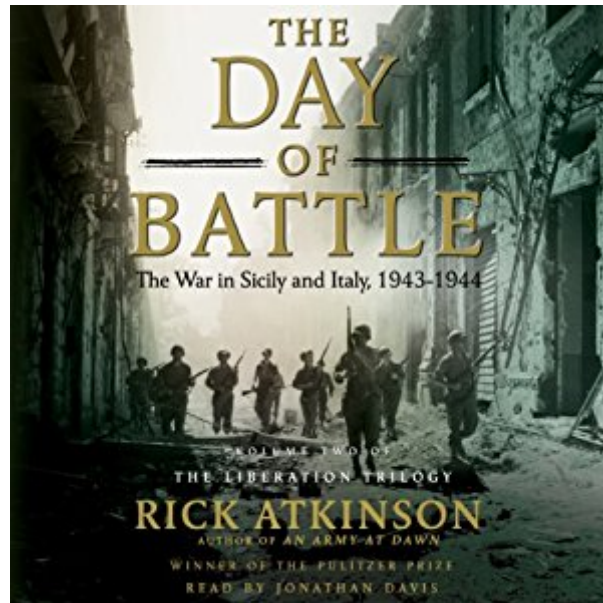


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# The Day Of Battle: The War In Sicily And Italy, 1943-1944



## Synopsis

In *An Army at Dawn* - winner of the Pulitzer Prize - Rick Atkinson provided a dramatic and authoritative history of the Allied triumph in North Africa. Now, in *The Day of Battle*, he follows the American and British armies as they invade Sicily in July 1943, attack Italy two months later, and then fight their way, mile by bloody mile, north toward Rome. The Italian campaign's outcome was never certain; in fact, President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and their military advisors bitterly debated whether an invasion of the so-called soft underbelly of Europe was even wise. But once underway, the commitment to liberate Italy from the Nazis never wavered, despite the agonizing price. The battles at Salerno, Anzio, the Rapido River, and Cassino were particularly ferocious and lethal, yet as the months passed, the Allied forces continued to drive the Germans up the Italian peninsula. Led by Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, among the war's most complex and controversial commanders, American troops became increasingly determined and proficient. With the liberation of Rome in June 1944, ultimate victory in Europe at last began to seem inevitable. Drawing on extensive new material from a wide array of primary sources, and written with great drama and flair, *The Day of Battle* is narrative history of the first rank.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When it comes to writing military history, Rick Atkinson's narratives, in my view, are as good as it gets. I have an entire bookcase devoted to books about World War II and I would argue that very few, if any of them, meet the standard set now by Atkinson as far as depth of research, a flair for the truly visual and personal, and where an easy and readable prose-style is of concern. So I would not

hesitate to nominate Atkinson as the best living author of books about World War II, if not of history in general. This current effort is the second volume of a proposed three-volume set of works about that devastating war. The first book in the series was "An Army at Dawn" -- a winner of the Pulitzer Prize -- which dealt with the North African campaign. Now, in "The Day of Battle," Atkinson takes on the campaign in Sicily and Italy in 1943 and 1944. And does he ever!! have a large collection of videos dealing with WWII and, of course, one can get "up front and close" to the action when watching them. The images, combined with the narration and the accompanying music in the background, provide the viewer with a true "you are there" experience. I felt almost the same experience while reading this book. Atkinson's ability to linguistically describe a situation so that the reader feels he or she is right there within the phenomenal frame of a battle is awesome. And I don't use the word "awesome" very often. But in this case it is genuinely applicable. I could actually visualize all the action as it was occurring; such is an excellent writer's ability to translate words into mental pictures. There is one other thing I found absolutely compelling about this book.

Rick Atkinson's "The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944" is a masterpiece of military history that should be read by anyone with any interest in World War II or American military history. Following on the heels of his Pulitzer Prize-winning "An Army at Dawn," this is the second work in Atkinson's "Liberation Trilogy" and deserving of yet another Pulitzer Prize. This book is awash in details about the difficult - and often forgotten - fighting in the Mediterranean Theater, but it also clearly and effectively describes the bigger picture of the war in Sicily and Italy. Two things will immediately strike the reader about this book: the detail with which Atkinson describes the fighting, and the dazzling prose that he uses to tell this story. Atkinson describes the personalities and details of the main characters in the story - the leaders, from Eisenhower to Kesselring to Patton to Mark Clark to - and also gives telling glimpses of the personal lives of the "grunts" who did the fighting on the ground. His emphasis on detail knows no bounds, as he describes Churchill's meals, the furnishings in Mark Clark's office, and the "Anzio Ritz" - the underground cinema at the Anzio beachhead that showed movies to the soldier's at the world's largest self-sufficient POW camp. For many authors, these details would detract from the story, but through Atkinson's incredible writing, these details instead add life, character, and flavor to this story. He captures the frustrations and difficulties of preparing and leading these forces, such as when he says that "for reasons known only at echelons above reason" a typical convoy required more than six thousand pages of names.

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