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| Amazon Page | [**Review (Fiction): Hell or Richmond**](http://www.phibetaiota.net/2013/05/review-fiction-hell-or-richmond/)Categories: [5 Star](http://www.phibetaiota.net/category/reviews/bookrating/five/),[Fiction](http://www.phibetaiota.net/category/reviews/fiction/),[War & Face of Battle](http://www.phibetaiota.net/category/reviews/war/)Tags: [Peters](http://www.phibetaiota.net/tag/peters/)Ralph Peters5.0 out of 5 stars **Equal to Cain at Gettysburg, Takes Fact-Based Fiction to New Level**, May 13, 2013 |
| Amazon Page |  |

I started this book, having given a rave review to [Cain at Gettysburg](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0765336243/ref%3Dcm_cr_asin_lnk) convinced that the sequel would disappoint, as most sequels do.  Although I counted only five goosebump moments in this new book (Cain had six, [The Killer Angels: The Classic Novel of the Civil War By Michael Shaara](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005WM81AW/ref%3Dcm_cr_asin_lnk) only had one), I have to rate it the equal of the earlier book, and also the linch pin book in what should be a series of at least four books, each – as the first two have been – a detailed study of men at war at all four levels (strategic, operational, tactical, technical). The concluding sentence in this book is brilliant, and it left me with precisely the sense of angst and anticipation for the next campaign as the author no doubt intended. If Cain was the thunderclap of divine providence, then Hell is the tough hard slog through mud during which the North adapts and learns lessons while Lee’s health worsens substantially, his weakness all the more grave because Longstreet is wounded and Stuart killed, leaving Lee with no bench, less Gordon as a late bloomer too easily ignored by his elders.

There is little doubt that with this book Ralph Peters has established a nearly impregnable position as the leading practitioner of historical fiction, taking it to a new level of accuracy and relevance to the military and political professionals who wage war, setting the gold standard for factual historical fiction that reveals the soul of those making history.

If I were to sum up the book in three words it would be leadership, logistics, and learning.

Ethics permeates this book, and the thought that stays with me, is the author’s stress on “no second chances.” You have ethics or you do not. IN THE MOMENT your character will tell.
The author provides a concluding note on sources that is absolutely essential reading; among the sources he cites with praise are Gordon C. Rhea’s books, such as [In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: The Wilderness Through Cold Harbor](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0807132691/ref%3Dcm_cr_asin_lnk).

For myself, this series stands alone, and I am very much looking forward to the next book is what is clearly one of the most profound endeavors in historical fiction to date.

Robert David STEELE Vivas
[*INTELLIGENCE for EARTH: Clarity, Diversity, Integrity, Sustainability*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0971566178/ossnet-20)



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