



The Complete Battlefields, Volume One

Garth Ennis , John Cassaday , Gary Leach , Peter Snejbjerg , Carlos Esquerra , Russ Braun

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Late summer, 1942. As the German army smashes deep into Soviet Russia and the defenders of the Motherland retreat in disarray, a new bomber squadron arrives at a Russian forward airbase. Its crews will fly flimsy wooden biplanes on lethal night missions over German lines, risking fiery death as they fling themselves against the invader- but for these pilots, the consequences of capture will be even worse. For the pilots of the 599th Night Bomber Regiment are women. In the deadly skies of the Eastern front, they will become a legend- known, to friend and foe alike, as the Night Witches. Dynamite presents the first stories of the acclaimed Battlefields series in one massive, oversized hardcover - Night Witches, Dear Billy, and Tankies. This edition features some ever-so-slight tweaks the creators have meticulously restored, plus bonus art material including a complete cover gallery and a special look at the making of the stories.

The Complete Battlefields, Volume One Details

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From Reader Review The Complete Battlefields, Volume One for online ebook

?enis says

Krásna grafika. Príjemné príbehy z druhej svetovej vojny.

1. O prínose ruského ženstva v bombardovaní nemeckých jednotiek prelínajúce sa s putovaním nemeckej jednotky pešiakov na Stalingrad.
2. O zdrtenej anglickej zdravotnej sestre, ktorú znásilnili a skoro zavraždili japonci a jej pomsta na privezených žltých v nemocnici.
3. Príbeh anglickej tankovej jednotky v Churchilloovi, ktorá sa potáca na hrane vyhladenia a bojuje proti lepším Tigerom.

Tarn Richardson says

This is an adult version of Warlord, giving Ennis and co the opportunity to litter the comic boxes full of expletives and carnage, that give the three stories a suitably visceral and real feel. Each story is better than the last.

'The Night Witches' is a rather flat story of female Russian fighter pilots, grim Nazis, hardened Russians and a hackneyed love affair doomed to failure. Never really manages to get off the ground. A sense that Ennis was finding his feet with this series. ***

Better is 'Dear Billy' which is a fascinating story of nurse who suffered at the hands of the Japanese and then went to work as a nurse for the British Army. A very clever way of demonstrating how war breeds hate and how we all cope differently with the horror witnessed through atrocity. (It also contains the most affecting comic panel I have ever seen, the opening panel of women walking out into the sea). ****

Finally, the best of the lot, Tankies, a blustering story of a hard as nails tank corporal taking on the might of the German Tiger tank. Drawn by Dredd master, Carlos Ezquerra, for me this was a joyous romp, finishing off the compilation in high spirits. *****

Lockpick says

Pr?m?rné p?íb?hy. Od autora bych asi ani víc ne?ekal, ale nebylo to vyložen? špatné a v?tšinou je to doprovázené p?ijatelnou kresbou.

Hagay Hacohen says

Brilliant!

As always, Garth Ennis is able to explore profound questions (esp what does it mean to be a man or a

woman) while presenting even people unaware of military history with unmatched research and skill poured into this collection. In other words, not just for history buffs. Top notch work!

arjuna says

Can unequivocally say I loved this. Three lovely tangents on the business of war and living with war and what it does to all concerned - I particularly loved "Dear Billy", but "Tankies" and "The Night Witches" are also very rewarding - and the gorgeous tank'n'gun'n'plane action artwork of the latter two were a real treat. Also very much appreciate a take on women in war which doesn't treat rape and rape fear as something titillative or sniggery - which far, far too many texts still do, while pretending otherwise. Kudos, gentlemen! Can't wait to get my hands on volume 2.

Sam Quixote says

Following the success of "War Stories Volumes 1 & 2", Garth Ennis returns to writing WW2 stories with this collection of three books: "The Night Witches", "Dear Billy", and "The Tankies".

"Night Witches" is about a female squadron of Russian bomber pilots who have to contend with inferior planes to complete their nightmarish missions against the Nazis as well as condescending attitudes from the male pilots who see them as a joke. This first story sets the tone for the rest of the book. The violence is extremely graphic with desperate young men thrust into do-or-die scenarios where they must do gruesome things to survive. This violence changes and warps them so that they no longer behave like humans such as the violent rape by a battalion of Nazis of one of the female pilots who is then executed and left with the one soldier who refused to take part. The ending is surprising as is most of the story and leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

"Dear Billy" is probably one of the best things Ennis has ever written. It tells the story of a British nurse in the Pacific Theatre of War who is raped along with the other women in her group by Japanese soldiers and sent out into the sea to be executed by machine gun. She somehow survives, is taken to a hospital in India, and, after recovering, becoming a nurse in the hospital, helping Allied soldiers recover. But when Japanese POWs start showing up, she cannot let her past go and begins a silent campaign of retribution against them.

The story examines the psychology of warfare on civilians and how a brutal act can become defining of a person's view of an entire race. For Carrie, her vendetta against the Japanese can never end because of what they did for her, so when the war does end? Then there is a final decision that must be made.

I feel that if Ennis had written this story as prose that he would win literary prizes left and right. That he chose his medium of comics should make the story no less praised, but of course it will be because of peoples' attitudes to comics in general. It's an amazing story nonetheless and the best in the collection.

The book closes with "Tankies", about the days following D-Day when the Allies were desperate to make inroads into France in order to secure their position, except the British tanks were inferior to the Germans making their incursions more dangerous and slower. The story follows one tank as it gets left behind its battalion and makes its way through enemy lines. The side story of a unlikely hero leading a half dozen men against a wave of German soldiers was particularly brilliant, based as it was on a real story.

Ennis writes an extensive afterword to the book going into the historical detail of each of the stories. It shows a man who cares deeply about the subject matter and wants to give honour to the fallen in the stories who all had real-life counterparts. There's also a bibliography provided for those who want to read more on the subjects in the stories.

If you enjoyed the remarkable "War Stories" series Ennis did a few years ago, you'll enjoy "Battlefields" as well. Dark and gritty, clever, emotional, tragic, and real, the book shows a writer at the top of his game working with tremendous artists to tell gut-wrenching stories - this is comics as Art, and for those who like reading WW2 history but not comics, this is one for them. For fans of Ennis, this is a must-read.

Cheese says

Just to start...this book was very difficult to get hold of. It took me over a year to find a copy and luckily found one on eBay from the US for a bargain. It was worth the wait.

I doubted this book/series from beginning because I always compare all Ennis' work to his Preacher run which is probably my favourite comic of all time.

How wrong was I to doubt this book. The thing about this is you can't compare it to Preacher, because Preacher is crazy and off the wall. Mental. Battlefields however is based on fact. History. There however is one comparison you can make to his Preacher run; heroines! The way Ennis writes women is wonderful. He empowers them in a realistic manner and with dignity and strength.

In truth the writing blew me away just like most of the soldiers do in this book. Essentially even though there are two volumes it's really three stories.

Story 1, female Russian fighter pilots against the Germans: An empowering love story between two unlikely soldiers.

Story 2 female British nurse against the Japanese: A heartfelt story of tragedy and revenge. Probably my favourite Volume.

Story 3 male soldiers in tanks against Germans:

Ennis totally takes the piss out of the British in this with wild stereotypes and it made me piss myself laughing. I absolutely love the humour. Spot on old chap!

I'm now off to make a cup of tea.

Dave Glorioso says

I loved the first two stories. Macabre and gripping. These stories are not nice but are realistic in telling and artistic depiction. The first two stories involved women which made the stories emotionally charged.

I found the combat and art great in the third story but it was emotionally uninvolved.

The afterword explained how the art and the stories were well researched and based on historical fact. It was

a great addition and made the book more complete.

The first 2 stories are 5 out of 5

The third story was 3 out of 5

William says

Garth Ennis is a badass writer. Seriously.

Bad. Ass.

Marcus Lagré says

The first two stories of this book are excellent. The third didn't quite grab me as much, though all are beautifully drawn. All three stories present the war, and war in general, from different perspectives.

The first one, presented largely from the perspective of female pilots in the Russian airforce, was my favourite. I've always been a sucker for WW2 aeroplanes and stories about them and their crew. But it also presents the story from the other side, the German troops on the ground, who had to suffer the nightly raids of the "Night Witches".

The second, about a young English nurse raped and nearly killed by the Japanese in the pacific region, was very gripping. A story of love and revenge, as a story, it was perhaps even more captivating than the first.

The third one, about an English tank crew, while filled with action, felt a little slow. Perhaps I'll think otherwise on a second read.

Matej Kondas says

Garth Ennis jak ho neznáte. V prost?edí vále?nému a veskrze zajímavé.

To neznamená že nedojde na solidní brutalitu, ale tady je taková... opodstatn?ná.

Vynikající p?íb?h s hloubkou jsou No?ní ?arod?jnice a Drahý Billy je p?íb?h, z t?ch kterých se za války ur?it? stalo spousty, z dob kdy si lidé posílali dopisy a kdy neexistovalo n?co jako psychologická pomoc. Akorát finální tankisté balancují nad prospastí vážné road movie a trošku dadaisticky nepochopitelné variace na ?ty?i z tanku.

Každopádn? vynikající práce BBArtu za to že to kone?n? vyšlo i u nás.

Russell Grant says

This collects the first three, three-issue story arcs of the acclaimed (?) series. It's Garth Innis, it's based in

world war two, of course it's brilliant. Each story is quite different which makes this a great read. The first deals with the Night Witches of Russia, focusing on both the women and the German soldiers they are terrorizing. The second is a more personal tale of a woman dealing with a savage assault in east Asia, and the last is a day in the life of a British tank squad.

All are brutal, all reek of the truth of war and the whole thing is exhilarating in execution. The art in each is top notch, and I'm eager to get to volume two.

Alex Murphy says

I've read previous novels by Garth Ennis on World War 2, his War Stories Vol 2 which I enjoyed a lot. So reading this one wasn't a difficult choice.

Here, in this book the themes are very similar, a number of stories following a mix of characters, both military and civilian, in different theatres of the war and from both axis and allies' sides. Compared to War Stories, Battlefields has less stories (only 3) but these are longer.

The three stories are:

The Night Witches, set on the Eastern Front following a squadron of female soviet bomber pilots, while also featuring a German army patrol.

Dear Billy, is a change of pace. It follows a British woman in the Far East, who manages to survive a gang rape and massacre in Singapore, becoming a nurse in Calcutta. Falling in love with a RAF pilot who has his own horrors of the Japanese.

The third story, is Tankies following a sole British tank crew and a British army infantry attack as they push into the French countryside after D-day.

All the stories are good, each has its own individual story and characters. Night Witches starts off better than it ends. The female pilots thrown into battle with useless bi-planes, and the German unit on the frontline. The ending is a bit of a let-down compared to its start.

Dear Billy is my favourite of the three, as it is a different tone to the others following this British nurse. The way its told with a mix of narration of a letter she's writing is a nice touch. The story of vengeance, grief and being unable to forgive and forget makes for a more emotional tale.

Tankies, I think maybe the weaker of the three. Not that its bad, just not as good as the others. The story seems like a British version of the film Fury. Like with Night Witches, the beginning is stronger than the end. While the action is good, the tank crew for the most part don't seem to gel right for the story.

The artwork, is similar to a lot of Garth Ennis' stuff and it's a style I like. Vivid colours with a kind of mix of realistic and comic book feel to it.

The book is well researched, with much of the stuff mentioned based on historical fact, and parts taken from actual accounts of people during the war that weave through the stories.

As a change of pace from most graphic novels, it might appeal to more people who might not be into the 'comic book scene'. Being well written with sometimes moving stories and having good artwork I'd recommend it.

*****Dave Hill says**

Garth Ennis is well known for profanity, gouts of bloody violence, and writing about the depravity of humans. But in this collection of books he wrote -- all of them differently but competently drawn -- he hits a

home run by grounding it in the brutal reality of World War II. Based on historic records, shaken well with imagination, Ennis tells three stories of the "Night Witches" (Soviet female pilots against the advancing Wehrmacht), survivors in the back lines of the War in the Pacific, and British tank units during the break-out from Normandy.

There are glimmers of hope and nobility and even desperate heroism in these stories ... but also of blood rage, vengeance, hatred, and the dehumanization of war. Ennis clearly cares about his subjects here, and there's a wistful sadness to the darker episodes in this collection.

Triffic stuff, not for the faint or heart or children, but a remedy for anyone who considers war an ennobling, heroic challenge.

Rod Brown says

I read these stories in comic book format when they were originally published. This hardcover edition provides a nice reason to revisit these grim stories of war. The Night Witches and Dear Billy are remarkable for focusing on the experience of women at the frontlines of battle during World War II. Tankies is a fine series of vignettes about men operating tanks during the conflict, but suffers in comparison to the first two-thirds of the book from not having a solid story arc.

I like how Ennis captures the nightmarish aspects of war and the effect it has on the people who endure it. Dear Billy and Tankies contrast well with each other as they demonstrate how one enemy can be dehumanized and the other elevated to superhuman status based on race. All the stories touch on war crimes committed by all sides, with rape and summary execution of prisoners being most prominent. Far from glorifying war, Ennis captures the human aspects: the fear that pervades, the fleeting moments of joy that bring relief, and the callousness and outright evil that come out in the face of unrelenting violence and misery.
