

# 21ST ILLINOIS INFANTRY REGIMENT

The 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry was originally formed in Mattoon on 9 May 1861, as the Seventh Congressional District Regiment. Illinois initially passed the Ten Regiment Bill which called for a regiment of volunteers to be raised from each Congressional district and one from the state at large.

On 15 May 1861, Captain U S Grant, who had been called out of retirement by Governor Yates, mustered the regiment into 30 days state service.



The regiment consisted of men from the surrounding counties, and Company B's roster included 27 Mattoon men as well as their Captain Jesse P Stevenson, from Mattoon.

The regiment was under the command of Colonel Simon S Goode, of Decatur. Colonel Goode proved to be an ineffective leader and lax disciplinarian, as the men left camp at will, roaming the countryside and frequenting the Mattoon saloons.

Governor Yates heard of this and had the 7<sup>th</sup> regiment moved to Camp Yates, Springfield, by train.

On 15 June 1861, Governor Yates removed Colonel Goode from command and appointed U S Grant as Colonel of the 7<sup>th</sup> District Regiment.

A historical document titled "MUSTER-IN ROLL" for the 21st Illinois Infantry. It is a detailed ledger with columns for names, ranks, and dates. The document is filled with handwritten entries, including names like "John S. Grant" and "Jesse P. Stevenson". It includes a section for "DIRECTIONS TO MUSTERING OFFICER" at the bottom.

At that time the Mattoon Gazette ran a piece that stated:

Capt. U. S. Grant, of Galena, and a West Point graduate, has been appointed by Gov. Yates to the command of the Seventh District regiment, in place of Col. S. S. Goode, deposed. Instead of having a Col. Goode, now they have a good Colonel.

The Regiment was mustered into Federal service for a three-year term as the 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry on 28 June 1861, Colonel Grant, commanding.

Thus, U S Grant began what would be a notable career as the Colonel of a regiment raised in Mattoon and sworn in by him.

Colonel Grant was promoted to Brigadier General on 7 August 1861 and given command of the District of Southeast Missouri.

Lt. Colonel John W S Alexander, of Paris, was given command of the 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry.

The Regiment probably saw as much action as any Illinois regiment in the war, participating in battles at: Corinth, Perryville, Stones River, Tullahoma, Chickamauga, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, Jonesborough, Franklin and Nashville.

The Regiment was mustered out and discharged at Camp Butler on 18 January 1866.

Losses for the Regiment were: 6 officers and 124 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded and 2 officers and 140 enlisted men by disease.