



The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy)

By Rick Atkinson

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The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy) By Rick Atkinson

It is the twentieth century's unrivaled epic: at a staggering price, the United States and its allies liberated Europe and vanquished Hitler. In the first two volumes of his bestselling Liberation Trilogy, Rick Atkinson recounted how they fought through North Africa and Italy to the threshold of victory. Now he tells the most dramatic story of all—the titanic battle for Western Europe.

D-Day marked the commencement of the European war's final campaign, and Atkinson's riveting account of that bold gamble sets the pace for the masterly narrative that follows. The brutal fight in Normandy, the liberation of Paris, the disaster that was Operation Market Garden, the horrific Battle of the Bulge, and finally the thrust to the heart of the Third Reich—all these historic events and more come alive with a wealth of new material and a mesmerizing cast of characters. With *The Guns at Last Light*, the stirring final volume of this monumental trilogy, Atkinson has produced the definitive chronicle of the war that unshackled a continent and preserved freedom in the West.

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- Sales Rank: #37409 in Books
- Brand: Picador USA
- Published on: 2014-05-13
- Released on: 2014-05-13
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .32" h x 1.56" w x 5.52" l, 1.51 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 928 pages

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Editorial Review

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Spanning D-day to V-E Day, Atkinson culminates his three-volume epic of the U.S. Army in Europe during WWII. Readers of the prior volumes (*An Army at Dawn*, 2002; *The Day of Battle*, 2007) will discover a thematic continuation in this one, namely, criticism of American generalship. Debacles such as Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest, the Battle of the Bulge, and Patton's zany raid to liberate a POW camp punctuate the narrative of the U.S. Army's otherwise remorseless advance toward victory over the German army. To describe the high command's thinking concerning operations that turned into fiascoes, Atkinson funnels their postwar apologia through his appreciation of a particular battlefield situation, graphically conceptualized in this tome's excellent cartography. While casting generals in the light of human frailty, Atkinson allocates anecdotal abundance to soldiers' ground-war experiences. Emphasizing loss, he quotes many last letters from men destined to die. With a mastery of sources that support nearly every sentence, Atkinson achieves a military history with few peers as an overview of the 1944-45 campaigns in Western Europe. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"A magnificent book...[Atkinson] is an absolute master of his material." *Max Hastings, The Wall Street Journal*

"A tapestry of fabulous richness and complexity...The Liberation Trilogy is a monumental achievement, about 2,500 pages in all, densely researched but supremely readable." *The New York Times Book Review*

"Breathtaking, unforgettable...This volume is a literary triumph worthy of the military triumph it explores and explains." *The Boston Globe*

"Monumental... As befits a journalist who knows his material inside and out, Atkinson can provide the incisive explanation to a complex situation or personage...A masterpiece of deep reporting and powerful storytelling." *The Los Angeles Times*

"[Atkinson] reconstructs the period from D-Day to V-E Day by weaving a multitude of tiny details into a tapestry of achingly sublime prose...With great sensitivity, Atkinson conveys the horrible reality of what soldiers had to become to defeat Hitler's Germany." *The Washington Post*

"Detailed in its research, unsparing in its judgments and confident in its prose...This trilogy--on which [Atkinson has] spent 12 years, twice as long as the war itself--may well be his masterpiece." *Time Magazine*

"Great characters, vivid details...The final volume of Rick Atkinson's 'Liberation Trilogy' proves again that few can re-tell a story as well as he." *USA Today*

"A remarkable conclusion to his three parts on WWII... A fabulous book." *Tom Brokaw on MSNBC's Morning Joe*

"The same qualities that garnered Atkinson a Pulitzer Prize for *An Army at Dawn*--meticulous research married to masterful narrative--are apparent in *The Guns at Last Light*. The new book relates the oft-told (but never better) story of the war's final year, from D-Day to the German surrender." *The Chicago Tribune*

“Epic, set-piece battle sequences are balanced by deft portraiture. The Greatest Generation is nearly gone....The Liberation Trilogy is the monument it deserves.” ?*Vanity Fair*

“A sweeping, prodigiously researched epic...*The Guns at Last Light* is a definitive, heartfelt work of grandeur, atrocity, and profound sorrow. It is also, along with the two previous volumes, a long, fervent prayer for the fallen.” ?*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“[An] extraordinary accomplishment. This is a beautifully written, moving account of one of the most bittersweet chapters in modern history...The details build a stunning and precise account of major movements--from Normandy to Paris, from the South of France to Grenoble--and close-up portraits of famous figures that make them living, breathing beings.” ?*Smithsonian Magazine*

“A riveting book...Few historians have Atkinson's gift for language and few journalists pay as much attention to historical sources...Atkinson writes with the descriptive and lyrical power of a first-rate novelist.” ?*Christian Science Monitor*

“Emotionally gripping...This 850-page military history captivates the reader with the high drama of a spellbinding novel and a cast of characters that a master storyteller would be hard-pressed to invent...It's hard to imagine a more engrossing, dramatic, fair-minded and elegantly written account of these 11 months that changed the course of history.” ?*Associated Press*

“A terrific read...Atkinson never loses track of the men who fought the war. Mining their diaries and letters, he has produced an account that is achingly human.” ?*The Miami Herald*

“A richly detailed narrative of the war final's year, with riveting looks at D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge.” ?*San Diego Union-Tribune*

“Atkinson paints on a vast canvas while stressing the details. He cites the experiences of soldiers -- officers and grunts alike--caught up in a conflagration beyond their comprehension. He preserves the humanity of humans in an inhumane situation...Passages describe human courage and depravity in such vivid prose that readers need to pause, reflect and regroup...His book is a fitting tribute.” ?*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

“Soon, if not already, Atkinson will show up on the list of giants, as later historians stand on his shoulders.” ?*The Dallas Morning News*

“An epic conclusion to an epic historical trilogy about an epic quest to preserve Western freedom, *The Guns at Last Light* is sure to join its predecessor volumes in the best-seller ranks, and confirms the Liberation Trilogy as a new benchmark against which World War II books yet to be written will be measured.” ?*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

“Crisp narrative drive, prodigious research and incisive analysis of people and events...Atkinson's latest work is probably the single best volume about the war in Europe from the D-Day invasion...to the capitulation of German forces...Rick Atkinson...has become a poet of the war.” ?*The Washington Independent Review of Books*

“Superb...Atkinson writes sensitively, even lyrically...*The Guns at Last Light* offers an outstanding testament to all who sacrificed to defeat Hitler's Third Reich.” ?*The Louisville Courier-Journal*

“The master of narrative military history ends his Liberation Trilogy with this admired account of the 1944-45 fighting in Western Europe.” ?*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

“*The Guns at Last Light* is an important addition to the World War II bookshelf.” *The Washington Times*

“Impressively researched...and energetically written, with a brisk pace that carries the reader easily through the narrative's 600-plus pages.” *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“Stark photographs complement the excellent prose.” *Richmond Times Dispatch*

“[*The Guns at Last Light*] is deep in detail, narrative and character description. Readers encounter famous generals--Eisenhower, Montgomery, Bradley, and a host of lower officers--in illuminated portrayals, warts and all.” *Knoxville News Sentinel*

“Sweeping in scope, Shakespearean in drama and angst, unsparing in its observations, and rich in detail...Atkinson said that he wrote the trilogy as an effort to tell [the story of the frontline troops] ‘vividly and authoritatively, to current and future generations.’ That he has.” *Defense Media Network*

“Atkinson's zest for research and his evident devotion to hard facts never obscures the grace of his writing. The proof of that lies less in the many accolades and prizes (including a Pulitzer in history in 2003) than simply in the reading. Rare is a 600-page-plus history book that qualifies as a page turner.” *Military History Magazine*

“Brilliant...Each volume [of the Liberation Trilogy] is characterized by superb research and fine writing. The high standard set in the prologue to the first volume carries through the epilogue to the last.” *BG Harold W. Nelson, Army Magazine*

“Richly rewarding and beautifully crafted ...With lyrical élan, [Atkinson] accurately and objectively tells the greatest story of our time, and does so with the general reader always in mind.” *World War II Magazine*

“A marvelous capstone to a trilogy that will make Rick Atkinson to the U.S. Army in the European Theater of Operations what Shelby Foote is to the Civil War...Mr. Atkinson has a rare ability to combine a historian's eye with a reporter's pen to simultaneously provide a sweep and detail to combat that is both unique and enjoyable for the novice student and the hardest grognard.” *New York Journal of Books*

“Superb...Atkinson brings his Liberation Trilogy to a resounding close...An outstanding work of popular history, in the spirit of William Manchester and Bruce Catton.” *Kirkus Reviews (starred review)*

“Superb...The book is distinguished by its astonishing range of coverage...[Atkinson's] lively, occasionally lyric prose brings the vast theater of battle, from the beaches of Normandy deep into Germany, brilliantly alive. It is hard to imagine a better history of the western front's final phase.” *Publishers Weekly (starred review)*

“With a mastery of sources that support nearly every sentence, Atkinson achieves a military history with few peers as an overview of the 1944-45 campaigns in Western Europe.” *Booklist*

“The book stands out from others on World War II because it successfully explores the fallibility of participants at all levels...This is not a detailed account of any one particular battle but a sweeping epic, yet it is packed with fascinating details. Highly recommended to all who read World War II history.” *Library Journal*

About the Author

Rick Atkinson is the bestselling author of *An Army at Dawn* (winner of the Pulitzer Prize for history), *The*

Day of Battle, The Long Gray Line, In the Company of Soldiers, and Crusade. His many other awards include a Pulitzer Prize for journalism, the George Polk award, and the Pritzker Military Library Literature Award. A former staff writer and senior editor at *The Washington Post*, he lives in Washington, D.C.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paulette Cantu:

The knowledge that you get from *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy)* is a more deep you rooting the information that hide in the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to recognise but *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy)* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood through anyone who read the idea because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We advise you for having this specific *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy)* instantly.

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A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent the whole day to reading a publication. The book *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (The Liberation Trilogy)* it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book features high quality.

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