

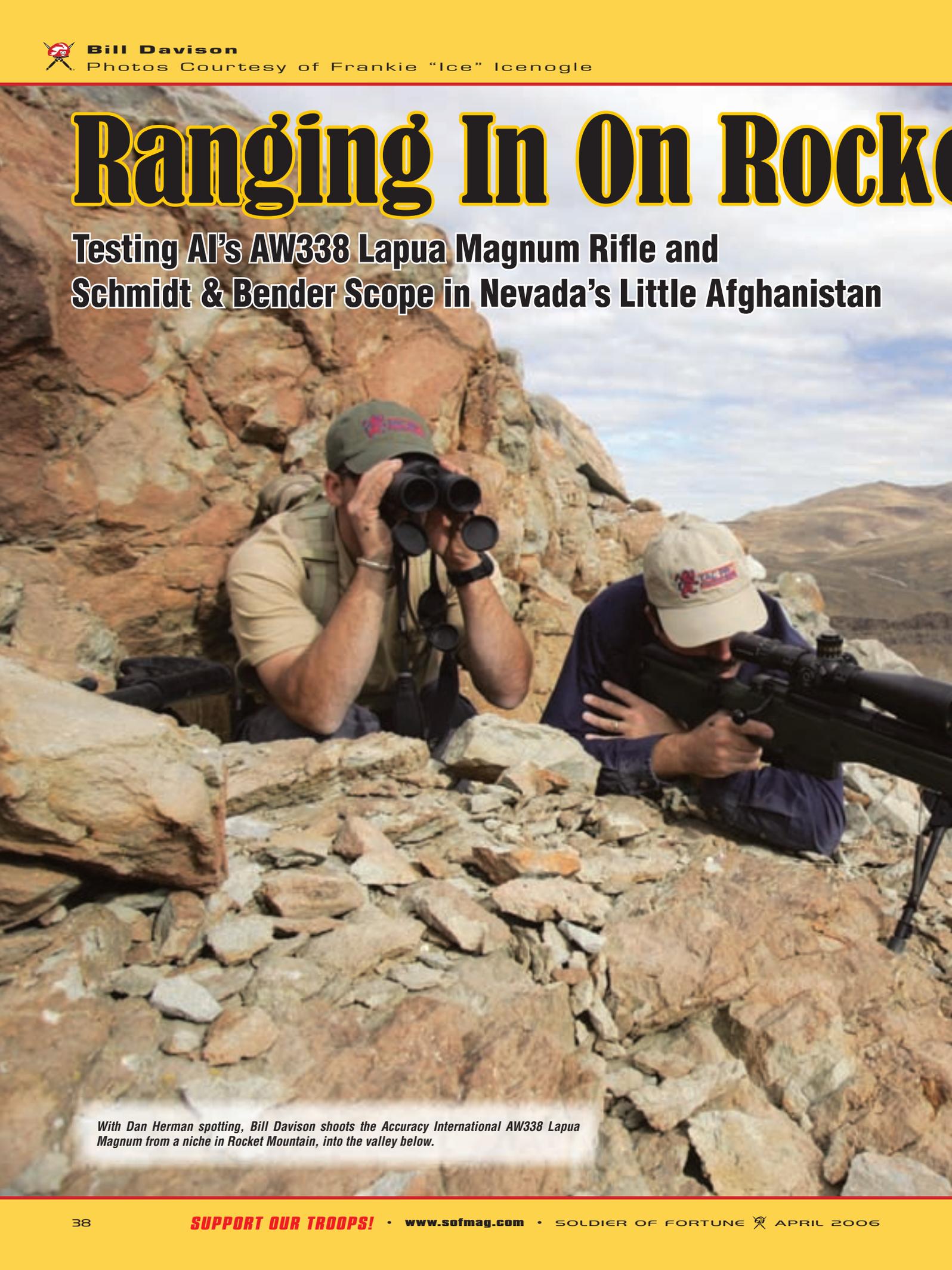


Bill Davison

Photos Courtesy of Frankie "Ice" Icenogle

Ranging In On Rocks

Testing AI's AW338 Lapua Magnum Rifle and Schmidt & Bender Scope in Nevada's Little Afghanistan



With Dan Herman spotting, Bill Davison shoots the Accuracy International AW338 Lapua Magnum from a niche in Rocket Mountain, into the valley below.

et Mountain

As it is fine gear by any standard, Davison is proud to be the main distributor/importer of the AI rifles, and dealer for Schmidt & Bender riflescopes.



After waiting for months it was finally here -- my new Schmidt & Bender 5-25x56 scope with CM clicks and the new P4 reticle. I had been keeping my Accuracy International AW338 Lapua magnum rifle "scope-less" just for this, so I put the two together and started to be amazed. In my opinion, the AI AW338 is without doubt the worldwide king of the battle-proven sniper rifles. It is the standard British Royal Marines Sniper Rifle as the L115A (for how the SAS uses this rifle in Iraq, see "Three for the Money," last issue).

It is still light enough to carry and climb into battle with and the ammo is not so heavy, so you can still take enough to be effective, and as those of us who have AI rifles know -- they are as strong as an ox and never let you down: What a perfect platform to mount the new Schmidt & Bender 5-25 scope on.

So off I went down the range to zero and see what we had. After setting the scope up and doing my break-in procedure, I was pleased to see that the Schmidt & Bender was exactly what Hans Bender had told me it would be at the Shot Show 2005: Basically the best of everything they do, in one package. I shot groups at 100 to 1000 yards and was very pleased, although it didn't



(top) Davison gave a good workout to an AI AW in .308 and mounting a Schmidt & Bender 4-16-50 double-turn metric scope, found it also good to go. (above) Marty Bordson of Badger Ordnance (left) spots as Davison shoots the AI AW in .338 Lapua magnum at targets twelve hundred yards away in the valley below. (bottom) Mounting a Schmidt & Bender 5-25x56 scope with a CM P4 reticle, the AI AW in .338 Lapua magnum would consistently deliver first-round hits past a thousand yards.

seem to be very hard to do. I decided that this combination needed to be tested in a much harsher environment.

I knew the U.S. Marine Scout Snipers were changing to the Schmidt & Bender 3-12x50 scope and that Badger Ordnance was making the mounts and bases, so I called Marty Bordson at Badger and had a chat. He told me that he was going to Rocket Mountain, the military training base at Hawthorne Nevada, to test and evaluate the mounts and bases in the harshest terrain possible. It sounded just what I was looking for. The area where they do the Mountain Scout Sniper course is very similar to the mountains and terrain of Afghanistan and the current theatre of war – mountainous, rocky and bare, an unforgiving place.

We started at around 6,000 feet above sea level on top of Rocket Mountain, with the closest target at about 400 yards at a 30-degree angle – which may not sound like much, until you have to hang off a cliff to shoot it! I don't remember being able to get into a perfect position on any of the targets.

Many other targets went all the way out to 1405 yards but because of the angles you had a true-flat-ground range of 1212 yards, so that's what I dialed in for. Dan Herman, NCOIC of the Mountain Warfare School for Sniping

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at Bridgeport, California, was shooting with us. He is a great instructor, with vast experience in this difficult application of a sniper's role.

I'm glad to say that the AI AW338 and the SB 5-25 and the SB 3-12 were outstanding in every way. With Marty or Dan spotting for me and using my Leica Geovids for straight-line distances out to 1350 yards, there wasn't any target we did not get on in two or three rounds, with most being first-round hits.

With such excellent equipment and training, we can make this dangerous and arduous job we send our troops out to do, a little easier. ☞

Bill Davison is owner of Tac Pro Shooting Center, 35100 N. Hwy 108, Mingus, TX 76463; phone: 254-968-3112 (www.tacproshootingcenter.com).

(top) Frankie (Ice) Icenogle draws a bead on a target far away in the valley below. With their superb accuracy and good handling characteristics, the AI rifles were liked by all who fired them from the Rocket Mountain promontory. (bottom) From left to right, Dan Herman, Tony Icenogle, Bill Davison, Frankie Icenogle and Marty Bordson – the lords of Rocket Mountain.



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