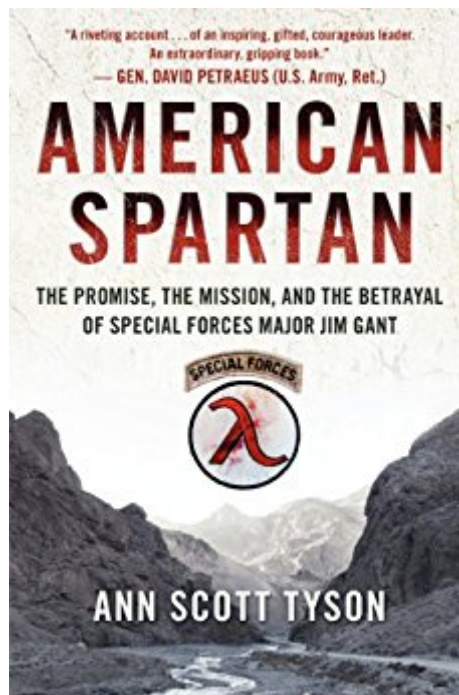




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American Spartan: The Promise, The Mission, And The Betrayal Of Special Forces Major Jim Gant



Synopsis

Lawrence of Arabia meets Sebastian Junger's War in this unique, incendiary, and dramatic true story of heroism and heartbreak in Afghanistan written by a Pulitzer Prize-nominated war correspondent. Army Special Forces Major Jim Gant changed the face of America's war effort in Afghanistan. A decorated Green Beret who spent years in Afghanistan and Iraq training indigenous fighters, Gant argued for embedding autonomous units with tribes across Afghanistan to earn the Afghans' trust and transform them into a reliable ally with whom we could defeat the Taliban and counter al-Qaeda networks. The military's top brass, including General David Petraeus, commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, approved, and Gant was tasked with implementing his controversial strategy. Veteran war correspondent Ann Scott Tyson first spoke with Gant when he was awarded the Silver Star in 2007. Tyson soon came to share Gant's vision, so she accompanied him to Afghanistan, risking her life to embed with the tribes and chronicle their experience. And then they fell in love. Illustrated with dozens of photographs, American Spartan is their remarkable story—one of the most riveting, emotional narratives of wartime ever published.

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Customer Reviews

Very fortunate to receive an early copy of AMERICAN SPARTAN by Ann Scott Tyson yesterday...opened it and didn't close it till well after midnight - this story captivated me like no other I've read on combat actions in Afghanistan since just after 9/11. For the record, I don't know Jim personally, but I do know many of the other men in this book that either gave lift to Jim's One-Tribe-at-a-Time thesis and took a chance, or stonewalled Jim at every turn and contrived childish charges to pad legitimate charges based on a young West Point officer's statement, written after being publically called out by Jim in front of the men down range. As several unnamed sources in the book shared, alcohol is a fact of life, inside the United States, or in very remote places on any battlefield. There isn't a special operations team, in any service, or a team of CIA folks, that could not acquire some form of alcohol in the first 24 hours of arriving if they wanted it - and any senior military officer who thinks that isn't true has not spent a day down range more than a quick helo ride in for a dog and pony visit, and a quick ride out before nightfall. Just because it's available doesn't mean you have to drop your guard and get tanked. I don't condone Jim Gant's every decision or the way he did things, but I do respect the heck out of what he did as a warrior and as an American Special Forces man. I absolutely disagree with some senior leaders in this book that opine Jim Gant somehow threw away all the positive things our Green Berets accomplished in Afghanistan by his isolated actions. When I read about senior specops leaders having the foresight to support Jim's One-Tribe-at-a-Time philosophy it tells me at face value that Jim wasn't entirely off the reservation. Guys like that, confident and humble in their achievements, understanding what it's like to be under fire on target, and not just under a radio headset far away from the gunfight, take risks to get stuff done. Jim was one of those risks. My mates and I walked the same hills in the first few years of the war that Jim's did the last half of the war. I can guarantee you we FAILED to follow Jim's philosophy and were laser focused on kill/capture. Had I been a little more like Jim, we might have had more success. If you are looking for a fascinating story that will make you proud to be an American, thankful for men like Jim and his Special Forces teammates, and really give you a major case of the backside all at the same time then AMERICAN SPARTAN is well worth your time.

A fascinating, well-written, riveting story. I've read every book about

Afghanistan I could find and this is one of the best. Granted the possible bias of the author being the protagonist's wife notwithstanding. When I finished the book, I was so angry and frustrated the way Jim Gant was treated once his field-grade supporting officers were replaced by petty, narrow-minded little men (using the word only to describe their sex because none of them are real men) obviously jealous of his success, skills, ability and war record. As USSF from VN (Det A-502 68-70), I find the actions of LTG Mulholland especially reprehensible. 1Lt Roberts, Maj Kent Solheim, Col Mark Schwartz, Lt Col Robert Wilson, Col Richard Kim and others should be stripped of their rank and retirement. They join a hall of ignominy with similar incompetents like Bill McRaven, Gen Dell Dailey, Brig Gen Greg Trebon and others who kept USSF and other specops in the field from doing their duty. Gant did what USSF is trained to do...train the indigs to defend themselves. He succeeded where others in the theater failed, let alone even tried. Most of the decisions he made supported his mission. He wasn't an addict. His use of alcohol and drugs to help him sleep should have been recognized as an attempt to deal with PTSD and given help, not censure. The one decision I question was to allow Ann to live with him. However, her participation enhanced his rapport with the local people, especially the women, an area off limits to him under Islamic rules. She was a positive presence, not a detraction. Most of all, he was amazingly successful in his mission, especially given the lack of logistics and intelligence support that he needed and requested. Besides Mulholland, who also let other USSF in Afghanistan down when he commanded the 5th early on, conventional Army mental midget Roberts, who started the entire attack on Gant, should be marginalized. None of those who attacked Gant and brought about his downfall without giving him a chance to defend himself should be accorded any respect, let alone retirement on the taxpayer's dime. Thank you, Jim Gant for your service, and Ann Tyson for telling the story. I loved it, despite the tragic end.

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