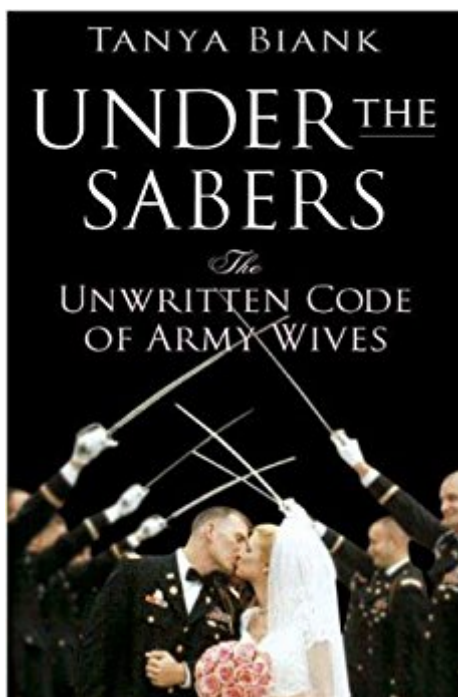


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Under The Sabers: The Unwritten Code Of Army Wives



Synopsis

Under the Sabers is a groundbreaking narrative detailing the complex personal challenges Army wives face, presenting a provocative new look at Army life. Tanya Biank goes beyond the sound bites and photo ops of military life and shows what it is really like to be an Army wifeâfrom hauling furniture off the rental truck by yourself at a new duty station when your husband is in the field, to comforting your son who wants his dad home from Afghanistan for his fifth birthdayâshe takes readers into the hearts and homes of today's military wives. In the summer of 2002, Army wives were in the headlines after Biank, a military reporter for the Fayetteville Observer, made international news when she broke the story about four Army wives who were brutally murdered by their husbands in the span of six weeks at Fort Bragg, an Army post that is home to the Green Berets, Airborne paratroopers, and Delta Force commandos. By that autumn, Biank, an Army brat herself, realized the still untold story of Army wives lay in the ashes of that tragic and sensationalized summer. She knew the truthâ"wives were the backbone of the Army. They were strongânot helplessâand deserved more than the sugarcoating that often accompanied their stories in the media. Under the Sabers tells the story of four typical Army wives, who, in a flash, find themselves neck-deep in extraordinary circumstances that ultimately force them to redefine who they are as women and Army wives. In this fascinating and meticulously researched account, Biank takes the reader past the Army's gates, where everyone has a role to play, rules are followed, discipline is expected, perfection praised, and perception often overrides reality. Biank explores what happens when real life collides with Army convention. Biank describes what it means to be a wife and mother in a subculture that is in a constant state of readiness for war. In this hard-hitting and powerful book, Biank takes a close look at the other womanâ"the Army itselfâand its impact on wives, marriages, and home life. This story of strength and perseverance is an eye-opener for those who have never experienced military life and an anthem to those women who each day live the "unwritten code."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As an Army brat and scholar who has done research on the Army life from an anthropological perspective, I found this book very interesting and well-done. It's well-written and is truly in the "case study" style, rather than being a scientific survey of attitudes or events that permeate the lives of Army wives. If that's what you're looking for (as at least one of the disappointed reviewers seems to be) you won't find it here. But if you like to learn about a neglected subculture in the United States by means of closely examining the lives of four disparate Army wives, then this is for you. No, it doesn't include Army husbands, but then the title does say "Wives." Whatever changes are occurring in the Army as far as gender goes, and whether they are positive or negative, the plain fact is that the vast majority of senior officers and NCOs are men, and the vast majority of their spouses are women (don't ask, don't tell, after all). Someone else can write the book on Army husbands, and that could be an interesting read, too. I think the whole point of Ms. Biank's book is that it is the very nature of the military lifestyle that led to the murders at Fort Bragg; they COULD have happened anywhere. The more interesting question is "Why there, why then?" and while Biank doesn't do a stellar job in answering those questions, the fact is there is probably no one "right" answer. Could be coincidence; could be the nature of that particular Army post. While my father worked in Army intelligence, and we sometimes lived on post, it was never the combat-focus in those communities that it seems to be at Fort Bragg. In the Army I saw, there was much more than combat that got done and that was important to the nation's security. At Fort Bragg, life IS focused on combat and readiness for it.

This book was nothing more than a dreadful look into the lives of a small handful of women who had horrible experiences. Do not judge this book by its cover. Mine displayed a happy couple kissing as they walk out of the church after their wedding under an arch of sabers. What a happy picture. Enjoy it because it's the last happy thing you'll see in this book. The grand title creates the illusion that you will be getting an general, but inside, look at the lives of military wives. A true look at what Army wives face and how they cope. What it provides is the utterly depressing story of a few women who faced murder, family deaths, illness, abuse, cheating, struggles, and unhappiness. It's not inspiring, and it will certainly not act as any sort of reference for what a new wife might face. As a matter of fact, if I had read this before I married my husband (enlisted infantryman on a career track in the Army) I would have been terrified about the life ahead. This title is so misleading that it's almost insulting to military wives who are happy. There are so many women who happily and joyfully approach their military marriages, myself included. We face deployments, moves, separation, uncertainty, and hard times with faith in our marriages and a true love of our husbands and the Army. We are happy to do whatever necessary to support our husbands, but we also receive love and support in return. We have careers that do not make our husbands jealous, and some of us are even the primary bread winner. We would never think of cheating, and we faithfully provide unwavering support during deployments. We are happy! And yes, there are families who face struggles, but the community really does come together to help out.

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