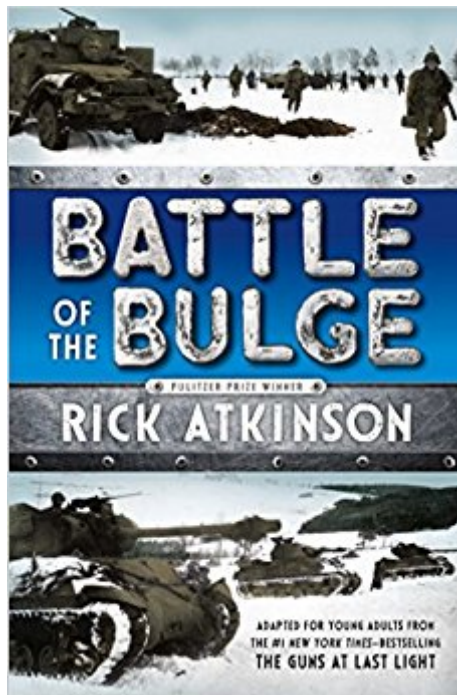




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# Battle Of The Bulge [The Young Readers Adaptation]



## Synopsis

December 16, 1944. In the frozen forests of the Ardennes, a surprise attack by the German army on American Allied forces launched the long, hard slog that was the Battle of the Bulge. Sir Winston Churchill called it "the greatest American battle of the war and . . . an ever-famous American victory." In clear and accessible prose, World War II historian, Pulitzer Prize winner, and New York Times-bestselling author Rick Atkinson skillfully navigates the attacks, counterattacks, advances, and retreats of this terrible bloodbath. Whether history buffs or newcomers to the topic, young readers will appreciate the many fascinating facts, photographs, and statistics included in this book, and thrill in this real-life account of victory against all odds. This thoroughly-researched and documented book can be worked into multiple aspects of the common core curriculum.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up — Following D-Day: The Invasion of Normandy, 1944 (Holt, 2014), the first YA adaptation from Atkinson's adult *The Guns at Last Light* (Picador, 2014), this title describes the planning, implementation, and horrors of the Battle of the Bulge. The book begins late in the war, providing comprehensive coverage of Hitler's bold final offensive, which caught the Allies by surprise, and describing the fierce battle action, largely fought by American defenders in the frozen Ardennes. The style is similar to that of *D-Day*, mixing details about plans, battles, terrain, and

weather with excerpts from primary source accounts that personalize the battle and demonstrate how the reactions of both sides shaped the action. Unlike D-Day, which emphasizes the successful planning and execution of the Normandy invasion, this volume focuses on how the shortages and stresses of a long war and severe winter weather exacerbated weaknesses and missteps on both sides, increased the difficulties of command and combat, and took a terrible human toll on the fighting forces of both Allies and Germans. The format is similar to that of the first book, with useful area and battle maps, captioned period photos, and an appendix with descriptions of winter fighting, equipment, and weapons. Tim McNeese's *Battle of the Bulge* (Chelsea House, 2004) covers much of the same material, but Atkinson's offering is better illustrated and more in-depth. VERDICT Because of the high level of battle detail and military jargon, this title isn't quite as readable as D-Day. However, it's a solid choice for high school reports and military buffs. — Mary Mueller, Rolla Public Schools, MO

— "You can't just tell kids that history is cool; you have to prove it, and Atkinson does." — Steve Sheinkin, *The New York Times Book Review* on D-Day — "Atkinson seats readers at the secret meetings of the Allied commanders, ejects them with paratroopers over the foggy French countryside, puts them into landing craft to hear soldiers barf and exclaim, and sends them out to die bloodily on the beaches wracked with enemy fire . . . a grand and historically significant tale told with dash and authority." — Kirkus Reviews on D-Day

Excellent overview of the Bulge. Atkinson is an outstanding WW2 historian.

A must read by Atkinson.

Not up to his prior works

I have read Rick Atkinson's WW II trilogy and saw this at my library. It is intended for young readers, but I wanted to see what it was like. If you have read the first two in the trilogy, skip this version and get the full *Guns at Last Light*. This book is based on that book. It has a great amount of pictures and short and sweet chapters. For a child interested in the subject it will do. As a book just to read, I am not sure young readers will get caught up in it. The story is history, this version is too short to provide in depth information and too focused on the history to develop any story which might hold a child's attention. No hero other than the whole allied army! The pictures do not do the book justice.

Incorrect titles like showing the "Sherman tanks" of the 82nd Airborne who did not have tanks as they do not drop well out of airplanes. Or tank silhouettes of Russian tanks (not German, US or British) on chapter headings, this is the Western front, not the Russian Front! But it does give an adequate reselling of who, what and where. So I bought it for my 92 year old dad who fought through the Battle of the Bulge in a Sherman tank of the 3rd Armored Division. Large print, lots of pictures, just too many of Gen. Patton whom he hates for stealing all the glory.

Pulled from historian Rick Atkinson's "The Guns at Last Light" (the third segment of his excellent World War II trilogy), **BATTLE OF THE BULGE** is designed to educate younger readers about America's epic final battle in Western Europe. While I feel the book does a fine job condensing the nuts and bolts of Hitler's Ardennes offensive, I felt the book's presentation diminished its overall quality. As someone who was first introduced to World War II at the age of 11, I developed a passion for studying the conflict that has lasted to this day (over 35 years later). To my surprise, my 8 year old daughter has cultivated a keen interest in the conflict and I have started to assemble a small World War II library for her. A battle book aimed at young readers seemed to be a logical addition, but I soon realized it was a little too advanced for her budding knowledge. First and foremost, **THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE** does an excellent job encapsulating the battle and addresses almost every facet. It sufficiently breaks down the essence of the battle into a multitude of interesting topics (weapons, personal accounts, key individuals, data, etc.); the chapters are brief and chock full of photos. The book certainly doesn't bore. While I found the text easy to read/understand, it may be a hard pill to swallow for those younger than 10 (the suggested age range is 8-12 years of age). Even though my daughter has a decent foundation of basic World War II knowledge, this book proved to be a challenge for her. While it is understood that the Battle of the Bulge is a significant American battle, I am disappointed that this battle and D-Day are the only young reader adaptations offered from Atkinson's comprehensive trilogy (which covers the entire spectrum of US participation in the European Theatre) and would have preferred books summarizing each book of the trilogy to provide younger minds with a better understanding of how the Battle of the Bulge (and D-Day for that matter) were significant parts of a more significant event. I see this book as being just one piece of a large puzzle. The other pieces are needed to see the full picture. Something else that I found irritating were the random silhouettes of planes, tanks and infantry that adorned the start of each chapter. Rather than silhouettes of objects related to the Battle of the Bulge (an American/German

battle), the images of a Soviet tank destroyer (SU-52?), an early war Soviet plane (Ilyushin Il-2 "Sturmovik"), a seaplane (the Bulge was fought inland) and what appears to be a column of infantry sporting Brodie helmets (British?) are repeatedly presented throughout the entire book. Even worse, the section describing the weapons used in battle appears to use a silhouette of a modern day assault rifle and an image of a Soviet T-34 seems to be used as a description of a Sherman tank. Maybe I'm being picky, but there are certainly enough related photos/images readily available to match the topic being discussed and certainly no need for the use of unrelated/Eastern Front imagery. THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE provides an adequate synopsis of a major American battle in World War II, but its value is best served for young readers that are already familiar with the battle's place in the war.

My grandson is an avid and voracious reader. He is nine, and I was unsure if he would enjoy a book built on our nation's battle history. He has an excellent vocabulary and retention rate. I had a thought that we should read a chapter, and discuss to see how much of this book he would assimilate and enjoy. That was a good thought, because he had some difficulties with timelines and geography of the region. There were many good maps and photos but none were labeled, so it is difficult to know what will appear in the finished book. I do think that this part of the war was described well, but more facts about what led up to the war would be helpful. This was an excellent refresher course for me, and for his parents. I might be a little more hesitant to offer a battle history until he is a little older. My grandson told me he did like the book, but it was not one of his favorite books. I am familiar with Rick Atkinson and his writing, and he is an excellent writer. Too much too soon for my grandson. Recommended For Ages Over Ten. prisrob 04-21-15

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