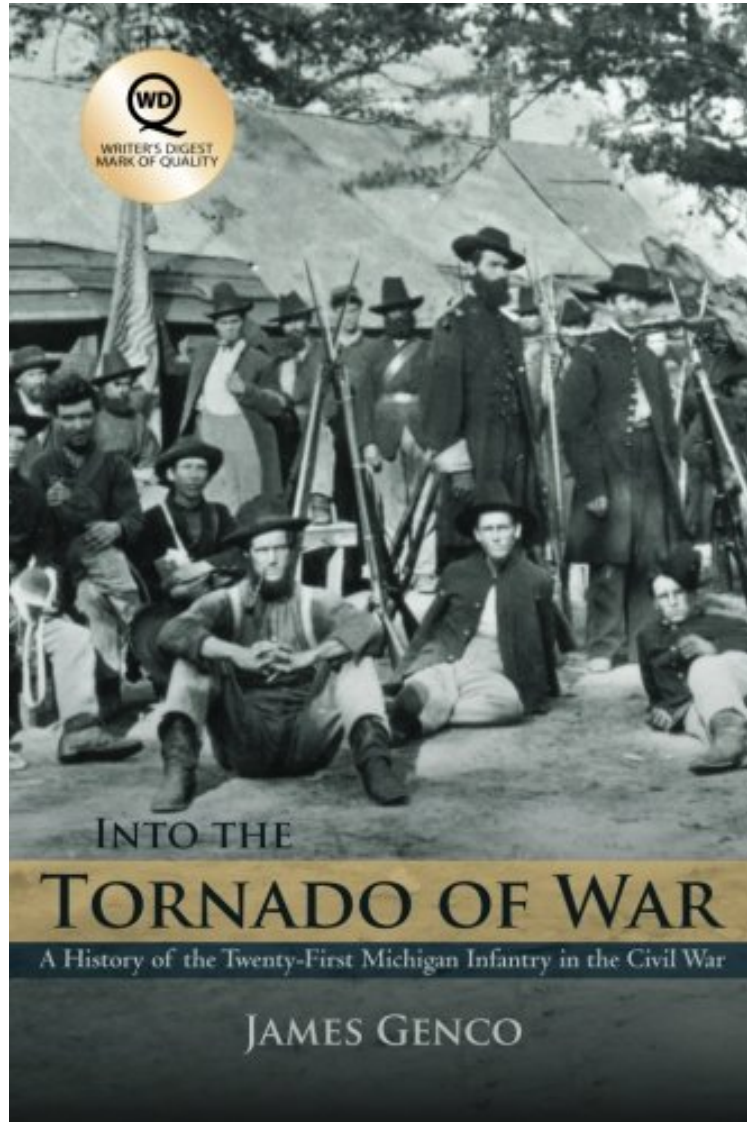


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Into the Tornado of War: A History of the Twenty-First Michigan Infantry in the Civil War

James Genco

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James Genco : Into the Tornado of War: A History of the Twenty-First Michigan Infantry in the Civil War
before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Into the Tornado of War: A History of the Twenty-First Michigan Infantry in the Civil War:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent history of the 21st Michigan Infantry By Lowell White I am a Civil War reenactor. I also was one of the founders of the 21st Michigan reenactors and led the unit in the '80's and

early '90's. We chose to portray the 21st because we felt that although the heaviest fighting of the Civil War took place in the East, the war was won in the West. We chose the 21st because it was typical of the regiments that served in the West. Naturally I have a keen interest in the history of the 21st and ordered the book as soon as I found it while browsing Civil War titles on . The book tells the story of the recruitment of the regiment in western Michigan in the summer of 1862 and initial training at Ionia MI. The regiment left the state in September 1862 and went by rail to Kentucky. It immediately took part in the Perryville campaign and was lightly engaged there. Genco describes the hard marching in hot and dry weather prior to the battle and more forced marches on the way to Nashville after Perryville. The book ably describes the Twenty-first Michigan Infantry in action at the battles of Stones River TN, Chickamauga GA, and Bentonville NC. The regiment also spent many months in camp near Murfreesboro TN in the first part of 1863 and also spent almost a year on engineer duty in the Chattanooga area in 1863-64. The regiment also marched- a lot! During less than three years of service they marched about 3300 miles. The only map in the book shows the route of these marches. I would like to have seen maps showing the position of the 21st at the major battles of the regiment. The book has many photos, most of which I have not seen before. I do question the captions on the often published photos on pages 116-119. The author states these photos were taken at Murfreesboro TN in the spring of 1863. My research indicates these were taken in the spring or summer of 1864 in the Chattanooga TN area. High resolution images of these photos are available online. Close examination of the muskets in the images show these as being Enfields and/or Springfields. As the regiment carried the Austrian Lorenz musket in early 1863, these photos could not have been taken earlier than the spring of 1864 when the regiment was near Chattanooga. The author makes use of the Chauncy Peck letters. I was given a copy of the Peck letters by a relative of his in 1994 and they have been posted online at [...] . Mr. Genco states that the dying Peck was placed in a tent away from the main hospital to spare the others from the sight of Peck's terrible wound. A careful reading of Mr. Willard's letter to Peck's family states that "his right leg, from the hip down, was mortified and swollen as large as his body, the stench did not offend me..." This indicates it was not the sight of Peck that the others in the hospital found disturbing but the smell of his gangrenous leg. Also, Mr. Genco states that Chauncy Peck received his mortal wound at Chickamauga. However, on page 143 and 144 of Charles Belknaps "Michigan at Chickamauga, Chattanooga and Missionary Ridge 1863" states that the mortal wound came from Confederate artillery on Lookout Mountain. "... strange as it may seem, from all the shots fired, but one man in the army, Private Peck, Company F, Twenty-first Michigan, was killed, one wounded seriously and a few others slightly." (I think of Chauncy Peck whenever I am at Point Park on Lookout Mountain knowing that it was one of the guns positioned here that killed Peck.) My special interest is flags carried by Michigan units in the Civil War. Page 300 of the book has a photo of the Regimental Flag made by Horstmann Bros in Philadelphia and carried by the 21st for much of the war. This and three other flags are stored at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing. The flag returned to the Ladies of Ionia in 1865 is on display at the Ionia County building. I would like to have seen photos of these other flags in the book as well. The flaws in the book are minor and the omissions would have made a very good book even better. The release of the book is timely as the 150th anniversary of the formation of the 21st Michigan Infantry will be later this year. This book is a must have for anyone interested in Michigan in the Civil War and should be a welcome addition to any Civil War library. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Donald Loase Very satisfied with this purchase. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting look inside the life of the Civil War By C. Dixon This is a documented and well written glimpse into the lives of Union soldiers during the Civil War. It is written around primary correspondence and reminds us that our nation fought a terrible war and learned how horrendous war is for people. A great look at our history that might help us in directing our future.

In the summer of 1862, a group of volunteer soldiers joined the Twenty-First Michigan Volunteer Infantry in western Michigan. For the next two and a half years, these men saw extensive combat against the Confederacy in America's most brutal and bloody war. Drawn from hundreds of letters, diaries, and memoirs, *Into the Tornado of War* is the complete history of this Union regiment as seen through the soldiers' eyes. James Genco traces their movements from their first major battle at Perryville, Kentucky, through Tennessee, Georgia, and finally, the Carolinas. In addition to Perryville, the regiment was severely tested in the landmark battles of Stones River, Chickamauga, and Bentonville, and participated in Union General William T. Sherman's March to the Sea in November and December of 1864. As the war wound down in 1865, the regiment was part of the Union Army that cut its way through the Carolinas, ultimately finding itself in the forefront of one of the last major battles of the war. In a valuable contribution to the scholarship on the American Civil War, *Into the Tornado of War* paints a picture of the realities of the war through the words of real soldiers.

About the Author James Genco served with the Department of Justice as an assistant US attorney in Michigan and Connecticut. An avid historian, he now researches and writes on topics ranging from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War and World War II. Genco and his wife, Carol, live in Avon, Connecticut.