



World War Cthulhu: A Collection of Lovecraftian War Stories

Brian M. Sammons (Editor) , Glynn Owen Barrass (Editor)

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The world is at war against things that slink and gibber in the darkness, and titans that stride from world to world, sewing madness and death. War has existed in one form or another since the dawn of human civilization, and before then, Elder terrors battled it out across this planet and this known universe in ways unimaginable.

It has always been a losing battle for our side since time began. Incidents like the Innsmouth raid, chronicled by H.P. Lovecraft, mere blips of victory against an insurmountable foe. Still we fight, against these incredible odds, in an unending nightmare, we fight, and why? For victory, for land, for a political ideal? No, mankind fights for survival.

Our authors, John Shirley, Mark Rainey, Wilum Pugmire, William Meikle, Tim Curran, Jeffrey Thomas and many others have gathered here to share war stories from the eternal struggle against the darkness. This book chronicles these desperate battles from across the ages, including Roman Britain, The American Civil War, World War Two, The Vietnam Conflict, and even into the far future.

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From Reader Review World War Cthulhu: A Collection of Lovecraftian War Stories for online ebook

Michael Brookes says

I'm a huge fan of Lovecraft and of the Cthulhu mythos in particular. I've also enjoyed many stories that expand upon the theme. This collection of short stories does that with varying success, with a central theme of war to connect them besides the mythos.

On the plus side there is a good variety of stories here, ranging from ancient times and even a space setting in the far future. As well as varied settings there is a solid array of plots, so each tale did feel distinct from the others.

And some of the stories are simply fantastic, and if it had just been them then it would have been a five star read. Unfortunately, as is sometimes the case with collections, the quality is uneven through the book. In fairness I didn't dislike any of them, and was able to finish all of them, but some just stood out noticeably from the rest.

Two stories that shined for me were The Ithiliad by Christine Morgan, and Sea Nymph's Son by Robert M. Price. In both cases they blended the strengths of the mythos, but also something fresh to them.

As an ensemble I did find it a bit heavy going. You might appreciate the book better if read by dipping in and out over time, rather than in one go. It's worth a look if you enjoy Lovecraft's work, but if you're a newcomer then there are tastier feasts out there.

David says

A good, readable collection. The stories are better written than some Cthulhu Mythos anthologies I've read. A must read for devotees of the genre.

Mark A. Gravitt says

An interesting anthology

As the title informs us, these are war stories in a Lovecraftian vein. Pick an era, there will be a tale. Some are rather more successful than others, but all tell their stories with horror.

Callum Shephard says

Seeking to explore the idea of the Cthulhu mythos' impact upon a world in conflict, World War Cthulhu is a collection of twenty-two tales of eldritch creatures drawn into human battles. Covering a variety of settings from ancient Greece to the near future, each story asks itself what might be unleashed in the event of humanity going too far.

The variety of stories on offer is easily World War Cthulhu's greatest strength. Each author furnishes a different kind of Lovecraftian monstrosity, ranging from unknowable horrors, to unstoppable beings of war and even creatures the world has somewhat adjusted to. As a result, each story plays out differently, with some following a far more conventional horror route while others offer a more action-orientated style. There's a nice mixed bag of foes to choose from, with the Mi-Go, the Deep Ones and the squid-faced sleeper all putting in appearances.

Unfortunately, the tales vary in quality too. Some only retain trappings of the Cthulhu universe rather than truly embracing it, with the monsters serving as generic doomsday creatures. Similarly, few authors attempt to replicate the purple prose which made Lovecraft's works so chillingly memorable, opting instead for more modern styles. In combination, these problems make certain tales far too generic for such a unique world.

Despite this, World War Cthulhu remains an intriguing anthology. Any fan of the setting with an open mind should definitely take a gander at this one.

Spencer says

This is a fairly middle of the road collection of short stories, none of which I would say are badly written but quite a few are pretty average. There are some fantastic stories like Dark Cell, Wunderwaffe and The Procyon Project, but the overall quality in this collection varied too much for me to rate it higher. If you're a fan of Lovecraft and the Cthulhu mythos you'll at least somewhat enjoy this anthology.

Paul Perry says

It is rare that collections are not a mix of quality, all but the very best having a few misfires. This is quite the opposite, a generally low standard of fiction with a couple of stand-out good stories, no great ones, and a few that are quite painfully bad. Often, the stories were just not very interesting, and reading to the end of even these short works often a slog. It must be said, I got the distinct impression that part of the issue was in the editing; several of the stories seemed to contain clumsy sentences or word usage of the sort that I'd have thought an editor - or even a proofreader - would have picked up on.

Cthulhu Mythos stories are quite difficult to do well, having to get the right balance of weirdness and cosmic terror and hopeless dread, and the proliferation of Lovecraftian works due to ever increasingly popularity over the last few years suggests an even greater preponderance of tripe than the general run of fiction. Sadly, this volume does nothing to dispel that. One of the pleasures of a short fiction collection is finding authors to seek out in the future, but there are only a couple from this who I would even consider seeking out, and some that would actively put me off should I see them included in an anthology.

Christopher Henderson says

When the 5 stars are right

Every now and again I wish that Goodreads had a more nuanced rating system than its 5 stars. 'World War Cthulhu' is a collection of stories by different authors, writing in different styles, and coming at the theme

(war) from different and often wonderfully alien angles. This makes it hugely enjoyable but at the same time difficult to decide how many stars the whole should get. Inevitably, readers will prefer some stories to others, and this is likely to dissuade them from giving the collection in its entirety full marks. Personally, my (admittedly sanity-blasted) brain makes me think in terms of percentages, and to my mind this collection would average at least into the high 80s and perhaps creep, writhe and slither its way into the 90s. Translating that into Goodreads' 5-star system - where each star constitutes 20% of the total - puts it into the fifth star, and so that's what I'm giving it. In less mathematical terms, I would be surprised if Mythos fans didn't 'like' or 'really like' most of the tales here and find a couple 'amazing'. But of course the only way for you to discover which ones you like best is to buy a copy and read it.

Jordan Anderson says

I'm sure compiling an anthology is hard work. I mean, how do you go about choosing which stories to include in your theme out of potentially thousands? And how do you choose ones that are gonna appeal to everyone, not just yourself? Even more importantly, how does one try and keep Cthulhu exciting and new after the huge upswing in popularity in recent years? Well, if this is any indication, Sammons and Barass have figured on the perfect formula.

I know I'm a wee bit late to the Cthulhu party. It's only been about a year or so since I really got into the mythos and started reading everything I could get my hands on, but of the various anthologies I've read over this time "World War Cthulhu" seems to be the best. There's something like 22 shorts here and most of them (18 or 19) are actually pretty good. They fit in with the whole "Cthulhu vs. the World" theme and are (for the most part) really well written. They range from medium to long length, and that's a good thing as often times the stories in other anthologies tend to be far too short to gain any kind of attachment or interest. Some would complain it makes for a lengthy read, and while that is true at times (especially for some of the more crappy stories), I actually enjoyed the longer pieces. You have "The Bullet and The Flesh", "The Boonieman" "Long Island Weird", and "The Procyon Project", just to name a few. And there's "Loyalty" which, although not as long as it's brethren, is one of the best opening stories in any anthology.

A few so-so stories aside, this could have been a 5 star review had it not been for 2 stories that were just flat out awful. "The Ithiliad" and "Magna Mater" were horribly boring, if not confusing. I don't usually skip short stories, but these 2, I just couldn't get through. I suppose they MIGHT have picked up if I would have stuck it out, but really, who wants to do that, when there are much better offerings later on? Plus, there was already a short story about Helen and Achilles and Troy ("Sea Nymph's Son") so why would I want to rehash that again. (I think the editors should have left that one out altogether, if you want my humble opinion...)

Chad Anctil says

A very solid anthology - the various authors used the broad theme (Lovecraftian weird fiction set in a wartime setting) and really expanded on that. The stories explored many different parts of the mythos too, and didn't just focus on Cthulhu and old spellbooks.

Gianfranco Mancini says

3, 5. Loved a lot "Sea Nymph's son" and "The Ithiliad", the two tales where Cthulhu Mythos meet Homer's Iliad. Nice anthology.

Michael says

The details of a lot of these stories are a little fuzzy as I read the majority of this collection from the eBook version over about 4-1/2 months while waiting for the hardcover to arrive last week, but overall it was one of the better Cthulhu collections I've read. The war-inspired short stories ranged from back in the days of Rome as a power in Britain through WWII, Vietnam and on into the future of war. It definitely makes me ready for Dark Regions Press next offering along this line which is soon to be announced - *Dreams from the Witch House: Female Voices of Lovecraftian Horror*.

Jason Williams says

A fine collection of Cthulhu mythos stories as the result of an Indiegogo crowdsourcing campaign.

Nice quality printing and binding. I am very pleased with the result of this project and was more than happy to be involved in the funding for this project.

Many of the authors have had works appear recently in other anthologies of weird fiction. I look forward to reading their future works. Sammons and Barras did a fine job of editing this project and the lavish illustrations by M. Wayne Miller sets the tone for this marvelous book.

Sadly the author of one of the stories, C. J. Henderson, passed away before the book was printed. The editors did dedicate the book to his memory.

Nathan Carpenter says

A mostly good, if uneven, anthology

Strong stories overcome some forgettable ones in this collection, but the bulk are average Cthulhu lover's fare. Rely no "hard" military fiction in the lot; some Tom Clancy, David Weber, or Glen Cook soldiering would be welcome. A little too much of turning Lovecraft's horrors into movie monsters, but still original and worth the two buck sale price.

Wayne says

Okay, let it be noted that this was a book read for work, and that my artwork is all over this thing. My only hope is that my contribution lives up to the collection of fine stories that comprise this hefty volume. If you love HPL, the Cthulhu Mythos, and stories based on armed conflict (not always world wars, mind you), then

do yourselves a favor and read this book. The magnitude of talented authors in this collection is astounding, and I am honored to have been a part of the endeavor. This is serious entertainment folks, so join the fight. Victory awaits.

Kaisersoze says

I'm not going to lie: this collection of 21 short stories mixing Lovecraftian themes into various wars throughout history (and into the future) was a hard slog. At various points I almost gave up on **World War Cthulhu**, but then I realised returning to consume just one story in between every other book I read wasn't translating well for me, and I put aside most everything else to push through the rest. The problem was, I chose all the authors I liked or had at least heard of to read from that point, meaning the stories I read in the middle of my journey through this collection were by far the best. Or, if you prefer, the ones I read first and last did very little for me.

But let's start with the good. **THE PROCYON PROJECT** was classic Tim Curran, if a little on the understated side for him; while **BROADSWORD** by William Meikle was a good old fashioned WWII action-adventure, that just happened to feature creatures imagined by Lovecraft. **WUNDERWAFFE** was my first introduction to Jeffrey Thomas and his Punktown setting, and was good enough to ensure I'll be revisiting that place in the universe before too long. Then there were three other stories I enjoyed that came from authors I was not familiar with. **DARK CELL** by the editors of the entire collection, Brian K. Sammons and Glynn Owen Barrass, felt like it could be the bare bones of a Hollywood action-horror movie depicting a law enforcement agent and a career criminal having to join forces to stop the IRA from unleashing something evil into our world. **THE YOTH PROTOCOLS** by Josh Reynolds was cut from a similar mould but featured something very different from a career criminal teaming with a law enforcement officer ... My favourite story of the whole collection, however, was **THE BOONIEMAN** by Edward E. Erdelac. This was a fantastic creature-feature set in the Vietnam war, featuring a beast you're unlikely to forget any time soon.

I should also mention the art which accompanies each tale. Created by M. Wayne Miller, each brings aspects of the story that follows to life, and on occasion assisted me to picture something which my imagination was having trouble conjuring up. Good stuff.

But for every tale I mentioned above, there was at least one that left me very cold. Some I reacted quite neutrally to, but others were either overly detailed, too confusing, or simply non-engaging. Both the stories set amongst the battle for Troy fell to one or more of these issues, while **MAGNA MATER** by Edward Morris numbed me to a point past caring and **THE SINKING CITY** by Konstantine Paradias was a good idea which failed to grab me in any way.

I should also mention this collection is long - possibly too long - for a short story collection. Clocking in at over 390 Kindle pages may not sound like a lot, but when it's the same basic theme revisited in different settings, it feels at least half again as long as that page number. The collection likely would have been strengthened had it been a few stories shorter (though the last two tales are not examples that should have been cut.)

2.5 Mad Plans to Win At Any Cost for **World War Cthulhu: A Collection of Lovecraftian War Stories**.
