

– Backgrounder –
Virtual Firearms Training Simulators
The technology that powers QuickDraw Nashville

Here is some information about Virtual Firearms Training Simulators like those now available to the public for use at **QuickDraw Nashville**:

- The first virtual firearms training simulator system was originally developed in 1984 as the brainchild of South African race car driver Jody Scheckter, who moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1989.
- The idea behind FATS, or Firearms Training Systems, Inc., was to use computer technology to provide interactive live-fire simulations for police forces, the military, and hunters. Though there are now other manufacturers in the U.S., FATS has become synonymous with the entire interactive simulation market.
- Firearms simulators enable users to train in highly realistic threat situations through the use of video and digital projection imagery and firearms that have been modified to emit lasers but still feel like the original weapon. Using film to create hundreds scenarios from hostage situations to terrorists on a plane or gunmen in a mall, and realistic backdrops for simulations, the technology helps law enforcement and gun enthusiasts learn how to better defend themselves and others in various real-life threat situations.
- Those who train on the system conduct fire exercises indoors in a dark room with projected images of various backgrounds including urban landscapes, battlefields, farmhouses and open fields, which create a particular sense of environment.
- The technology is extremely attractive over live-fire exercises because of safety and low cost, allowing for practice and training without expending ammunition. Rising costs and shortages in ammunition, as well as legislative and other perceived threats to gun ranges and gun rights will continue to increase virtual firearms training simulation ranges with gun enthusiasts.
- The system tracks a shooter's success rate in a way that would not be possible in live situations, recording how many rounds were fired, how many hit the target versus bystanders, and how many of the hits were fatal.
- In 1985, FATS (now owned by Meggitt Training Systems) produced its first simulation training system for the U.S. Post Office, and began developing relationships with major urban police forces. By 1988 the police departments of Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco were using the FATS training system. By the mid 1990s FATS had grown to the point where it had a lock on the police and military market.
- FATS military simulators are the used by the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, US Marines, US National Guard, US Air Force, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Air Force, Australia Defense Forces, Singapore Army and many others.