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## Pulitzer Prize-winning author visits Lake George High School

Renowned American war historian and visited Lake George for the 250th anniversary of the Knox Artillery Trail

By News Report

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**LAKE GEORGE** | Lake George Jr.-Sr. High School welcomed renowned historian and author Rick Atkinson for a visit that brought history to life for students. Atkinson, whose acclaimed works focus on American wars, spent the day answering student questions, discussing his writing process, and even sharing lunch with students, creating a personal experience.

Over the past summer, Lake George students read *D-Day* and *The Battle of the Bulge*, two of Atkinson's works that explore pivotal moments of World War II. Well-prepared with questions, students were eager to learn more about the inspiration, research, and dedication behind the books they studied.

Atkinson shared that he has been a writer for most of his life. He began his career at a small newspaper in Kansas before spending 20 years working for The Washington Post. He is currently working on his ninth book, all of which focus on American wars, a subject he has dedicated decades to researching and writing.

Students were especially interested to hear about the evolution of his books. Atkinson explained that his works are often published in multiple formats, including hardcover, paperback, digital, and audio editions. For the first time, one of his books is also being released as a graphic novel edition, which will be published in June and based on *The British Are Coming*, allowing history to reach new audiences in fresh ways.

Atkinson's first book, *The Long Gray Line*, was published in 1989 and remains particularly meaningful to him. The book chronicles the West Point class of 1966, which lost more men in the Vietnam War than any other class. "They were 18 years old," Atkinson shared. "They'll always be young to me." He explained that this book relied heavily on interviews with real people, soldiers, their wives, and their children, and that he conducted 10 to 15 interviews each with three main subjects alone.

When discussing his research process, Atkinson emphasized the importance of both primary and secondary sources. For his work on the Revolutionary War, he has spent significant time conducting research at the British National Archives and in France. His commitment to accuracy was clear as he described how deeply he immerses himself in his subjects.

Students also learned that *D-Day* is adapted from an adult book published in 2013 and is part of a trilogy that took Atkinson approximately 15 years to complete. When asked about *The Battle of the Bulge*, Atkinson explained that one of the most important parts of his work is visiting the actual locations. "I need to see the ground, understand how it happened, feel the area," he said. Visiting the graves, he added, is a matter of respect and remembrance.

This opportunity offered students not only a deeper understanding of history but also insight into the dedication and humanity behind historical writing. It was a powerful reminder that history is not just dates and battles, but real people, places, and stories that continue to matter today.