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American Sniper shoots to top of US box office

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The war drama, directed by Clint Eastwood, is up for best picture and best actor for star Bradley Cooper, who plays real life Navy Seal Chris Kyle.

Action comedy *The Wedding Ringer* opened in second place with \$21m (£14m).

British family film *Paddington* came third with \$19.3m (£12.8m).

*American Sniper* jumped from 21st place at last weekend's US box office, after a limited release in just a few screens.

It is now Eastwood's most successful film opening as director, beating *Gran Torino*'s 2008 opening of \$29.5m (£19.5m), and performed twice as well as studio estimates according to Reuters.



Action comedy *The Wedding Ringer* sees Josh Gad hire Kevin Hart to be his best man

*The Wedding Ringer*, which stars Kevin Hart as a best man for hire, achieved its successful opening weekend despite being panned by critics.

Last week's number one, Liam Neeson's action sequel *Taken 3*, fell to fourth place.

US cinemas were especially busy during the three-day Martin Luther King Day holiday weekend.

Martin Luther King drama *Selma*, which was nominated for two Oscars including best picture, was in fifth place.

*The Imitation Game* - which landed eight Oscar nominations - also made the top 10, along with Disney musical *Into the Woods*, the final *Hobbit* film and Angelina Jolie's *Unbroken*.

New cyber-terrorism film *Blackhat* was in 10th place.

### **US and Canada box office**

Source: Rentrak

1. *American Sniper* - \$90.2m (£59m)
2. *The Wedding Ringer* - \$21m (£14m)
3. *Paddington* - \$19.3m (£12.8m)
4. *Taken 3* - \$14.1m (£9.3m)
5. *Selma* - \$8.3m (£5.49m)

