



The Damned of Petersburg

Ralph Peters

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GLORY TURNED GRIM and warfare changed forever. As Grant pinned Lee to Petersburg and Richmond....

The Damned of Petersburg Details

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Author : Ralph Peters

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From Reader Review The Damned of Petersburg for online ebook

Jim Beekman says

My favorite civil war author. Detailed battle plans, characters, and politics. Ralph has it all, as well as the feel of battle.

Joyce says

5 stars

This book tells the story of Petersburg from both the Union and Confederate points of view in 1864. All of the major characters are there: Grant, Meade, Lee, Burnside, Hancock, Hill and Beauregard. It gives the reader a short biography of the men, both the actual people and the characters fostered in Peters' imagination to flesh out the story. It was stiflingly hot and everyone, officers and enlisted men alike, suffered because of it.

Sitting in a comfortable chair at home in the present, we get the picture of the horrors of the Civil War. Not only do we get a sense of the harsh terrain and tactics available at the time, but also the feelings and thoughts of those present at the battles on the way to Petersburg from the officers to the enlisted man. For the most part, the men on both side of the war gave it their all and acted bravely even when pushed to their physical and psychological limits.

The "colored" troops play a part in this novel as well. The politicians wanted to hold them in abeyance for fear of what the abolitionists would say if any were killed. But the men were anxious to fight and some acquitted themselves quite well.

The reader must understand the sheer horror of the war. One panicked man would send several of his cohorts running away from the battle. Men using bayonets and clubbing the opposition to death with their rifles – this was perfectly awful. I know this goes on in war, but Mr. Peters describes it so thoroughly and colorfully that one can't help but get these pictures in their mind. He describes the terrain surrounding the various battles very well. The reader is there, slogging up and down the craters, eating the dust along with the soldiers, sweating in their filthy and smelly uniforms – what was left of them that it.

Each man held to his beliefs, politics and ideology – rightly or wrongly - as they fought for the battle-scarred ground. Mistakes in judgment were made that cost lives.

Very well written and plotted, this book takes the reader right into the battle. I have read all of Ralph Peters' Battle Hymn Cycle series and truly enjoyed them all. I am going to look into his other books now as well.

happy says

Once again, LTC(R) Peters takes the reader into the sweltering heat, the muck, and gore that was a Civil War

battle field. In this entry into his Civil War series, the author brings the Siege of Petersburg to life starting with the Battle of the Crater.

As with the other novels in the series, the author brings to life both the high ranking generals and the officers and men below them who have execute the general's plans. In this novel, the author tells the high level Union's story mainly through the eyes of Francis Barlow and Nelson Miles. Barlow, a division commander, is portrayed as man while extremely ill with dysentery, but has such a devotion to duty, will not take the time to take care of himself. He is shown as a hard man, both on himself and the men under him. Through the course of the novel, he takes several breaks due to his ill health, but always comes back to his division before he has healed. Nelson Miles who is one of Barlow's brigade commanders, always takes the division when Barlow is absent. The lower ranking soldier's story is once again told through the eyes of the men of C/50th PA Inf.

The CSA high command is illustrated by the Confederate Cavalry Commander, Wade Hampton. Hampton is portrayed as talented commander and almost as much of a father figure to his men as Robert E. Lee. He also drawn as one who knows his duty and will not shirk it, even when he sees the chances of winning the war slipping away. Both of his sons are attached to his command and his concern for his younger son especially is an excellent metaphor for the feelings of all of parents who send their sons to war.

The story of the CSA lower ranks is once again told through the eyes of LTC William Oates. He is now in command of the 48th Ala, which unfortunately is brigaded with his former command, the 15th Ala. Oates is again portrayed as a fierce fighter who cares for his men. In one of his first appearances in the novel he has purchased a cartful of watermelons for his regiment, out of his own pocket. When men from the 15th wander over, he lets them join in the feast. That is until the man who took the 15th from him comes over. He then sends the men from his previous command away. Oates portrayed as a hard bitten man, and his sexual urges are always on his mind. In fact it seems that his main concern after losing an arm is how that will affect his love making.

As the story of the siege unfolds, it is almost the story of lost opportunities. The author makes clear that that Grant and the Union army just didn't sit still in their trenches that summer and fall. There were several attempts to break the Confederate lines. Starting with the Battle of the Crater many of them were initially successful. However due to poor planning, bad luck or just plain command ineptitude those chances were thrown away. There are several scenes in the book when Peters has Robt E. Lee saying basically "What is wrong with those people?" as yet another chance to destroy his army is lost.

A couple of themes that Peters follows – the reactions to the Colored Troops that have enlisted in the Union Army. The expectations and distain of them by both sides is very well told. To say they were unwelcome is an understatement. The author also looks at what a long period of sustained combat can do to the fighting ability of good soldiers. This deterioration is not just through combat losses, but in just the willingness of men to "see the elephant" one more time. By the time the novel ends C co is down to less than 10 men.

Finally, I don't think there is anyone writing today that is better at putting the reader into the minds of men fighting not only the enemy, but the weather, their commanders, the supply system and everything else that seems to conspire against the poor infantry soldier.

One word of caution - the N word is used extensively. However, it is used in the context of the time.

If Goodreads allowed this is a 4.5 star read, so I've rounded up. I definitely recommend this to anyone who is interested the American Civil War or soldier anywhere or anytime!

Danielle Urban says

The Damned of Petersburg by Ralph Peters is an extraordinary novel taking readers deep into the heart of Civil War. Ralph Peters has masterfully captured each and every detail and organized his writing to relive the memorable moments in history. This is a novel all readers should read no matter what they're preferred genre is. This story doesn't feel real just because it was based, off of historical facts, but because of the talented writing of Ralph Peters. I got to experience the memories and daily lives that some of the men during this era. It was fascinating from page one and still captivated me until the ending.

The Damned of Petersburg brings, to life, the lives, hardships, and bravery of the men who fought during the Civil War. I love anything that is about history or brings, to life, the precious moments fought and lived by those now dead. Famous men such as Grant, Lee, Winfield Scott Hancock and many others will be popping off the pages as readers turn them. Ralph Peters has created a world, that lures readers in from the beginning. It's fascinating how history can show us cruel life really was and what those moments may have been like if we were to witness them with our own eyes and ears. Many soldiers whose names we don't know, as well as their leading officers, are also brought to readers' attention. I loved that about Ralph Peter's writing. He wrote The Damned of Petersburg in a way to remember everyone and not just the officers with special ranks. Warfare in its purest form is brought to readers everywhere. Overall, I found this novel to be remarkable and stunning. I highly recommend this read to readers worldwide.

John Warren says

I love his books him and Jeff Sharra Civil War historical fiction books are the best

James Jacobsen says

As a historian I envy the novelist because he/she can go anywhere they want, unlimited by specific facts. And just as I resent Disney for giving a voice to Winnie the Pooh, I really valued Gore Vidal giving a personality to Lincoln. This is really more of a historical novel and again as a historian I was impressed by the degree to which the author put flesh and bones on historic personages and in so doing provides a learnable context for them. This story is about the Siege of Petersburg from the Confederate viewpoint and I found it truly riveting and informative.

Diane Moyle says

I have come to expect outstanding historical fiction from Ralph Peters and he does not disappoint with this book. This Civil War novel picks up with the ill-fated mine that the North built to break the South in the siege of Petersburg. It details man's inhumanity to man and the slaughter that followed after the explosion and the crater was formed. It shows that no one is immune to the cruelty that comes upon these men, both North and South in this struggle. It follows numerous generals and enlisted men from both sides as they

struggle with their injuries and illnesses that threaten to take them out of the theater of war. It highlights the frustration that is endured as battles fall apart and lives are senselessly wasted because of ill planning and execution.

Ralph Peters brings history to life! He does not whitewash the personalities and the brutalities that occur. You feel that you are in the thick of the battle, can hear the booming cannon and muskets and smell all the horrendous odors that fill the air. He follows the war in chronological order, rotating between North and South, generals and enlisted men. All the chapters are identified at the beginning detailing which side of the battle is going to be described which makes for ease in following the story.

Again, I highly recommend this book. If you have read the other three in the series, you definitely won't want to miss this one. If you haven't read them and are interested in just this period of the war, you can pick this novel up and follow and enjoy without having read the others. I would recommend this for teen and older readers. Mr. Peters minces no words and descriptions and this may be too graphic for younger readers. I am eagerly awaiting the last installment of this sequence of books!

Marilyn says

I gave one star only because I couldn't get into the story. I have read other books by Peters and thoroughly enjoyed them.

Steve says

Great book for Civil War buffs

Tim Armstrong says

Another amazing book in the Civil War series of Ralph Peters. Fantastic characterization. These people really come alive.

Mike says

Have you ever seen the "WW II in Colour" documentaries on TV? The ones where you see the marching soldiers on black and white film pass through a "magic portal" and the film turns to color? Somehow the people and events in the color film seem closer and more understandable than the old B&W version. The Damned of Petersburg is just like that. It turns a distant world and conflict into vivid colors and real people, with all the grit, horror and nastiness that comes with it. Peters gives you the Civil War down and dirty, no gauzy patina of heroic battle scenes of good over evil. If you need "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" to deal with uncomfortable realism, don't bother with this book. You won't make it far. Peters gives you the Blue and the Gray in all their ugliness, racism, ruthlessness, incompetence, bravery, madness, filthiness, weariness, etc. You will be mentally and probably physically uncomfortable reading parts of the book. I was.

BUT, it is a **5 Star** battle history of the first rank.

Peters' goal is to put you in the physical and mental framework of the combatants. He begins at "The Crater" and he tells it raw. The devastating heat, the awful heat of Virginia in the summer, you will wonder how anyone could survive much less fight in it. Terrible madness in this battle and Peters will introduce a horrific aspect of the battle involving the 30th US CT that I was totally unaware of. I'll not tell but it is a shock. Peters tells the story from the POV of the grunt infantry on the front up to the famous generals. It feels so real, the despair of the Union troops after terrible losses prior to Petersburg. The crazy madness of the Confederate troops so overextended and yet usually winning.

Peters also brings to light lesser known battles of the campaign and shines the light on lesser known participants. He confines his fiction to the depictions of the participants and the dialogue. The battles are historically accurate and he provides great maps for every battle, often better than highly rated non-fiction histories.

I am a big fan of Ralph Peters as a news commentator and as an author of both fiction and nonfiction. This book is a must-read for Civil War buffs. Also recommended to all general readers, wanting to know more about American History and not afraid of holding up a mirror to the good and the bad.

I received a free copy of "**The Damned of Petersburg**" (Advance Uncorrected Proof) through the GR Giveaway Program. A review was encouraged but not required.

Andrew says

The Civil War is getting closer to its end, but first the campaigns around Petersburg, and Peters does a wonderful job of bringing those bloody struggles to life, on both the Federal and Confederate side, through the end of 1864. Another strong entry in this series. Looking forward to reading the final chapter in this saga.

Bart Slawson says

Magnificent

I loved the ambiguous nature of real war and humanity. Felt like I was there. So very sad and exhausting.

Ben says

A riveting novel of historical fiction.

I waited two years to get a copy of this book. I am sorry that I waited. It is worth every penny.

"The Damned of Petersburg" is the third of a planned four-part series of novels about the Civil War. Each one has been remarkable in the way it has placed fictional characters among actual ones in a way that is neither intrusive nor forced. Actual words and emotions from letters and diaries of historic figures merge with those of the fictional characters in a haunting way, as if we are hearing the voices of the dead. Mr. Peters treats his characters, real and fictional, probing lay, depicting their fears, pride, prejudices, blood lust

and horror at war-and their love of it. Absolutely compelling writing.

Mr. Peters, depicts the awful scenes of a battlefield as only a veteran can. Beginning with the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, the book easily can horrify any reader , even one who might be jaded by the horrors of modern warfare. At the Crater, men killed at arms length, stabbing, shooting, bludgeoning. Worse, if possible, because "colored" troops were used by the Union against the entrenched Southern forces, they expected and received no quarter. (The author notes that they entered the battle vowing to give no quarter to the slavers.) And that the colored S , int pretreat were jeered and shot at by their white comrades. Did you know that? Ever read that in serious history books. But it happened.

But that battle only begins the book. It ends with the siege of Petersburg still in effect after many small, costly battles . These , seldom ever noted in serious histories of the War, except as " probing actions" or attempts to cut of a supply road, were as costly as any fight in the battle almanacs. Even now, after all I have read of serious works and fictional dramatic retellings, I was amazed how men could stand up to the slaughter , knowing that most wound meant amputation, and amputations usually meant death.

Yet sixty years later, the lessons of the Civil War were lost on the kingdoms of Europe as trench warfare locked a continent in a death struggle.

Ok...this review is too long . If you enjoy reading military history or great historical fiction or simply want to read a good book, read" The Damned of Petersburg."

I look forward to the concluding installment of Mr. Peters' novels.

Craig Zeichner says

Spares no punches in the graphic depiction of the Battle of Crater. As always, the personal portraits of the actual participants in the war are stellar: Wade Hampton, "Little" Billy Mahone, and Regis de Trobriand -- want to learn more about him. I even like the way he spins the Francis Barlow story into something of a Byronic tale. The only thing I missed was the "what happened to them afterwards" that Peters has included in his excellent postscripts to the novels. Bittersweet anticipation for the next book in the series, I can't wait, but sad to see it all end. Perhaps Peters will look to other campaigns/battles for future Civil War novels?
