

After Action Report

Company: 212 Firearms Training

Class: Carbine Proficiency I

Date(s): Saturday-Sunday 20-21 January 2018 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: Fortress Training Facility, Lobo Ranch near Gatesville, TX

Instructor(s): Jared Segraves, Lead Instructor; Pat Crawley, Kenny Stallman and Matt Kenny, Assistant Instructors

Targets: Paper silhouettes, steel silhouettes

Gear: Rifle: S&W M&P15 MOE, Trijicon MRO red dot optic, Magpul MOE furniture, Troy sling adaptor, Magpul single point sling (out of production), 4 Magpul MOE PMAGs and 6 PMAG30 Gen M3, 2 G-CODE Soft Shell Scorpion w/ cobra paddle rifle mag pouches mounted on belt.

Pistol: Glock 17 Gen3 with Suarez SI-17 slide with Trijicon RMR Type 2 (RM06 3.25 MOA dot), Surefire X300U-A weapon light, 5 Magpul PMAG17 and 2 PMAG21 GL9 magazines, 1 G-CODE Soft Shell Scorpion w/ cobra paddle pistol mag pouch mounted on belt, G-CODE OSL holster.

5.11 Tactical Operator Belt, 5.11 Tactical Tac-Lite Pro pants; Oboz Firebrand 2 shoes; Dark Angel Medical DARK LITE kit with CAT Gen 7 and SWAT-T tourniquets.

SLIP2000 EWL lubricant. The guns were not cleaned the entire weekend, only lubed at the beginning of each training day.

Ammunition: Class requirement called for 1000 rounds for the rifle and 100 for the pistol. Ammunition used: 5.56 PPU M193 and 9mm SPEER Lawman 124 gr FMJ. Actual number fired:

Rifle: 494

Pistol: 34

Reliability: 0 organic malfunctions. Trijicon MRO and RMR suffered no malfunctions and maintained zero. On one rifle reload, I did experience the top round jumping partially free from the feedlips. This either occurred spontaneously or perhaps I attempted to close the bolt before the magazine was fully seated (I have done this with a pistol a couple of times).

The offending mag was dropped easily and the rifle was reloaded with a fresh magazine. This was no fault of the rifle

and was likely operator-induced.

Disclaimer: As I write this report, a week has passed since the class. As a result, I may inadvertently omit something and/or discuss them out of order.

Training Day 1

We began in a classroom setting shortly after 8:00 AM.

Everyone first introduced him or herself and gave a brief description of their goals for the class. We then jumped straight into a safety brief. We covered the four universal safety rules as follows:

1. Treat all guns as if they were loaded.
2. Never point a firearm at anything you do not wish to destroy.
3. Be sure of your target, its foreground and background.
4. Keep the trigger finger off the trigger until the weapon is presented to the target and the decision is made to fire.

Jared then began a discussion on operation and manipulation of the AR-15 rifle and outlined the procedures for the day including Range Commands, Zeroing, Combat Effectiveness Test and then covered Stance, Grip, Sight Picture/Alignment and Trigger Press. After about an hour in the classroom, we headed down to the range.

Zeroing

We began our range time by obtaining a zero at 50 yards. I use a 50/200 yard zero, meaning that my bullet will pass my line of sight at 50 yards and then cross again near 200 yards. After firing five rounds, point of impact (POI) was right on with point of aim (POA). Some shooters needed to adjust their optics and then we fired another five rounds. A few shooters required a second adjustment and then fired another five rounds while the rest of us moved back to the 100-yard line.

From 100 yards, my POI was about 1.5-2" high, just as expected.

From 200 yards, my POI was about 2-3" low. This is a little low for the range, however, it was a bit windy all weekend and I was using a non-magnified optic with a 2 MOA dot.

From 300 yards, my POI was about 8-10" low. Again, this was greater than expected, but the trajectory of my 55 gr ammunition clearly told its story on the target.

As distance increases, visual acuity may begin to cause problems in which the shooter's inability to see the target clearly can negatively affect sight picture/alignment.

Combat Effectiveness Test

The CET is a 95 round course of fire shot at various ranges from 3-100 yards. We would shoot from standing, kneeling and prone under time pressure. We shot this course of fire with no further instruction at the time because Jared wanted to reveal our baseline ability with our rifles. At the end of the test, I had six rounds outside the vital area of the target, including two misses.

Reloading

Reloading the rifle is quite similar to reloading a pistol. There are two basic types of reloads: the emergency reload when the rifle is empty and the tactical reload in which the shooter chooses to replace a partially expended magazine with a full magazine.

The emergency reload, as its name implies, must be performed quickly and efficiently because the gun is empty. It is a reactive procedure. Using the Greatest Drill Ever, we practiced two different methods of holding the rifle during the reload. First, we tried bringing the buttstock down into the bend of the elbow, and with the muzzle elevated, reloaded the rifle much like a pistol using our “work space” so our eyes were up and could visualize not only the reload if necessary but to maintain visual awareness of our target environment. The second method keeps the buttstock shouldered with the muzzle only slightly elevated. The rifle is rotated outward slightly to bring the magazine well closer to the offhand. I prefer to use a hybrid of the two.

The Greatest Drill Ever uses a hot chamber with an empty magazine in place. Upon the fire command, one round is fired, locking the bolt open on the empty magazine. The shooter then depresses the magazine release, retrieves the spare magazine and loads it into the magazine well with a push/pull and then closes the bolt. I use a BAD lever, which allows me to operate my bolt catch with my trigger finger. For those without such a device, they must use their offhand to depress the bolt catch after seating the magazine.

It is quite common in the tactical community to carry the emergency reload on the belt and this class was no different. We were also encouraged to carry the magazine with bullets facing to the rear to facilitate the so-called beer can grip when retrieving the magazine. This is different than the method of carrying and retrieving pistol magazines, which are usually, carried bullets forward.

The tactical reload is a proactive procedure in which the shooter, by decision, replaces a partially expended magazine with a fresh magazine as the situation demands/permits.

Generally, the partially expended magazine is retained. To perform a tactical reload, the shooter first retrieves the fresh magazine. As the rifle is moved into the preferred reloading position, the shooter also grips the partially expended magazine, forming an “L” with the two magazines. As the magazine release is depressed, the shooter strips the partially expended magazine, rotates the offhand and seats the fresh magazine with a push/pull. Once the fresh magazine is seated, the partially expended magazine can be retained and stored for later use.

LUNCH!!!

Cadence Drill

Next up was a Cadence Drill. I’ve done this drill with a handgun many times, but this was my first attempt with a rifle. We shot the drill from 3 yards. It consists of 4 volleys of 5 rounds, each fired according to the cadence. We shoot the drill one shooter at a time with each successive shooter picking up the count as the previous shooter finishes. Everyone is encouraged to count out loud to keep the timing as we move down the line.

Cadence 1 – One round per second on the count of “one thousand ONE, one thousand TWO, one thousand THREE, one thousand FOUR, one thousand FIVE”

Cadence 2 – One round per .5 second “and One, and TWO, and THREE, and FOUR, and FIVE”

Cadence 3 – One round per approximately .35 second “ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE”

Cadence 4 – One round per .25 second “ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE”

Shooting this drill from 3 yards should allow all shots in the vital area of a silhouette target. Some shooters were struggling to keep time as we got faster and faster, but considering our overall lack of rifle experience, we did quit well as a group.

Transitions

To safely learn to transition from a rifle to a sidearm, we first put our rifles down and simply checked everyone’s ability to safely and properly draw a handgun. Once this was completed, we grabbed our rifles and got back to work. Now, why would we want to transition from our more effective rifles to our handguns? Assuming the threat is at close range, a

shooter would transition from an empty or malfunctioning rifle to a handgun rather than attempting to reload or clear the rifle.

To do this requires a sling. I prefer a single-point sling, but two-point slings are quite common as well.

Upon needing to transition, the rifle is lowered with the offhand and allowed to hang on sling while the strong hand acquires the handgun and completes the draw as normal. Upon completion of the shooting task, while the handgun is still in the strong hand, the rifle is retrieved with the offhand. The shooter then will inspect the rifle to determine the cause of the rifle's stoppage. Should it only need to be reloaded, the handgun is holstered and the rifle is reloaded as we learned earlier. If the rifle has a malfunction that needs to be cleared, the shooter's environment and situation will dictate if the shooter can clear the malfunction or continue to remain armed with the handgun.

I have heard many people question the desire of civilian defenders to learn transitions. In my opinion, civilians have the right to learn the same skills we teach to our soldiers and law enforcement officers. In the same breath, many people also question the validity of civilians learning to fight with rifles.

The answer is actually quite simple: the rifle, especially a properly equipped AR-15, is a much better fighting weapon for the vast majority of situations as compared to handguns and shotguns. AR rifles are easier to shoot accurately and quickly, they have high magazine capacities, have excellent terminal effectiveness when loaded with proper ammunition and give the civilian defender a much better tool with which to eliminate a threat while minimizing risk to bystanders.

We finished the day back in the classroom for debriefing. Each student was given the opportunity to discuss what he or she learned. I was quite pleased with the safety of the students and everyone's ability to keep pace and learn quickly. Many of the students present had little to no rifle experience prior to today. I've been shooting my rifle at what would normally be considered pistol range for several years. This class had me shooting this rifle much further than I had previously and I was pleased to see my 50/200 zero play out just like it was supposed to. I would have liked to shoot tighter groups while zeroing, however, with the wind and a non-magnified optic, I was still able to deliver combat-effective hits out to 300 yards. My rifle is pretty basic in its configuration. I don't have a free float rail or an upgraded trigger. I have only added what I believe to be

the three most necessary upgrades: red dot optic, weapon light and sling. My weapon is a basic M4-pattern fighting rifle and I see no reason to make any changes at this time. For my mission, which is home defense, my set-up is quite effective without adding unnecessary weight or bulk.

Training Day 2

Training Day 2 began in the classroom once again. We first reviewed yesterday's procedures and accomplishments and then discussed the procedures for TD2.

We began our range time with another check of our zero at 50, 100, 200 and 300 yards. Today, my groups tightened somewhat and the same story played out. I was quite pleased that my 300-yard group could be covered with one hand and was not nearly as low as it was yesterday. I'm really looking forward to some more range time at distance. It's actually quite impressive what can be accomplished with a non-magnified red dot sight. More on that later...

Following the zero check, we shot another Cadence Drill, this time at five yards. Wow! Not only did everyone keep time much better than yesterday, our groups shrunk considerably in size. On the first cadence, my first four rounds went through one CLEAN hole with shot 5 dropping about 1/2". The instructors were literally beside themselves with the immense improvement the class had made since yesterday.

We took head shots for this cadence drill and it gave the students an excellent opportunity to learn how to compensate for height over bore. Due to the straight-line design of the AR-15 action, the sights are necessarily high on the weapon.

Regardless of whether a shooter uses iron sights or an optic, the line of sight is approximately 2.5" above the bore line. This can be problematic at close range when a surgically accurate shot is required. For example, with a 50/200 yard zero, the POI will be 2.5" below the POA at the muzzle. At 25 yards, the POI is still about 1.5" low. This requires the shooter to aim slightly high inside 25 yards and a full 2.5" high inside 10 yards. It is well known that a shot to the midbrain with a super sonic projectile will cause immediate incapacitation. The ideal POA for a shot like this is between the eyes, however, do to height over bore, if the shooter holds POA between the eyes, the POI will be closer to the mouth, especially inside 10 yards. While this may indeed deliver a lethal wound, POI between the eyes is much more desirable. To achieve this, the shooter simply needs to shift

POA to the hairline.

It was time to now begin incorporating movement. We split the line into “odds and evens” with the “odds” taking the line first. On command, the shooters would take a few steps left, right, forward or backward and then fire 3 to five rounds on target. We shot this drill from 7-10 yards.

During our lunch break, the instructors set up the range for the afternoon’s drills. Moving back to 50 yards so we could safely engage steel, we shot a number of drills that involved movement and/or cover.

We also shot a drill called Last Man Standing. It was a knock out type exercise that pushed shooters to make shots from cover, both strong side and weak side, as quickly as possible.

Should the shooter behind you on the drill catch up, you were eliminated. I managed to win the first one but was knocked out in the second run.

We then gathered our gear and moved all the way back to 500 yards. The final exercise of the class was to engage a steel silhouette that I would describe as 4/3 to 3/2 the size of a typical silhouette. Using a spotting scope, the spotter would direct each shooter’s shots until we hit the steel. Once you figured out your hold over, it was actually quite easy to hit the target, once again pointing out the awesome capability of a duty grade rifle with a red dot sight.

We then returned to the classroom for the final debriefing, once again, giving everyone an opportunity to comment on what they learned. Jared is always open to questions, discussion and criticism. After saying good byes we began to head home around 6:30 PM.

CONCLUSION

This was my first dedicated rifle class, and my fifth class with 212 Firearms. My takeaways are as follows:

1. Mission drives the gear train – As a civilian defender, the mission of my rifle is home defense. My rifle only leaves the house to go to the range (however, it may begin to travel with me on camping and road trips). With that mission in mind, my rifle setup is quite simple. I use a lot of Magpul accessories because they are high quality, yet very affordable. I see no need to spend the money (and add the weight) of a free float rail. I only have a weapon light mounted on my hand guard, thus the rail space of a free float rail is not needed. I use a Surefire handheld light in a

VTAC mount. I like the simple push button activation of the Surefire handheld lights. I don't like pressure pads and wires. I use a vertical fore grip (VFG) only because it allows me to better activate the light. I still use a C-clamp grip and treat the VFG as a hand stop. I prefer a single-point sling. I prefer a red dot, in this case the Trijicon MRO in Larue mount, to a magnified optic. My mission, my ability and my visual acuity do not necessitate magnification. With this setup, I have proven to myself that I can make combat effective hits out to at least 300 yards. I have a basic, milspec single stage trigger. I do not want a two-stage trigger, however, I may eventually upgrade to a better single-stage such as BCM's PNT or the ACT from Geissele. These two single-stage triggers are manufactured to a higher level of quality, are polished and nickel-boron coated. They deliver a trigger pull that is cleaner and smoother but still behave just like a milspec trigger.

2. Optic mounts – While I had no trouble with my optic/mount combination, many shooters did. Regardless of the optic you choose, be sure to put it on/in a quality mount. Also be sure to use blue thread lock on your mounting screws.
3. Lubrication – My shooting partner, Larry, and I used SLIP2000 EWL. This product is a bit more expensive than most others on the market, but I am very pleased with its performance. Larry and I did not suffer any feeding, extraction or ejection problems during the class (I did have the one reload stoppage that was attributable to me or the magazine, NOT the rifle). To my knowledge, all of the other students suffered malfunctions. Larry and I applied a generous amount of lubricant to our bolt carrier groups (BCG) each morning. We did not clean our rifles during the weekend. Our BCGs remained visibly “wet” and did not sound gritty when cycling the action. When I peered in the ejection ports of other rifles, they appeared oily, but not wet. I believe most, if not all, of the problems the other shooters experienced were due to insufficient lubrication. The AR-15 rifle will run dirty and it will run dry, but it will not run dirty AND dry. Use good lube, use a sufficient amount and keep your weapon reasonably clean and it should run. I did not clean my rifle until the following Saturday and the BCG was still a little wet and it cleaned

up easily. The SLIP2000 kept the fouling soft and kept the rifle running despite the sand present in the action (dang wind!)

4. 50/200 Zero – Maximum point blank range is described as the distance at which a rifleman can hit his target without guessing hold over. The 50/200 provides this for my rifle and me. Regardless of the zero you choose, you WILL have to aim high at ranges inside 25 yards due to the height over bore of your sights/optic.
5. Safety lever manipulation – Basically, the safety should be on unless the sight picture has been acquired AND the decision to fire has been made. Practice operating your safety. Several students forgot to disengage the safety and delayed their shots, especially on Saturday's cadence drill.

I have always been pleased with my experiences with 212 Firearms. Regardless of your previous experience, you WILL learn something when shooting with Jared Segraves. He is passionate about shooting and passionate about teaching. His enthusiasm is infectious and he runs a safe, productive range. If you've never trained before, you don't know what you don't know. Get training! If it has been awhile since your last class, remember, shooting is a perishable skill. Get back out there! Most gun owners don't shoot their guns much, if at all. Even fewer run their guns hard. Fewer still seek out training. Be the minority. Stand out amongst your shooting peers. Get trained. Maximize your skill sets so that when the chips fall, you can be an asset to yourself and those you care about. Be a civilian defender.