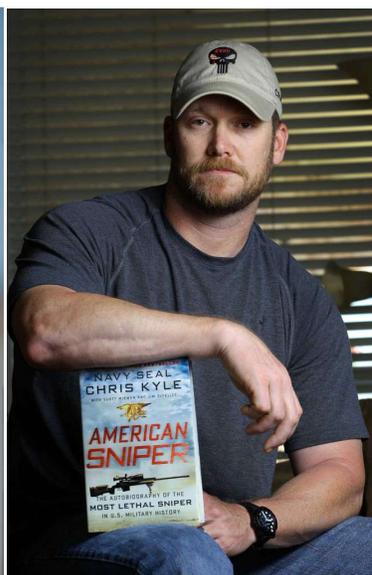


# 'American Sniper' memorial honoring Chris Kyle as 'humanitarian' unveiled in West Texas

By Kelsey Bradshaw

Updated 5:41 pm, Thursday, July 28, 2016



Chris Kyle, the focus of last year's blockbuster "American Sniper," was honored Thursday with a statue honoring his memory in Odessa commemorating his life as a "father," "husband," "solider" and "humanitarian."

Kyle, a U.S. Navy SEAL veteran and sniper, was shot to death by Eddie Ray Routh, a former Marine, on Feb. 2, 2013 at a Central Texas shooting range. Actor Bradley Cooper starred as Kyle in the 2014 film "American Sniper." Since then, Gov. Greg Abbott declared Feb. 2 to be "Chris Kyle Day" in 2015.

Kyle's widow, Taya, was in attendance to honor her late husband, according to her [Facebook page](#). She was joined by Dr. Sudip Bose, who worked with Kyle in Iraq and U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway, R-TX.

Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers sang the National Anthem at the unveiling.

**RELATED:** [9-foot Chris Kyle bronze statue, plaza set for May unveiling in West Texas](#)

And now, the late Texan who is regarded as the deadliest sniper in U.S. military history — originally from Odessa — will be forever remembered and honored with a 9-foot-tall bronze statue, depicting Kyle with a sniper rifle in his left hand and the American flag in his right.

Kyle's wife, Taya, and his father Wayne were consulted by Vic Payne, the sculptor of the statue to make sure the slain "American Sniper" was remembered properly.

According to the [Odessa Chamber of Commerce](#), the 2,800-square-foot plaza is be made of granite and Texas limestone. It is located adjacent to the Veterans' Clinic in Odessa at the Medical Center Hospital on SH 191.

**RELATED:** [Taya Kyle, widow of 'American Sniper' Chris Kyle, faces President Barack Obama on guns at town hall](#)

The statue of Kyle is the centerpiece of three plazas linked together. Beside Kyle, the other two plazas feature the "unmentioned team members and all of those other unnamed SEALs that gave their lives for our country," according to the chamber.

Limestone, cut from Kyle's hometown, paves the plaza and is inlaid with a SEAL symbol, the Roman god Neptune, and three tridents, which is the Greek god Poseidon's weapon. The three tridents are a remembrance of Kyle and other unknown SEALs.

Texas and U.S. flags flank the plaza which is shaded by trees from former President George W. Bush's ranch.

Black granite serves as the backdrop to the memorial, creating low walls and spaces for visitors to sit down. According to the chamber, the low walls are angled making it so visitors can see engravings of Kyle's medals, accomplishments and tours of duty and "their own face, reflecting in the mirrored granite."

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U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, R-TX, called Kyle a "hero in every sense of the word," Thursday in a news release.

"This memorial will not only pay tribute to a devoted husband and father who gave back to fellow veterans in need, it will help folks across our state and nation remember a heroic Texan," he said.

Cooper, who is not Chris Kyle, was criticized for attending the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia this week. Some Twitter users say they plan to boycott Cooper's future films over his presence at the convention. Another commented that they thought his experience playing Kyle would have rubbed off on him.

Cooper received an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Kyle last year.

The number of medals Kyle received was corrected following a military investigation July 10.

In his best-selling book, Kyle wrote he had received two Silver Stars and five Bronze Stars. Lt. Jackie Pau told [the Associated Press](#) that the investigation and review of Kyle's discharge paperwork, known as a DD214 form, determined he had earned one Silver Star and four Bronze Stars with combat "V" for valor.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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