

NVision helps honor a fallen hero

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NVision recently volunteered its 3D laser-scanning services to help Sarasota sculptor Greg Marra create an exact replica of the rifle that former Navy Seal Chris Kyle used while in the military.

Christopher Scott "Chris" Kyle is widely considered to have been the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history with over 150 confirmed kills. Having retired from the military, Kyle and a friend were shot and killed in February at a Texas gun range by another former service member whom they were trying to help cope with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Marra wanted to pay tribute to Kyle and honor all service members by creating a life-size clay sculpture of the soldier as a gift to Kyle's family. However, he wanted the statue to be holding an exact replica of Kyle's rifle, down to the smallest detail. He contacted NVision, a company with a history of working successfully with sculptors.

Kyle's wife allowed NVision to use her husband's gun for the project. Using the company's HandHeld laser scanner, NVision technicians scanned the gun, collecting all the necessary data on the rifle's exact shape and size.

The NVision Handheld scanner is a powerful portable scanning device that is capable of capturing 3D geometry from objects of almost any size or shape. The scanner is attached to a mechanical arm that moves about the object, freeing the user to capture data rapidly with a high degree of resolution and accuracy. As a part is inspected, the scanner generates a point cloud consisting of millions of points each with x,y,z coordinates and i,j,k vectors. Integrated software that comes with the scanner is used to convert the point cloud to an STL polygon and an optional tripod provides complete portability in the field. Intuitive software allows real-time rendering, full model editing, polygon reduction, and data output to all standard 3D packages.

The scanning took about two hours. Once the HandHeld scanner had captured all the data on the gun's geometry, NVision engineers used the data to make a foam replica of the gun to be placed with Marra's statue of Kyle.

In a recent interview, Marra, who has dedicated his life toward the pursuit of classical historical statuary to honor the United States, said: "I believe that our service men and women sacrifice so much more than we are aware of. Creating statues like this is the least I can do to honor them. It's my way of giving back to the country and to them." Marra is endorsed by congressmen and senators from every state.

Steve Kersen, NVision's VP of Sales and Marketing, voiced a similar sentiment. "There are military families whose loved ones are alive today because of Chris Kyle. In Iraq, he played an important role in stopping insurgents who were preparing to attack our soldiers. We were honored to have the chance to use our skills in this tribute to Chris and all U.S. service men and women."