

'American Sniper' in the crosshairs

By Jim Cornelius

"American Sniper" has become a surprise box office smash, breaking records for a mid-winter release. Less surprisingly, it has become a flashpoint in the culture wars.

For many folks, it's a depiction of the skill, dedication and sacrifice of American warfighters as represented by one of the elite: Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle. For others, the movie is a glorification of war and killing that evades taking responsibility for a bad war.

Clint Eastwood says his movie is an "anti-war statement," because it shows the vast civilian population that had no personal skin in the game "what [war] does to the family and the people who have to go back to into civilian life like Chris Kyle did."

Chris Kyle was one of a long line of country-boy sharpshooters who made their mark on American military history. Some exalt that heritage and his burly Texas cowboy persona; others find it hard to take. Some see him as a hero, others as a remorseless killer who dehumanized the people in his crosshairs, calling them "savages."

Some scoff at Kyle's

insistence that his job was about saving lives — but that's what sniper overwatch does. Snipers protect soldiers or Marines as they go about the dangerous work of patrol or raid in an urban environment. That said, if you've read Kyle's memoir, upon which the movie was based, it's clear that he relished his work and his skill with a rifle. He felt competitive with other snipers and he did, indeed, regard those in his crosshairs as savages.

Why that should shock anyone is a perplexing question. No matter how it's sanitized for public consumption, no matter how anti-septic it is rendered by the distance afforded by missile strike or drone, war is still about killing enemies. And the brutality of the insurgents and outright terrorists Kyle and his comrades fought in Iraq certainly earned the designation "savage."

One can oppose the Iraq war for any number of valid reasons and yet acknowledge that the hostile elements our troops fought there were deadly enemies. In fact, that seems to be exactly

where Eastwood is coming from.

The movie elides some aspects of Chris Kyle's character that would have made for a more complete picture. He seems to have made up some whoppers after returning from war. He claimed to have killed two men who tried to carjack him in Texas, deploying some kind of get-out-of-jail-free card from the Department of Defense to deter law enforcement heat. And he allegedly told stories about traveling in secret to New Orleans during Katrina and shooting looters.

None of that is verifiable, and knowledgeable folks are pretty certain nothing like these incidents ever happened. After Kyle's



death, Jesse Ventura won a defamation suit against his estate over a claim that Kyle decked Ventura in a Coronado bar after Ventura allegedly disparaged the war and Navy SEALs. Ventura said it never happened, and a jury sided with him.

Why Kyle felt the need to tell tall tales when he had a verified record of exceptional combat prowess and fortitude is an open question. The answer may be psychologically complicated — some need to hold onto to a sense of identity ("The Legend") — or maybe not.

He sure ain't the first Texas cowboy to tell a stretcher or two in a barroom.

Kyle's larger-than-life persona surely had its portion of bravado, but he was also a generous and compassionate man. The irony of his death is bitter: slain by a troubled veteran he had reached out to and was trying to help.

Whether you see Chris Kyle as a hero or not depends mostly on the lens you are looking through. But certainly he was a man whose story was worth the telling, and Eastwood told it well.

SISTERS ENTERTAINMENT ARTS SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday~Jan. 29

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with Lindy Gravelle 6 to 9 p.m. \$5 cover. For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Friday~Jan. 30

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with The Matt Summers Band 6 to 9 p.m. \$10 cover. And Fondue Friday is \$30 for two! For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Saturday~Jan. 31

The Belfry '80s Dance Night with Fun Bobby! 7 to 10:30 p.m. \$15 adults and \$10 students. A fundraiser for the 2015 Sisters High School Grad Night Party. Purchase tickets at CommonThreads.com, online at bendticket.com, or at the door. For info call 541-480-6525.

Monday~Feb. 2

The Open Door at Clearwater Gallery Live Music! 7 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-4994 or go to theclearwatergallery.com.

Thursday~Feb. 5

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with Heather & Tom Duo 6 to 9 p.m. \$5 cover. For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Friday~Feb. 6

Sisters High School Sisters Folk Festival Winter Concert with Foghorn Stringband & Beth Wood 7 p.m. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door (\$10 students). For additional information or to purchase tickets call 541-549-4979 or go to sistersfolkfestival.org.

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with Geoff Elvee 6 to 9 p.m. \$10 cover. And Fondue Friday is \$30 for two! For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Saturday~Feb. 7
Hoodoo Winter Carnival 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Kids' games, live music, BBQ, the annual "dummy downhill" and fireworks! An all-day family affair! For additional information go to hoodoo.com or call 541-822-3799.

Black Butte Ranch Fat-bike Cow Patty Crit 12 to 4 p.m. This 2- to 4-person short-track fat-bike race is for riders 15 or older. Entry is \$15 online in advance by February 5, or \$25 the day of the event (fat bikes provided; helmets and closed-toe shoes required). For more info go to blackbutteranch.com or call 541-595-5877.

Monday~Feb. 9
The Open Door at Clearwater Gallery Live Music! 7 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-4994 or go to theclearwatergallery.com.

Wed.~Feb. 11
The Belfry Live Music with Carolyn Wonderland 7 to 10 p.m. for 4 Peaks Preview Party! \$17 online at bendticket.com and \$20 at the door the day of show. Pub doors open 90 minutes before the show. For more info: 541-815-9122 or go to belfryevents.com.

Thursday~Feb. 12

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with The Substitutes 6 to 9 p.m. \$5 cover. For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Friday~Feb. 13

Sisters High School Sisters Folk Festival Winter Concert: The Stray Birds with Cahalen Morrison & Eli West 7 p.m. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door (\$10 students). For additional information or to purchase tickets call 541-549-4979 or go online to sistersfolkfestival.org.

Saturday~Feb. 14

The Belfry Valentine's Dance & Dessert with The Notables Swing Band! 7 to 10:30 p.m. \$10 online at bendticket.com or \$12 at the door the day of show. For additional information call 541-815-9122 or go to belfryevents.com.

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Valentine's Dinner & Dance with The Substitutes 6 to 10 p.m. \$115. For 21 and over. Celebrate romance the winery way! Special menu with guest chef Cerstin of Bleu Bite. Purchase tickets online at faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

Sisters Schools "Sisters Shootout" Basketball Tournament 8 a.m. start for day-long event. For boys and girls in grades 5 to 8. For additional information go online to sistersshootout.com or call Sisters Park & Recreation District at 541-549-2091.

Listings are subject to change. Submission deadline is 5 p.m. Fridays. Email Teresa@NuggetNews.com

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The Belfry Author Reading, Garth Stein, "A Sudden Light" 6 p.m. Free! Paulina Springs Books presents the bestselling author of "The Art of Racing in the Rain," sharing his new novel. Pub doors open at 5 p.m. For more information call 541-549-0866 or go to paulinasprings.com.

Faith Hope & Charity Vineyards Live Music with JazCru 6 to 9 p.m. \$5 cover. And Fondue Friday is \$30 for two! For additional information go to faithhopeandcharityevents.com or call 541-526-5075.

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The Belfry

Jan. 31st / Sat.
SHS Grad Committee presents
80s Dance Night with Fun Bobby!
7 PM • \$15 adults
\$10 students

Feb. 11th / Wed.
Carolyn Wonderland 4 Peaks Preview Party!
Heralded as one of the best vocalists in Austin!
7 PM • \$17 online

Feb. 14th 7pm

Valentine's Dance with The Notables Swing Band
Dessert & Dance Swinging Fun!
7 PM • \$10 online

PUB OPENS 1-1/2 HOURS PRIOR TO SHOWS
BelfryEvents.com
Call for Details
541-815-9122

Sisters MOVIE HOUSE

STARTS FRIDAY
FRI., JAN. 30 - THURS., FEB. 5

Whiplash (R)
Fri 5:00, 7:30
Sat 2:15, 7:30
Sun 1:45, 4:00
Mon-Thurs 4:00, 6:30

Foxcatcher (R)
Fri 7:15 • Sat 4:15, 7:00
Sun 3:45 • Mon-Thurs 5:45

Theory of Everything (PG-13)
Fri 4:45 • Sat 1:45, 4:45
Sun 1:15 • Mon-Thurs 3:15

The Imitation Game (PG-13)
Fri 4:30, 7:15
Sat 2:00, 4:30, 7:15
Sun 1:30, 4:00
Mon-Thurs 3:45, 6:15

American Sniper (R)
Fri 4:15, 7:00
Sat 1:30, 4:15, 7:00
Sun 1:00, 3:45
Mon-Thurs 3:15, 6:00

Movie times and titles are subject to change. Visit website or call for latest information.
WWW.SISTERSMOVIEHOUSE.COM
541-549-8800

