



## Battle of the Bulge [The Young Readers Adaptation]

*Rick Atkinson*

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On the 16th of December, 1944, in the frozen forests of the Ardennes, the German army attacked American Allied forces, launching a final bid to turn the tide of World War II. Thus began the long, hard slog of a battle that was nicknamed by the media as the Battle of the Bulge. Lasting more than a month, it led to tens of thousands of casualties. Sir Winston Churchill called it "the greatest American battle of the war and . . . an ever-famous American victory." Atkinson skillfully guides his audience through the attacks and counterattacks, the advances and retreats of this terrible bloodbath. Whether history buffs or newcomers to the topic, young readers will appreciate the author's clear and accessible prose, as well as the many fascinating facts, photographs, and statistics.

A historical exploration of World War II's Battle of the Bulge from Pulitzer Prize–winner and *New York Times*–bestselling author Rick Atkinson.

This thoroughly-researched and documented book can be worked into multiple aspects of the common core curriculum.

## **Battle of the Bulge [The Young Readers Adaptation] Details**

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Author : Rick Atkinson

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# **From Reader Review Battle of the Bulge [The Young Readers Adaptation] for online ebook**

**Alex (not a dude) Baugh says**

Judging from my stats, there are still a lot of readers interested in books about WWII. Like me, most are interested in fiction and stories of courage and survival, whether they take place in countries under Nazi occupation/siege, near the front lines, or are stories about the home front. Not many really seem want to read the details of military strategy or battles fought. But sometimes a book like that comes along and the author has made it so interesting, it appeals to everyone. Pulitzer Prize winning author Rick Atkinson is one of those writers who can bring major WWII battles to life, and adapting his adult books for young readers. He did it in D-Day: The Invasion of Normandy, 1944 and he has done it again in Battle of the Bulge.

By December 1944, it was looking pretty certain that Germany was going to lose WWII. Refusing to accept defeat, Hitler came up with a plan he called Herbstnebel (autumn mist). It was to be a surprise attack against Allied Forces in the forest of the Ardennes in Belgium, and Hitler ordered that nothing in the plan was to be altered, even though his advisers had grave doubts about the success of Herbstnebel.

And the surprise element of Hitler's last ditch Western Front offensive hit was indeed a surprise attack for the Allies. Unlike the D-Day invasion, the Allies did not have time for planning, so the surprise element of the attack resulted in one of the worst battles of World War II for them. How bad? According to Atkinson, in just one day of the fighting, December 19, 1944, 9,000 American soldiers were captured by the Germans.

The Battle of the Bulge began on December 16, 1944 and ended in German defeat on January 25, 1945. Much needed American reinforcements arrived on December 26, 1944 with General Patton, and proved to be a great boon for the Allies. It must have felt like a Christmas present to the soldiers already at the front.

Atkinson used the same format for Battle of the Bulge that he used in his D-Day book for young readers. There is plenty of informative front matter to help readers understand the main part of the book. This consists of maps, who the key players were, Allied and Axis Commands, and a timeline of the war. Atkinson's Back Matter is even more extensive and consists of many interesting topics, especially the kind that young readers might want to know about after reading the book and seeing the copious photographs he includes. Topics like what U.S. soldiers wore in a battle that happened during such a bitter cold, snowy winter, or what weapons were used, and even what happened after the Battle of the Bulge ended, even the use of dogs on the battlefield.

The book is divided into four sections, each section covering both Allies and Axis sides. The first section covering the Western Front from the beginning of the war to November 1944, for readers whose knowledge may need to be refreshed or for readers who know nothing about the war. Atkinson's second section focuses on Hitler's Plan; section three follows the events as they unfolded on the actual day of the German offensive; and finally the days following that.

In war, planning and fighting a battle are very complex parts of war, consequently, writing about a battle cannot possibly be done as a linear narrative. For that reason, it sometimes feels as though Atkinson has simply cut and pasted parts of his adult book to make this a book for young readers. But this is meant to be an introduction to this important, pivotal battle and in that respect, I think Atkinson does a very good job. As always, his research is impeccable, and his writing clear and, while taking into account he is not writing for an adult, he does not condescend to his readers, either.

The Battle of the Bulge was never something I was particularly interested in after watching a old movie about it on TV when I was a tween. It was cold, and bloody and, not knowing anything about it before I watched the move, I didn't really understand it. Natuarlly, I never felt inclined to read anything about the battle of the bulge t before this book. I feel like I have a much better handle on the events of this offensive now and hope it will help kids understand its importance in the overall WWII events, too.

This review was originally posted on The Children's War

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

E ARC from Netgalley.com

Do you have boys who frequent your library who are keenly interested in WWII? There are fewer now than there were, but it is still a topic that inspires a level of fanaticism other topics do not. Our school curriculum no longer covers this era, but the books still circulate well. This new book is a youth oriented reworking of part of this author's Guns at Last Light, just as the companion volume, D-Day, is.

This is a tremendous resource for readers with an avid interest. Key players are explained, and their motivations examined in minute detail. Military maneuvers are given the same treatment. Plentiful pictures add tremendously to the text. This would be a great starting place for a WWII based History Day project, and is a very readable nonfiction book for those interested in the topic.

That said, it was WAY too much information for me; I have to admit that I skimmed a great deal!

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### **Beth Kakuma-Depew says**

I am an adult who prefers to read the "Young Readers Adaptation" of non-fiction. The author, while talking about troop shortages, pointed out that even under these circumstances, the generals didn't allow African-American soldiers to fight alongside White American soldiers. This was a nice touch, that reminds readers just what a different world view they had. Also, Kurt Vonnegut gets mentioned, and a quote from him, as a captured soldier is included. This might be a great non-fiction tie-in after reading Mother Night.

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### **J says**

WWII is one of those always topics that gets covered a lot, usually in weird detail, and from multiple angles. Then comes along an adaptation for younger readers on a very specific battle from a longer nonfiction book meant for an adult audience. What I'm getting at is, given the popularity of the subject matter and the specific nature of this exact book, why not just write something original?

What I do like is the short chapters within the sections. They are young reader friendly. There are a lot of pictures to break up the text and it feels more interactive than text book. The front and back sections feature timelines and extra information relating to the larger picture. There are suggestions for further reading, a

bibliography, and an index for more easily finding specific bits of information. The bulk of the book, though? It's not quite so friendly and this is where the adaptation vs. a new original argument above comes in.

Battle of the Bulge feels like it is mostly snippets of a larger book pulled out, given the hint of context, and thrown back into something else. There is not always a clear sense of where the action is going and it skips a lot. The writing itself does not feel edited for the target audience, either as larger words and concepts are not always clearly defined. The military buff kid might get it but the average reader is going to look at this and say it's not really accessible. There is not a lot of use even from the standpoint of using this for a report. Most of the information is most likely easily gotten from other books with better organization and greater accessibility. Even the maps were a bit of a disappointment as they were busy to look at and the map key is at the beginning while the maps themselves are strewn about the book.

I guess, in a way, I understand that there's money to be made from adapting adult nonfiction for middle grade readers, but this book would have been much better served if it had been an original, not based on a larger work.

Note: ARC received via Amazon Vine in exchange for review.

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### **Aidan McPhillips says**

It was a great book. The pictures really helped me picture the destruction that happened. I really like the "Kilroy Was Here" drawings. It troubles me with the slaughter that happened during the battle of the bulge.

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### **Joseph says**

This is an adapted version from his book 'The Guns at Last Light,' which was fantastic. I definitely recommend that book. The book of course is based on the the Battle of the Bulge in WWII. That was probably the last hope of Germany to reverse the war they were starting to lose. It was a bloody sequence that took many lives on both sides.

It is probably extremely difficult to go from a book with a ton of information and condense it to something smaller and still have it flow and make sense. He achieved this for the most part. There were at times I think he went back and forth with some things that were a little confusing to where the different battle lines were and who was doing what. But other than that it was good and having more photo's during that time is always exciting to see.

For young readers who have read a lot of other WWII books I would recommend. For those who have not read a lot and are unsure about some of the events I would hold off on this until later.

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### **Annette Vellenga says**

This book about WW2 I read about half way through with my lad but it was getting to be too real for him,

and he wasn't ready for all the details in this book as much as he was interested in it.

It is loaded with TONS of historical facts and lots of black and white pictures. Those, as I continued to read the book, I would show my boy, particularly the ones with men working cannons, and hiding in the snow, and what not.

The chapters are, for the most part, short and easily read.

They are very detailed and explained why the Battle of the Bulge happened as it did. It was a hard fought battle which the Americans ended up winning but at heavy cost.

I found some of the words too large for a child. Quite frankly some of the words I didn't know what they meant.. so for this being a young readers edition I had to query it being for children younger than 11-12.

I found it fascinating watching how the battle played out. Horrified by the actions of the SS group that murdered the surrendering soldiers. Pleased by the determination of troops to battle on. Dismayed by cowardice. Disgusted by ineptitude. It was all the different things that come up in war.

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### **Peter says**

I received this book for free through the Goodreads Giveaway program.

This history of the Battle of the Bulge is intended for readers aged 8-12 and is an adaptation of Atkinson's final volume of his World War II trilogy.

This book is highly recommended for younger readers who have curiosity about World War II. Indeed, the layout of the book should motivate many youngsters who might be reluctant to read history, accounts of war or specific battles. First, the large number of archival photographs, many taken by the Army Signal Corps, powerfully convey the intensity, brutality, and desperation of those involved in any battle. The photos will affect most adults leafing through the pages of this book as well. The chapters of the book are kept short and focused. There are numerous chronologies, glossaries and appendices explaining the key participants, the weapons used, and army terminology.

My ten-year old nephew enjoyed the book and read it in one sitting. He now wants to know more about WWII.

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### **Betty Byrd says**

Interesting story for children or anyone interested in WWII. Lots of information - timeline, photos, key players of this battle. I think it would be better for older readers but if 4th, 5th, or 6th graders are good readers they will like this book. A good book for those needing to do a report. Short chapters and lots of photos make this book more accessible to reluctant readers.

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## **Morgan says**

Really good book and I could imagine the battle unfolding in my mind thanks to this book.

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## **Dave Hoff says**

Excellent History of the final big battle in Europe. Written in an easy, but detailed style. Rick is one of the best WW2 writers.

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## **Nathan Pozen says**

### Battle of the Bulge

The World War 2 equivalent of the Battle of Gettysburg, with the opportunity to keep tides stern or for tides to turn, comes the most important battle in American history, the Battle of the Bulge; written by Rick Atkinson. It all started December 11th, 1944, late in the war, in what appears to simply be a few cottage homes in the woods, yet inside lurks evil. Gathered inside walls of inches and inches of bulletproof metal in the camouflaged cottage homes are Hitler, the leader of Germany, and all of his generals. The time has grown desperate and by the end of the day in this little area called Alderhorst, the Nazis design their final push into Ally land with whatever supplies they have left. The offensive, code named Autumn Mist, goes into action almost immediately before the enemy can strike. The first move is named Zero Day, carried out only 5 days after the plan was created, in which Nazis cross their country lines and advance into their first fight later being called the Massacre of Malmedy. In this Nazis capture unsuspecting American troops, keep them as prisoners of war, then shortly after kill everyone of them. This was a wake up call to America and the Allies of the still impressive strength Germany still had. After this, more troops are sent to the lines, cities are captured only to be lost again, and the front lines are move back and forth. Through Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Years Day the war carries on until the Nazis are finally separated and stopped momentarily. Though still deep within the Allies' territory, the original Autumn Mist plan is crumbling so Hitler devises the Baseplate plan for the few remaining of the Nazi Air Force to destroy that of the Allies, but when this plan fails, the different Nazi commanders take matters into their own hands'. They decide to reunite in front of one of the most important cities in France, Strasbourg. Strasbourg is half American and half French responsibility in terms of troop positions, but the 2 allies want to do the opposite things. France wants to defend the city were America wants to retreat to a mountain range with better lines. In the end, America doesn't disappoint their fellow ally, coming to aid the French and drive the Nazis back to Germany. The tattered Nazi army is in pieces, with only few tanks, troops, and supplies left, but when they return home, an army of over one-million red Russians are waiting to finish the already destroyed Nazis. Overall, many Ally lives were lost, along with machinery, traditions, and leaders, but through all the brave, innovative, courageous and intelligent actions us Americans took, WWII might not have ended the way it did.

By the end of this book, you will know every detail of the greatest war in American history. Though broad, Mr. Atkinson is very detailed and precise with many statistics, areas, and orders, you could take notes from this book. Telling the way the story is yet formatting it in a way appealing to readers, Mr. Atkinson does a great job.

This entertaining book definitely has higher vocabulary, and also some sections take multiple pages to fully comprehend the intended story. Due to those reasons, I think readers in the 8th through 11th grade would enjoy this book the most. Though very factual, this book tells the story of our hardworking ancestors that now have won back to back world wars.

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## **Dachokie says**

Nice Content, but Poor Presentation ...

This book was reviewed as part of Amazon's Vine program which included a free advance copy of the book.

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 ("Rata"), 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.

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### **Laura C. says**

My son got this book for Christmas and I picked it up and read it because, well, that's what I tend to do.

60 million deaths worldwide. That is 19 for every minute of the war.

1/27/44 Soviet forces break the German 900-day siege of Leningrad during which more than one million civilians dies of starvation.

"At least a few officers wondered whether the time had come to allow black GIs to serve in white rifle companies, but even under there circumstances that radical notion found few champions in the high command."

"He's just a little man. He's just as little inside as he is outside." Ike on Montgomery

"Next to the weather, the French have caused me more trouble in this war than any other factor." Ike

"I started this war with the most wonderful army in Europe. Today I've got a muck heap." Hitler quoting Frederick the Great

"Everybody shares the same universals-- hope, love, humor, faith." Private First Class Richard Cowan.

His mother upon his death: "It is such a bitter dose to take and I am not a bit brave about it."

Book seriously needed more maps.

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### **Stacy says**

If WWII is a high interest of yours or if you homeschool this is a great resource. This gives extensive detail on characters of interest with tactics and reasoning behind them. There are also many pictures which help grasp the knowledge given within the book. This is not something I generally read but I found it very interesting and I have passed this book on to someone who does homeschooling with her children and she was very excited about it. Rick Atkinson covered everything imaginable and then some in this book and it really is exceptionally informative.

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