is definitely included in the discussion and feels free to ask questions) we covered such topics as a fighting mindset, the mindset of our enemies, situational awareness, pre-attack cues, and also watched a few short videos of actual attacks.

Next we worked on using these lessons to deal with an unknown contact. This included a set of preset verbal responses, which leave the mind free to asses and deal with the situation, and physical responses, such as hand position, stance, and lateral movement. These were drilled inside, and then we went outside (did I mention earlier that it was HOT) to drill some more where we had a little more space. This part of the course dealing with threat recognition, and management is, in my opinion, the most important part of the course as any conflict which can be safely avoided is effectively won.

At this point we started the shooting portion of the course. This started out with another quick safety review, and let me say that I never felt endangered nor witnessed any safety violations at any time. The first lesson was the draw stroke. Let me remind you that this course was given in New Jersey where the only people allowed to carry guns are the police, corrupt politicians, and criminals. Consequently several people taking the course had never drawn from a holster, and actually had to buy holsters for this course, while others were more experienced. Chris and Ray quickly worked through this disparity and everyone learned the 4 part draw stroke and presentation. We then got up close and

personal with the cardboard targets and proceeded to ventilate them from positions 2, 3 and 4. When everyone was comfortable, particularly with the #2 position, we learned 3 different defensive positions for our support arm. We also learned what to do when a magazine runs dry at this range, and it isn't call timeout to reload. As this course was CQT- Close Quarter Tactics all of this was done at arms length or closer to the target with the vast majority of shots being fired at contact range. In the final segment of the shooting portion we worked on transitioning from 2 to 3 to 4 and vice versa while firing. This, at maybe 5 feet, was the farthest we got from the targets all day. This was a novel experience for those who only get to shoot at commercial square ranges, and very eye opening.

We were all very happy to go back into the air conditioning for some more classroom work. As there was going to be a physical aspect to this portion of the course we searched each other to make sure no one inadvertently brought any live weapons in. The fellow student who searched me is a correctional officer, and seemed rather skillful at this. We then made all firearms safe by means of a chamber flag. Now that we were all unarmed and a bit cooler Chris taught us a default defensive position, which is a simple position to adopt, if you find yourself in the unenviable position of having lost the initiative, with the purpose of not getting knocked out or to the ground while you asses and react to the threat. We chose partners who we worked with to make sure we had the default defensive position correct through a range of mild slaps up to some pretty good blows while wearing the FIST helmets. Another interesting drill was the Billy Goat drill (courtesy of Paul Sharp) which involves going head to head with your partner to help you become accustomed to asserting pressure upon your opponent while they are doing to same to you. This drill left most of us explaining our marked foreheads for the next few days! At this point we went back outside (even though the air conditioning inside was having trouble keeping up with all of our exertions it was still way HOTTER outside), where we integrated some grappling, drawing a weapon, or preventing your opponent from drawing theirs, into the Billy Goat drill. Now we integrated the verbal we learned earlier into the drills, working through everything we had learned so far.

Now we were in for a real treat as Chris and Ray broke out the non-lethal training munitions, and we got to apply what we had learned in simulated contacts with an unknown, from the first verbal contact, through various physical responses, and occasionally through drawing and firing of a weapon. It was interesting how many evolutions were resolved without a weapon ever being fired.

I learned a great deal of new material in this class, and reinforced a lot of what I had previously learned. Oddly enough I learned that the more I get beat up in training the more I like it and learn. I think this is a great course and would highly recommend it to both beginners and those with other prior training as I think it addresses an area, 0 to 5 feet that most firearm training misses.

Now what review would be complete without some negative content? This course is humbling. Fortunately this was not a big problem for me as I already have a pretty good idea of how little I know, and how meager my skills are. On the other hand, if you think you are a super badass because you bought the latest custom 1911 or the most reliable polymer gun you are in for a harsh dose of reality. As Chris said, this course can be a big ego buster, but I think that it is well worth expending some ego in obtaining skills that could save your life.