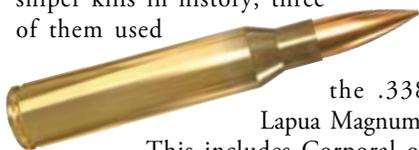


# “Passion for Precision”

## Nammo's .338 Lapua Magnum Story

The .338 Lapua Magnum (Lapua for short) has now been around for a while in the sniper community, but it does have the distinction of being the first cartridge designed specifically for sniping. The .338 Lapua was developed back in 1983 but it was not until the later 1990s that it gained in popularity and started to become more widely used. The cartridge was designed to reach at 1000 metres with enough energy to penetrate five layers of military body armour and still make the kill. The effective range of this cartridge is over a mile (1609 meters) in the right shooting conditions as has been demonstrated in recent conflicts with confirmed kills in excess of 2000 metres.

In fact, of the top ten longest recorded sniper kills in history, three of them used



the .338 Lapua Magnum.

This includes Corporal of Horse (CoH) Craig Harrison, Household Cavalry of the British Army, who has two confirmed kills using the .338 Lapua Magnum Lock Base B408 bullets at a distance of 2,475 meters.

Realistically, 1500 metres is within the range of a trained sniper. This cartridge is based off the .416 Rigby Case, necked down to .338 caliber, and is designed primarily as a military extreme range anti-personnel round and there is really no

Law Enforcement applications, unless one need a super penetrating round for either armoured vehicles or barricaded suspects. There are not a lot of rifles chambered for the .338 Lapua but the list continues to grow. The availability of match ammo has also grown to where there are a handful of manufacturers making good match grade ammo. The recoil of these heavier extreme range cartridges, such as the 338 Lapua, can be high so a good muzzle brake is required.

For military extreme long range anti-personnel purposes the .338 Lapua is an excellent choice, however this cartridge is not recommended for close range Law Enforcement use.

### Genesis of the .338 Lapua Magnum

Originally developed as a military cartridge, the .338 Lapua Magnum may well be seen by small-arms historians as one of the most important cartridges developed in the latter part of the 20th century. The .338 fills an important but previously unfilled tactical niche between 7.62mm and .50 caliber sniper rifles, since it is capable of delivering reliable hits to 1,500 metres. Owing to innovative bullet designs developed at Lapua, the .338 Lapua Magnum also makes a compelling cartridge for long-range target shooting, hostage situations or providing accurate fire in support of ground forces.

The .338 Lapua Magnum, also known as the 8.6 x 70mm, was originally developed

in 1983 as a long-range sniper cartridge for the US Navy designed to push a 250 grain (16.2 gram) bullet at about 3,000 fps (914 mps). After a series of experiments, the Research Armament Company in the United States designed a round based on a slightly shortened and necked-down .416 Rigby case, building rifles for the Navy that used Hornady bullets and cases from Brass Extrusion Labs. The cartridge went from wildcat to production status when Lapua Ltd. in Finland refined the design at the Navy's request. The standard .416 case was not robust enough to support the average pressures generated by this cartridge, so Lapua kept the outside dimensions the same but strengthened web area of the case. It should be noted that average pressures for this cartridge run a bit less than 60,915 psi or 420 MPa, and no single round will exceed 70,052 psi or 483 MPa. Muzzle velocity of production ammunition is a wee bit slower than the original concept, running about 2,950 fps (900 mps) out of the average rifle. This round will still be supersonic at 1,300 yards (1,200 metres), however, while 7.62x51mm M80 ball commonly goes subsonic around 704 metres.

Accuracy and velocity at long range are greatly facilitated by design of the Lapua projectiles, which have had a reputation for extraordinary long-range performance since the 1930s, when Lapua developed a special bullet with rebated boat tail designed to give Maxim belt-fed machine guns



*.338 Lapua Magnum improved for King of 2 Miles Match*