

Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook

From December 1944 to January 1945, fighting raged in the Ardennes Forest. Now that the battle has subsided, it will be your job as a reporter to create a news dispatch about what happened. You will use a series of sources concerning the battle to make sense of it. For each source, answer the questions that go with the item. At the end, you will write your piece.

PHASE 1: On the Road to Victory

Source: Champagne Bowl Photo

What does this tell you about the mood of the Allies in December 1944?



PHASE 2: One Final Strike

Secondary Source: http://abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/WW2/index.html

> Click on 1944 > Click on Ardennes-Alsace Campaign > At left, a document will appear. Read the document until you get to "3 January 1945."

In one sentence, explain WHY Hitler wanted this strike. _____

In one sentence, explain WHAT the plan was. _____

In two sentences, summarize HOW the German attack unfolded, and how the Americans responded. _____

PHASE 3: Thrust to the North Sea

Source: Map of the German Plan

Use the TARGET method to analyze the map of the German Plan.

Title: _____

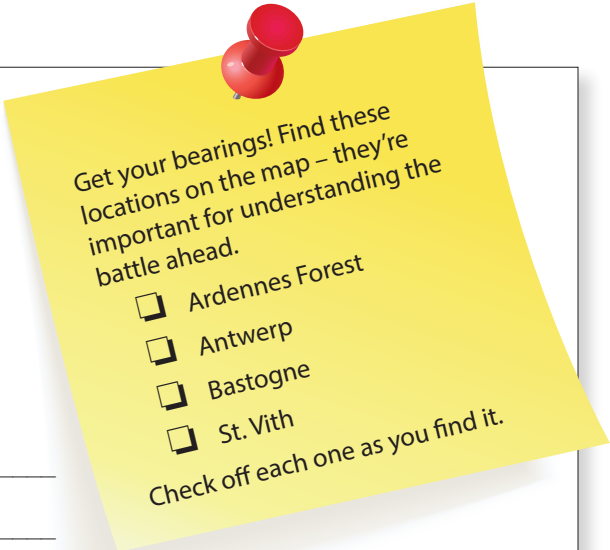
Area (What overall area is the map showing?): _____

Region (What regions are being affected by events/issues on the map?): _____

Group (What groups/people would the action on the map affect?): _____

Economics (Does this map show anything of economic importance? Hint: Where do trade and commerce enter/leave?): _____

Theme (Overall, what does the map tell you?): _____





DECISION POINT!

How would you try to hold/ defend Bastogne? Where should you put troops? Why? Explain your answer in three sentences.

PHASE 4: A Closer Look

Source: Photograph of Bastogne

1. Study the photograph for an overall impression of the photography and examine individual items. _____

2. Divide the photo into quadrants to see what details become visible. Discuss the people, objects, and activities in the photo.

3. Based on what you have observed, discuss three or four things you might infer from the photograph. _____

4. Are there questions left unanswered by the photograph? What would you as the photographer change if you had the chance? _____



PHASE 5: Farthest Extent

Source: Rick Atkinson Book Talk (Library of Congress)*

How does Atkinson describe the surprise? Why was it so dramatic? Why was it so effective? _____

What accounts/sources did Atkinson probably consult to come to this conclusion? _____

Source: Limits of German Penetration Map

Look at the Ardennes Counteroffensive map in the top right corner. In two sentences, explain how the farthest German penetration compared to the original plan and objectives.

*Can read or watch this source.

DECISION POINT!

Source: Limits of German Penetration Map

On the larger map, identify Bastogne.

In two sentences, explain the situation at Bastogne.

What difference is there between the American lines at Bastogne and the American lines elsewhere on the map?



PHASE 6: How Did the Americans Stop the Attack?

Source: Holding the Line at Bastogne

Communication was often an issue at Bastogne. These two articles overlap, cutting out some words. Piecing together information from both, explain in three sentences how the American forces stopped the German advance.

DECISION POINT!

What critical decisions did General MacAuliffe face in Bastogne? Could you have reacted as he did? Why or why not? (You may not just say, "No, because I'm not a general in 1944." Think it through.)

PHASE 7: A Ground Level View

Source: Gene's Interview

You've read a little about the 101st Airborne Division's experience. What about those racing across France to save the embattled troops? Read this description of what it was like for troops on the ground, and summarize it in three sentences.

What would you expect to read in Gene's selection that wasn't mentioned? _____

What was mentioned in Gene's selection that you didn't expect?



DECISION POINT!

What sorts of things do you think soldiers had to do both mentally and physically to push past the hurdles men like Gene faced?

Think of the hardest things you've ever had to do. How did you make yourself keep going? Do you think that would work for something as traumatic as World War II? Why or why not?

PHASE 8: The Ones We Left Behind

Source: Charles Crossley Missing in Action (MIA) and Confirmed Killed in Action (KIA)

During all of the events above soldiers put themselves in harm’s way, and some never made it back. This is an example of what their family could expect to see. Even though this pilot was shot down earlier in the war, this is the kind of communication that commanding officers sent home each time a soldier went missing or was killed.

Read the series of telegrams sent home to the Crossley family when Charles went MIA/KIA and answer the questions that follow.

Page 1

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this form? Choose three things. Look at all four quadrants of the telegram closely. _____

If you were the family receiving this, what other information would you want on this telegram? _____

Page 2

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this letter? Choose three things. Read carefully. _____

Does this satisfy what you would have wanted to see in the first telegram? _____

PHASE 8: The Ones We Left Behind (continued)

Page 3

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this letter? Choose three things. Read carefully. _____

What has changed since the last letter? _____

Page 4

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this form? Choose three things. Look at all four quadrants of the telegram closely. _____

How does it compare to the last two letters? _____

OVERALL:

Now that you have read these, if you were a general, do you think the knowledge that you would have to send letters like this home would change any of the decisions you have made so far at your Decision Points? Why or why not? _____

What does this tell you about the sacrifice made by the families of servicemen? _____

PHASE 9: Perspectives

You now have four accounts of the Battle of the Bulge: your textbook, the initial timeline summary, the *Saturday Evening Post* article, and Gene’s story.

Name one other point of view that could help you understand the battle more fully. _____

Why would this source be helpful? _____

In two sentences, explain why this battle was important. What did this mean for the United States? For Germany? _____

What unique sacrifices were asked of the troops and leaders at this battle? _____

PHASE 10: Wrapping up

Source: Newsreel - January 11, 1945.

Now watch the newsreel clip again.
What images and information were in the newsreel that you already knew, or that you expected to see? _____

What images and information were in the newsreel that you did not know, or that you did not expect to see? _____

Does this newsreel describe the battle as you now understand it? If so, give two key points it includes that make it an accurate portrayal. If not, explain two things that would make it a more accurate portrayal. _____



DECISION POINT!

Why might Gene’s story sound different than the story from the newsreel, even though they are talking about the same event?

What was the purpose of making the newsreel? How might that affect what its writers/directors included or left out?

