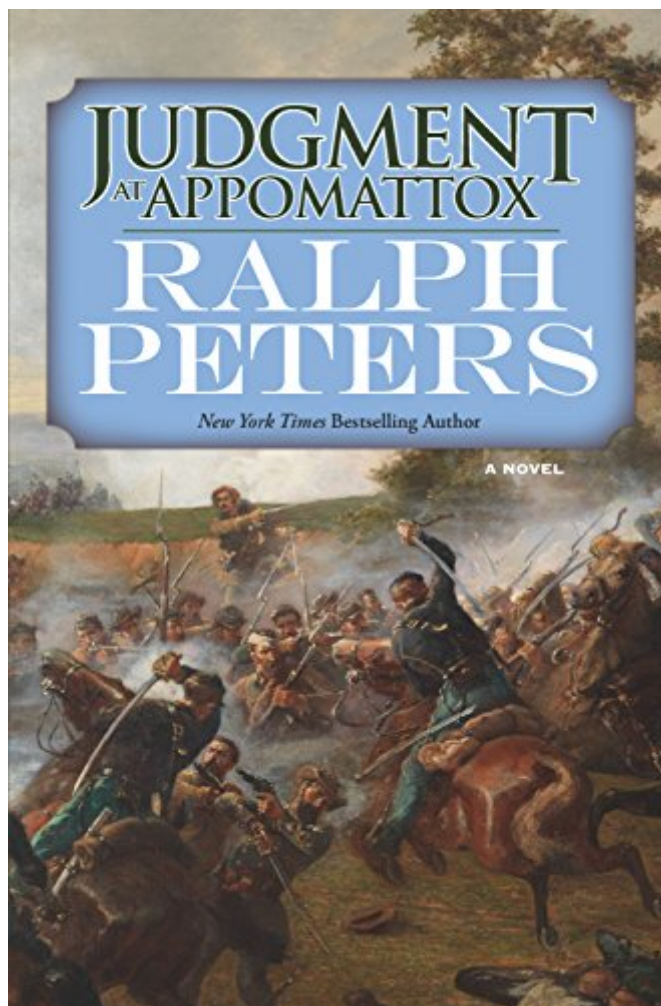


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# Judgment At Appomattox: A Novel (The Battle Hymn Cycle)



## Synopsis

The ferocious final weeks of the Civil War come alive in *Judgment at Appomattox*, the final novel of New York Times bestselling author Ralph Peters's breathtaking, Boyd Award-winning series. A great war nears its end. Robert E. Lee makes a desperate, dramatic gamble. It fails. Ulysses S. Grant moves. Veteran armies clash around Petersburg, Virginia, as Grant seeks to surround Lee and Lee makes a skillful withdrawal in the night. Richmond falls. Each day brings new combat and more casualties, as Lee's exhausted, hungry troops race to preserve the Confederacy. But Grant does not intend to let Lee escape... In one of the most thrilling episodes in American history, heroes North and South, John Brown Gordon and Phillip Sheridan, James Longstreet and Francis Channing Barlow, battle each other across southern Virginia as the armies converge on a sleepy country court house. Written with the literary flair and historical accuracy readers expect from Ralph Peters, *Judgment at Appomattox* takes us through the Civil War's last grim interludes of combat as flags fall and hearts break. Capping the author's acclaimed five-novel cycle on the war in the East, this "dramatized history" pays homage to all the soldiers who fought, from an Irish-immigrant private wearing gray, to the "boy generals" who mastered modern war. This is a grand climax to a great, prize-winning series that honors and reveals America's past. *Battle Hymn Cycle*: *Cain at Gettysburg*, *Hell or Richmond*, *Valley of the Shadow*, *The Damned of Petersburg*, *Judgment at Appomattox*. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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## Customer Reviews

Ralph Peters' closing volume in his Battle Hymn Cycle is superb. Anyone interested in the Civil War will find this book, as well as the previous four volumes, to be a rare and enthralling experience. I cannot recommend the entire series too highly. Although, most of the dialogue is fictional, events are precisely historical. In fact, Peter's exposition of the Appomattox campaign is more illuminating and lucid than most non-fiction works. Even more intriguing is Peter's ability to bring his historical characters to life. Deeply researched, man after man is brought so compellingly to life that you are inspired to find their biographies. That ferocious Mars, Francis Barlow, the cruelly ambitious but deadly Philip Sheridan, the simply inadequate and hollow George Pickett, and the gifted and calculating John B. Gordon, and countless others from company grade officers to enlisted men people this book in all their depth and humanity. Towering over the campaign, of course, are Grant and Lee. I doubt whether any other author has delved more deeply into the character of these great men than Peters. This is Civil War writing at its very best. Peters has the gift of weaving prose and poetry into a glittering tapestry that will richly reward the reader. Buy this book. You will not be disappointed. Peter G. Tsouras

There are countless history books published on all aspects of the American Civil War. Distinguished historians specializing in every imaginable category — battles, leaders, campaigns, politics, economics, land, sea, social issues, etc. — have published a plethora of remarkably extensive, widely-ranged, meticulously researched works covering everything even remotely conceivable about America's bloodiest and most destructive war and, in this case, how it ended. Yet, for those who want to truly understand what the Civil War experience was like for the officers and soldiers on both sides who fought and endured it, there is no better reference to consult than Ralph Peters' series of five Civil War novels, covering the war from the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg through the 1865 Appomattox campaign. Together, these

superbly researched, richly-imagined, marvelously-written recreations of all of the actions that comprised the war's final two years totally immerse readers in the reality faced by the soldiers and their leaders on both sides. Known collectively as his "Battle Hymn" series, these five books are: *Cain at Gettysburg*; *Hell or Richmond*; *Valley of the Shadow*; *The Damned of Petersburg*, and, most recently, the fifth and final book in this outstanding series, *Judgment at Appomattox*. History books tell us the basic facts of the war's end: Grant broke the siege of Petersburg; Lee led his Army of Northern Virginia west in an attempt to escape; Grant's forces trapped the Confederate army at Appomattox; and Lee surrendered April 9, 1865. But, how exactly did that happen? What were the commanders at all levels and the soldiers fighting at the "sharp end" of combat thinking and experiencing? How did the dynamics of leadership, personality and individual motivation within both armies play out during those final days of the war? Why, ultimately, did the war end there, and then? Peters brilliantly conceived novel delves into all of those questions, providing as accurately as humanly possible a century and a half later plausible answers to all of those questions. He examines and brings to vivid life those at the highest levels of command Lincoln, Grant, Davis and Lee and their immediate subordinates, the Union's Sheridan, Meade, Humphreys, Barlow, Custer and Rhodes, and the Confederates Longstreet, Ewell, Gordon, Pickett, Mahone and Evans. Moreover, he deftly brings both sides' common soldiers to life by presenting the rankers in blue and gray, doomed to fight and, too often, die in obedience to their officers' orders. By the end of this outstanding book, readers will understand how the end of the Civil War came about, how the commanders and soldiers and both sides fought it, endured it and, ultimately, dealt with it. Peters has described what he set out to accomplish in his acclaimed "Battle Hymn" series: "I've spent the better part of a decade attempting to portray the war in the eastern theater, from Gettysburg to Appomattox, with realism, fidelity, and humanity. I sought to free the famous from their prisons of bronze and marble, to let them live again as the complex, imperfect, challenging, and ultimately inspiring individuals they were. Above all, I wanted to be just, to shun today's pernicious habit of judging the past by our own self-righteous standards. Whether they wore Federal blue or Confederate gray, I tried to understand these men on their terms, to appreciate the values for which they fought so long and hard." To say that Peters accomplished what he set out to do a decade ago is an egregious understatement. He succeeded marvelously, of course, in each and every one of his five novels, and his "Battle

Hymn series has set the "gold standard" of translating the historical facts of the Civil War into real understanding of what actually transpired on the battlefields. As with his previous books in this series, Peters has wisely provided a dozen illustrative battle maps of the actions he so brilliantly describes in the novel's narrative. Created by cartographer George Skoch, each map clearly, concisely and accurately graphically displays and faithfully reflects the actions of the units on both sides, perfectly complementing the narrative and, thereby, allowing readers to easily follow the action by visualizing the terrain and the region over which it was fought. If Peters' narrative mentions a unit or a location, Skoch's superb maps show them avoiding that maddeningly frustrating problem found in so many historical books in which units and locations are mentioned in the text but not shown anywhere on the accompanying maps. In summary, this terrific account of the end of the war is one of those rarely encountered books that compels readers to, on the one hand, desperately want to get to the end as quickly as possible to see how the characters' real and imagined fare, while, on the other hand, makes them long for it to go on and on. Readers want to know how it ends, but they don't want it to end! Alas, as did the war itself, end it must. Yet, rumor has it that Peters is even now considering writing a "prequel" to his "Battle Hymn series" a novel about the May-June 1863 Chancellorsville campaign. This reviewer, for one, fervently hopes that rumor is true and he can't wait to read Peters' presentation of Stonewall Jackson and "Fighting Joe" Hooker!

I just finished reading Ralph Peters' latest volume in his Battle Hymn series. Each of his marvelous depictions of the men and women who lived during America's Civil War has been extraordinary. I have felt as though I had come to know them as people, not just characters in a novel. Just by coincidence, I traveled from Petersburg, Virginia to Appomattox, Virginia the day after completing Judgement at Appomattox. I have made that trip on a number of occasions, tracing the footsteps of my Great Grandfather, a Confederate soldier. I am familiar with the ground, the roads, and the stories of Lee's Retreat. But I never appreciated any of that saga anywhere near as much as I did after reading Ralph's marvelous book. His entire series has been a great gift to those of us who want to learn more about the men and women who built the America we inhabit today. You simply must read this book. It is a gift to all of us.

I have read all of Ralph Peters previous Civil War books and bought this one the day it went on sale. It does not disappoint. Peters ability to bring the Civil War to us through the eyes of the participants continues to be the greatest contribution of this extraordinarily talented writer. In addition, in each of these books he manages to present insights that a mere reading of history might miss. His description of the final fracturing of the Confederate Army and the frantic pursuit that ended at Appomattox will keep you on the edge of your seat even though you know the ending. The missed chances and miscues, misunderstood orders and sheer confusion of that pursuit in the first week of April 1865 require a master craftsman to tell the story in a coherent fashion. Fortunately Peters is more than up to the task. You can almost feel the desperation and despair of the Confederates and the exasperation and grim determination of the Union commanders as the pursuit drags on day after day. Peters does his usual superb job of putting you inside the heads of many historical figures and shows them to be the fallible (yet mostly admirable) flesh and blood men (and women) that they were. I look forward to Peters next book.

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