

Film Review: ‘12 Strong’ Wins the Battle as it Loses the War

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 19, 2018 - 9:11am

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CHICAGO – In the 16 years of the U.S. and Afghanistan war, which began a month after Sept. 11, 2001, the U.S. has spent trillions of dollars and lost 2,400 soldiers. The story of that war’s first battle, “12 Strong,” would probably be more revelatory if we weren’t still there.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

To compare war films and their eras, the events depicted in the World War II film, “The Longest Day” (1962) took place 18 years before the movie, and it was about the decisive “D-Day” battle that helped to win that war. While “12 Strong” is a similarly dramatic war tale (and was classified until recently), it is just the beginning of a 16 year slog. If that had been the case for “The Longest Day,” and World War II was still going on, that film wouldn’t have the same feeling or impact. “12 Strong” suffers that fate because of the ongoing fighting in Afghanistan, and even as a war movie, its battle sequences become interminable.

Captain Mitch Nelson (Chris Hemsworth), an Army Green Beret strategist, has been assigned stateside under the auspice of Lt. Colonel Bowers (Rob Riggle). While doing training maneuvers, the events of September 11th, 2001, changes everything, including his assignment and duties. He will now lead “Task Force Dagger” into the newly declared Afghanistan War, which includes Spencer (Michael Shannon) and Diller (Michael Peña).

When his team of 12 men (Green Berets and CIA paramilitary) get to Afghanistan, the mountainous terrain is close to impossible for troop movement. They hook up with a ally, part of the in-country Northern Alliance, led by General Dostum (Navid Negahban of TV’s “Homeland”). This rag-tag military force travels by horseback, and encourages the 12 American soldiers to do the same. This small battalion has three weeks to capture a major, and strategic, Taliban-held city.

“12 Strong” opens everywhere on January 19th. Featuring Chris Hemsworth, Michael Shannon, Michael Peña, Rob Riggle and Navid Negahbah. Written by Ted Tally and Peter Craig. Directed by Nicolai Fuglsig. Rated “R”



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Captain Mitch Nelson (Chris Hemsworth) Rides Into Battle in '12 Strong'
Photo credit: Warner Bros.



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