SOLDIER VOTING IN OHIO DURING THE CIVIL WAR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the Civil War most of the states in both the Union and the Confederacy passed laws permitting soldiers in the field to vote for both the state and national candidates. In both sections it was felt that the soldier vote would strengthen the existing war government. In the Union the vote of the men in uniform was looked upon as an aid in preserving the federal and state governments supporting the war. In the Confederacy the soldier vote was looked to as a means of strengthening the cause of secession.

In Ohio a bill to let soldiers in the field vote on the state and national candidates was passed early in 1863. It remained in effect during the course of the war, with serious modifications, and was allowed to expire at the end of the conflict. The votes of the soldiers thus received much attention during the war period and were bitterly fought for by the Union and Democratic parties, or Abolitionists and Copperheads as they preferred to call each other. In reviewing the entire subject of soldier voting it seems that there was an undue fuss stirred up over the importance of military suffrage. The soldier vote changed the results only in a few local Congressional elections. In the election for Governor in 1863 when the eyes of the nation were on Ohio the soldier vote only confirmed the regular civilian vote. This was true also of the presidential election of 1864 when Ohio voted to keep Abraham Lincoln in the White House.
Despite the comparative unimportance of soldier voting in determining election results, it is important for several other reasons. It is an exciting chapter in Ohio political history and provides an excellent mirror for the Civil War election campaigns in the state. In the election propaganda of each party is reflected the emotional status of the whole state during the war. At the same time letters and reports from privates and generals give fascinating glimpses of army life and the political beliefs and fears of the men who fought the war.

The Union and Democratic parties both vied hard for the favor of the soldier. His vote might help win a decisive election but more than that his prestige might influence the voters at home. If one could show that "the boys" were on his side then how could the civilians at home possibly vote against the wishes of the soldiers and still remain patriots? Thus every newspaper fought the battle of its party and no political oration was considered complete without an appeal to the "gallant defenders of our country."

The newspapers, too, magnified every note of praise or discontent that came from the battlefields. Long editorials as well as prejudiced news stories purported to show that the soldiers were all either one-hundred per cent Unionists and Republicans or equally good Democrats. Many very natural war-time complaints of the soldiers were enlarged beyond the limits of all reason by the Democratic papers to show that the Union government, national and state, consisted wholly of charlatans, speculators, "nigger-lovers," and shoddy contractors. The Republican
papers at the same time tried to convince the soldiers that after 1860 all Democrats were traitors who spent their days and nights shooting innocent soldiers in the back.

From the letters, editorials, reports, pamphlets, and speeches of the years 1863 and 1864 it is possible to see clearly the political differences of the soldiers and people of Ohio.
CHAPTER II

THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF SOLDIER VOTING

When the Civil War started Ohio had no laws enabling soldiers to vote. In fact, Ohio was an unusual state in that there was no law prohibiting soldiers from voting. At the beginning of the war twenty states had such laws. This had been done to keep large contingents of servicemen from taking part in local elections and perhaps changing the outcome of the election. Ohio, as has been noted, did not have such a law and it can be presumed that until the outbreak of war in 1861 soldier voting was an unconsidered subject in the state.

What seems to be the earliest instance of soldier voting took place during the Mexican War. At that time a group of Pennsylvania volunteers taking part in the Texas campaign voted in an election in their home state. This was an isolated example, however, and it was not until the Civil War that it seemed important to make provisions for absentee voting by the men under arms.

Attempts to give the soldier the right to vote in Ohio were first made in 1862. In the session of the General Assembly meeting early in that year a bill was introduced by Representative Dresel, a Democratic delegate to the lower house. Dresel's bill was referred to a committee made up of three leading Democrats for consideration. The committee reported the bill back favorably to the house but no action was taken. After the house thus refused to act a similar bill was introduced into
the Senate where it passed. Upon being sent to the House this Senate bill was shelved like its predecessor and no action was taken before the legislature adjourned for the 1862 session.

These early attempts at soldier suffrage seemed to fail because of lack of Republican support. In 1862 this Republican opposition was seized upon by the Democrats as a campaign issue and they tried to convince the soldiers that the Democrats, and not the Republicans, were their true friends. The Democratic press also made much of the failure of the legislature to pass the voting bill. The radical Democratic Crisis (Columbus) carried a long news story on the failure of the legislature and in the fashion of the day editorialized at the same time to give the Republicans a severe lashing. After recounting the history of the ill-fated legislation the Crisis went on to say:

When the Democrats asked for the privilege of letting these soldiers vote the Republicans were inexorable. They would not trust a volunteer soldier to vote; it would corrupt the ballot-box; it would demoralize the Army; it would be bad in every way!

Let these abolition Republicans say no more about being friends of the soldiers. They dared not let a vote be taken as it would have tested the truth of their policies.¹

The Daily Ohio State Journal, the leading Republican organ in the state capital, blissfully ignored the tempest over soldier suffrage. The paper's only comment on the entire session of the legislature was that it had worked "industriously" and "harmoniously" in the best interests of the state.²

¹ Editorial in The Crisis, May 7, 1862.
² Daily Ohio State Journal, April 14, 1862.
The Democrats, however, realizing that they had a good talking point refused to let the matter drop. The Democratic newspapers continued to needle the Republicans for their obstructist tactics. In June 1862 The Crisis reported that a wounded soldier in Dayton had said that he would go home to vote for "The Union as it was, and the Constitution as it is." The Crisis went on to editorialize in the same article by saying that many soldiers went into the Army as Republicans but were rapidly becoming Democrats. The article concluded by noting, "The Legislature was suspicious of the same thing when they refused the soldier the right of suffrage, as a right they are anxious to confer upon the Negroes."^3

In their state platform of 1862 the Democrats reminded the soldiers of the party's efforts on their behalf and condemned the action of the legislature in the following words, "Resolved, that the refusal of the General Assembly to permit our gallant soldiers in the field the right to vote, was a great and unjustifiable wrong to them, and ought not to have been committed."^4

In their platform the Union Republicans pledged their support to the president and the governor but said nothing about soldier voting. They did include, however, a platform designed to catch the attention of the army by thanking the soldiers for services rendered to the country.

^3 Ibid.

^4 See pamphlet published by the Democratic State Central Committee, Columbus, 1863, entitled, Address to the Soldiers of Ohio by the Democratic State Central Committee, The Union and the Constitution.
These platform statements were prepared for the Congressional elections of 1862 which resulted in what the Unionists considered a frightful Copperhead victory. The abuse the Republicans received over their obstruction of the soldier voting law may have changed a few votes but it seems to have been a minor factor when compared with the other reasons for the increased Democratic strength. Some soldiers were at home on furloughs or were stationed near home and could go to the polls as regular voters. A few of them may have switched to the Democratic party because of these charges but there is little evidence of such a political turn-about by the men able to vote at home.5

By the time the General Assembly met in 1863 public opinion seemed to have crystalized in favor of immediate action on soldier voting. Both parties realized that if they were to pose as the soldiers' friend they would have to make provisions to allow them to vote in the field. The Republicans were especially anxious to start soldier voting after their state-wide defeat in 1862. It was correctly believed that the soldiers would support the Union war government and the Republicans looked to the soldiers to bring Ohio back into the Republican column.

At the beginning of the legislative year in 1863 petitions for soldier voting from almost every county in the state were referred to a committee which later reported favorably on the matter. After a series of joint conferences between House and Senate committeemen a bill was passed on April 13, 1863 which made it possible for soldiers

to vote in the field. This law prescribed the mechanics of regimental
and company voting and specified how the results were to be returned
to Ohio and counted. It should be noted that the system used differed
greatly from the method used by most states during World War II. The
localized character of Civil War companies and regiments made it easy
for ballots to be sent to the Army and returned for counting as a unit.
Most of the servicemen in any given regiment or company would probably
all be from the same general area of Ohio, if not from the same county.
This greatly simplified the machinery necessary to poll the Army.
Provisions were made, however, for individual voting in the case of
"strays."6

Before the war was over this original law had been replaced by two
new laws and the whole question of soldier voting had become a constitu-
tutional issue and had gone to the state Supreme Court. The changes
made after the original 1863 law were modifications to clear up questions
which arose in its operation. The suffrage was also extended by the
additional legislation.

The first question to arise in putting the law of 1863 into effect
was whether or not the act permitted soldiers to vote beyond the borders
of Ohio. It is clear that the framers of the law intended soldiers
out of the state to vote but the language of the law was rather hazy
on this point. This permitted the critics of the law to question its
operation and demand its repeal. A new act was passed in March, 1864,
which did repeal the law of 1863 and stated very clearly that it was

to apply to Ohio soldiers either in or out of the state. This same law also extended the benefits of out-of-state voting to teamsters, clerks, and others in the employment of the state who could not be strictly regarded as soldiers. The law was also to expire automatically at the end of the war. None of the legislation passed so far enabled out-of-state voting in municipal elections and so another law was passed in the same month making this possible.  

There seems to have been little public debate or comment on these laws at the time of their passage. A considerable discussion was started over the constitutionality of the laws, however. This was thin ice as neither party could afford to antagonize the men in the Army with abstract constitutional arguments. The question of constitutionality was first brought up by a defeated candidate for the office of probate judge. If all of the soldier votes were counted it was clear that the man who contested the election had lost. If, however, the votes of the soldiers out of the state could be subtracted the defeated candidate would then be the victor. The soldier voting law was therefore attacked as being invalid because it extended the powers of the state of Ohio beyond the borders of the state and was therefore extra-territorial.  

In December, 1863, the Supreme Court of Ohio held that this was not true. In a lengthy decision the court said that the law was not extra-territorial and was within the powers granted by the state.

7 General Laws, 1864, LXI, 49, 80.
constitution to the legislature. The court ordered that the out-of-state votes be counted and the original winner was upheld.\textsuperscript{8}

The same question came up later in the seating of a number of the legislature. It was not necessary to go to the courts again as the seat was awarded to the candidate who won by counting the out-of-state soldier votes. This was in line with the previous Supreme Court decision and was generally accepted. The \textit{Daily Ohio State Journal} printed in pamphlet form, and for general distribution, the speech delivered by Columbus Delano, Knox County Republican, in the House of Representatives during the general debate on the seating controversy. Representative Delano defended the constitutionality of the act. With quotations from the laws of all nations, ancient and modern, Delano asserted that a man did not lose his citizenship by leaving the state and that since the legislature could prescribe both the place and manner of voting there was nothing illegal about the act. He said that voting was a personal right and that the legislature could:

\begin{quote}
"...authorize and legalize its exercise in or out of the state... in Paris, London, or on behalf of those brave men who temporarily leave their homes, firesides, families, and friends, braving danger, and enduring hardships in other states, in order to crush this wicked and causeless rebellion."\textsuperscript{9}
\end{quote}

Although the major papers of each party carried accounts of the constitutional controversy there were few letters to the editor

\textsuperscript{8} Lehman \textit{v.} McBride, \textit{Ohio State Reports}, XV, 594.

\textsuperscript{9} Columbus Delano, \textit{Upon the Constitutionality of the Law of 1863 allowing Soldiers to Vote while Absent from the State on Military Duty}, Columbus, 1863, 13.
published on the question and little general discussion. The Crisis proved to be the exception, however, and became very excited over a question that seemed much too uninteresting for the rest of the press and public. The position of The Crisis is interesting and is well worth closer examination since it shows the position into which the more radical Democrats were forced by the effects of soldier voting.

As one of the earliest Ohio papers to support soldier suffrage it was a little difficult for The Crisis, and many Democrats, to continue to encourage military voting when the majority of servicemen seemed to be unalterably opposed to the Copperhead principles. The Crisis began to question the advisability of soldier voting after the gubernatorial election of 1863 in which Vallandigham was soundly defeated. The paper, and many Democrats, countered Republican victories with the charge that the soldiers were being coerced into voting the ticket of the Abolitionists, as they called their enemies. They also charged that Army election officials did not count Democratic votes and refused to send them back to Ohio to be counted. It was not possible to oppose soldier voting directly, so The Crisis opposed it on the grounds of "constitutionality and coercion." The paper said that the law was upheld by the "Abolition Supreme Court" only because the Court knew that a divided Army vote would not be allowed to occur. The editorial ended with the statement that, "As all the officers are the appointees of the President they can easily be made of one mind,  

10 See The Crisis, October and November, 1863.
and by their combined influence, the Army vote, from necessity, must be in accordance with that will."  

Generally speaking *The Crisis* was very much alone in its criticism of the law. The Union and Republican papers either upheld the law or paid scant attention to it. The same is true among the soldiers. Few knew, understood, or cared about the legal issues involved. There were letters of rejoicing from soldiers when the constitutionality of the act was upheld but otherwise there was little military interest in the legal aspect of the battle for their votes. One soldier, a lawyer by profession, did write a letter to the *Daily Ohio State Journal* which presented a paradox to the Democrats talking about unconstitutionality. James T. Murphy, stationed at Camp Chase, said in his letter printed in the *Journal* that, "If any person deserves the right it is the soldier. He perils his all to vindicate the very existence of free institutions by the bayonet, he should also try it with the ballot." Murphy then went on to point out the shaky ground on which the Democrats were standing in their legal argument. After noting that Vallandigham was not only outside Ohio, but outside the Union, he wrote, "Now, I do not think they ought 'to light a fire so hot for their enemies that they may scorch themselves.' If soldiers who are voluntary exiles, can not vote, how can Vallandigham, who is in voluntary exile, be eligible to office?"  

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11 Editorial in *The Crisis*, May 4, 1864.

The legal and constitutional debate over soldier voting was quickly and efficiently settled. Most of the opposition to soldier voting had its roots in practical politics and was not motivated by altruistic concern for constitutional principles. The great campaigns to influence the soldier revolved not around legal issues but the elections of 1863 and 1864.
CHAPTER III

THE ELECTION OF 1863

The election, in 1863, of a governor and a state ticket was probably one of the most important elections in the history of Ohio. It was also important nationally as few state elections have ever been. The fortunes, political and military, of the Union seemed to be at low tide. Military reverses and the Democratic resurgence of 1862 seemed to augur ill for what was left of the United States of America. Thus the state election in Ohio came to have particular national significance. As one writer says of this campaign, "The friends of the administration had repeatedly declared that they could better sustain the loss of a battle, or even of a whole campaign in the field, than to lose the political control of Ohio by his [Vallandigham's] election."\(^{13}\)

The results of the election proved that, despite economic and sectional differences with parts of the nation, and particularly the east, Ohio wanted to stay in the Union and fight the war to its bitter end. Before the balloting in October, however, neither side was too confident of victory. Both parties talked of winning but each let loose a flood of political propaganda designed to help God in what they prophesied would be a "God given victory." Since this was the first election under the soldier voting law the political pyrotechnics were aimed with an eye to the soldier as well as the civilian voter.

\(^{13}\) James Laird Vallandigham, A Life of Clement L. Vallandigham, Turnbull Brothers, Baltimore, 1872, 333.
There were several major avenues of communication to the soldier voter. The regular civilian campaign material was designed in part for the army voters and at the same time special pamphlets and materials were aimed exclusively at the soldiers.

Heading the hierarchy of campaign materials were those which received national distribution and were only indirectly concerned with the campaign in Ohio. Both the Republicans and Democrats distributed campaign literature on a national scale and it was designed with such flexibility that it could be used in local and state elections. A good example of this type of propaganda was that distributed by the Loyal Publication Society which will be considered in detail later.

In addition to the pamphlets and books distributed from national headquarters each party in the state printed and distributed literature dealing exclusively with the campaign in Ohio. Speeches by leading politicians were printed and then mailed to the men in service. Special brochures were distributed at election time which purported to show the party's interest in the welfare of the soldier. Song books were distributed to the army. The words were political but the tunes were those which today are folk music and college songs. Almost all of these publications had printed notices in them requesting the civilian reader to forward his copy to one of our "brave soldiers."

The widest avenue of approach to the soldier voter was that prepared by the newspaper. Countless editorials were addressed to the men in service and hardly an edition came off the press without a letter from some soldier commenting on the present state of politics. The
newspapers also urged private individuals to write to the soldier and
give him "sound political advice." At election time party officials
were also urged by the papers to see that a sufficient supply of
ballots was sent to all Ohio volunteers wherever they might be.

As the campaign of 1863 warmed up in Ohio one of the most important
Union organizations working to capture the civilian and soldier vote
in all areas was the Loyal Publication Society. This organization,
with headquarters in New York City, printed and distributed a series
of pamphlets designed in part, "To counteract, as far as practicable,
the efforts now being made by the enemies of the Government and the
advocates of a disgraceful peace to circulate journals and documents
of a disloyal character." Such famous American names as Roosevelt,
Church, Gould, and McKaye appear in the list of sponsors of this society.

One of the early pamphlets distributed by this organization in
Ohio contained a letter addressed to a Union rally in Cincinnati by
Colonel Charles Anderson of the Ohio Volunteers. After telling of his
personal escape from San Antonio to Dayton and the Union cause,
Colonel Anderson went on to tell why no peace without victory could be
made with the Confederacy. He said that peace could not be made with
the South as that section was dominated and ruled by oligarchs, traitors,
and despots. Anderson went on to condemn vigorously the Knights of the
Golden Circle and point out that a Northwestern Confederacy would be
of little value if the rebels held New Orleans. 15 Although this open

14 Charles Anderson, Letter Addressed to the Opera House Meeting,
   Cincinnati, Loyal Publication Society, New York, 1863, frontispiece.
15 Ibid., 2.
letter was addressed to a civilian audience it was sent to the soldiers. Since it was written by an officer of rank it was expected to appeal to them. It did not deal specifically with soldiers' problems but it did discuss general war aims in which the soldiers were expected to be interested.

War aims were not always discussed by the Loyal Publication Society in prose. Poetry too was used to woo the soldier vote. The following poem entitled How the Soldier Talks by Private Miles O'Reilly is fairly typical of the patriotic poetry that flooded the papers and pamphlets during the war elections.

'Tis now too late to question
What brought the war about;
'Tis a thing of pride and passion,
And we mean to fight it out.
Let the "big wigs" use the pen,
Let them caucus, let them spout,
We are half a million weaponed men
And we mean to fight it out.

The Negro - free or slave -
We care no pin about,
But for the flag our fathers gave
We mean to fight it out.\(^{16}\)

Another Union propaganda pamphlet which was published for national distribution and was sent to Ohio soldiers was A Savoury Dish for Loyal Men printed for "those who are suffering under the rabid influence of disloyalty, or from the venomous bite of the Copperhead."\(^{17}\) This collection contained a letter from General Rosecrans thanking the Ohio

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^{17}\) A Savoury Dish for Loyal Men, Philadelphia, 1863, 1.
legislature for its resolution against "peace on any terms." Like other publications of this type the Savoury Dish requested the reader to pass the pamphlet on to another civilian or soldier.

In Ohio the Union party was represented by several groups which published campaign literature to be sent to the men in the army. The soldiers were sent the regular campaign tracts as well as special works dealing with the political problems of Ohio and the problems of the Ohio soldier. The "Bible" of the Union campaign in 1863 was a speech made by John Brough at Marietta, June 10, 1863. Brough was a life-long Democrat and was nominated by the Union party for Governor. It was expected that he would draw many loyal Democrats to the Union coalition who might otherwise have voted for Vallandigham. This speech, which Brough made to his neighbors and townsmen in Marietta, expressed his philosophy of the war and was published widely throughout the state. Thousands of extra copies were printed and distributed throughout the Ohio regiments. Next to the official party platform this address stands as the official policy statement of the Union party in 1863.

Generally speaking the salient points of Brough's talk can be summarized briefly. Brough said that he did not vote for Lincoln in 1860 but that he was supporting him without question in fighting the war. He also said that before the war he was willing to let the South keep slavery, believing that it was a strictly local problem. Brough told his audience "It has cast a blight and a mildew over their whole country, but has cast none here; nor do we desire that it should."

18 John Brough, Speech of John Brough, at Union Mass Meeting, Marietta, Ohio, June 10, 1863, Union State Central Committee, Columbus, 1863, 3.
Brough did appeal very strongly to the electorate not to refuse to support the war just because the Republicans were in power. He recognized the truth of the frequent Democratic charge that the war was going slowly but said that the Democrats would have the same problems if they were in power. Brough said that in 1864 he would support a Democrat for president if one could be found that could do a better job than Lincoln. In the meantime, he remarked, "What is the duty of every man to his country in this crisis? It is first, put an end to this rebellion, and then, when that is accomplished, if we have anything to settle with these men at home and in power, we will take hold of it." The future Union candidate for governor went on to say that he believed that two nations, the North and the South, could never live together in peace and that God himself had marked out the boundaries of the United States.

Unlike many later political speakers in Ohio, Brough did not make specific promises to the soldiers. He did not promise pensions, a bonus, or rewards of any kind other than the reward to be found in preserving the Union. Part of the Marietta speech does, however, contain statements designed to influence the soldier vote. Once when a heckler in the audience suggested an immediate peace along the lines of the Crittenden compromise, Brough replied:

Why do you desire peace? You tell me that you want to stop the shedding of blood. Let me tell you something I know in regard to this point. The men who are fighting our battles do not want you to make any dishonorable peace to

19 Ibid., 2.
save them. All that these gallant men ask of you is to stop sowing dissensions, stop giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and let them fight it out. They do not want any of your sympathy — it is all thrown away. There are not any of your bones in danger, and I am afraid there won’t be unless you are conscripted by and by. 20 

Brough also appealed to the people of Ohio not to fight their government and its soldiers while they were engaged in putting down the rebellion. Since this address seemed to sum up Brough’s political stand so well the Union newspapers reprinted it frequently and also advised the soldier voters to read it as an antidote to the vicious Copperhead slanders of the campaign. 

One other important Union campaign circular issued before the October election was an analysis of Vallandigham's record with appropriate comments. The general tone of the attack on Vallandigham can be seen in the charge that he had achieved his place in politics because of his "excessive vanity and audacity, his fanatical passions and morbid prejudices, his destitution of patriotism and traduction of the National Government." In addition to this, it was charged that Vallandigham had no "special intellectuality, moral worth...or social standing." 21 

Direct appeals to the soldier voter were made in this pamphlet. It was charged that Vallandigham had opposed Blair's resolution thanking the Union armies for their participation in the battles of Bull Run. He was also accused of helping defeat a bill in Congress

20 Ibid., 6.

21 The Peace Democracy alias Copperheads, Columbus, 1863, 2.
to increase the pay of the soldiers. This had happened at the beginning of the war when Vallandigham was a national representative from Ohio. He was also charged with voting against the one-hundred-dollar bounty for soldiers at that time. These charges about the bounty and pay increases were used repeatedly during the campaign and Vallandigham always replied that he had merely insisted that the soldiers be paid in gold rather than in depreciated paper currency. Thus he claimed to be the soldiers' friend and not the villain that his detractors made of him.

The Republicans also charged in this pamphlet that if Ohio elected Vallandigham then his running mate, George E. Pugh, who would become lieutenant governor, would call out the militia to escort him to Columbus from his exile in Canada. After this, the opposition said, Vallandigham and Pugh would complete their plot to get the sympathy of neighboring governors and rebel against the war and the national administration of President Lincoln. Vallandigham, it was alleged, had told Jefferson Davis that the North was ripe for invasion and that many Ohioans would be sympathetic. Such talk was designed to make the soldier feel that the enemy in the south was represented at home by Vallandigham and his Democratic Copperheads. It is interesting to note that many soldiers, writing to the newspapers at home, paraphrased this pamphlet in giving their reasons for voting the straight Union ticket.

The Democrats did not have an organization comparable to the Union party's Loyal Publication Society. They were able, however, to get
some of their campaign material distributed on a national basis by
the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, a New York
organization. One paper published by this organization for the Ohio
Democrats was a speech by "Mr. Pugh, to 50,000 voters who nominated
Vallandigham and resolved to elect him Governor of Ohio." As previously
noted Pugh was Vallandigham's running mate for the office of lieutenant
governor and had served as Vallandigham's lawyer at the time of his
trial and enforced exile. This pamphlet was widely distributed in the
army and played on the war-time complaints of the soldiers. Pugh
blamed the Abolitionists for the war and scored Lincoln for his
arbitrary assumption of war-time powers. He also blasted General
Burnside's famous order Number 38 which limited freedom of speech in
Ohio. Governor Tod was characterized by Pugh as an dishonest man who
"glories in licking the very dust at the feet of Presidential domi-

nation."22 The Democrat went on to point out the dire results that
could be expected if his party failed to win the fall election.

If we should fail at the election, in October next, a
majority of the people of Ohio will have sanctioned a
tyranny as monstrous as ever prevailed; and I counsel you,
in that event, to sell your property as soon as possible,
your goods and chattels, your land and tenements, and emigrate
with your families to some other country - no matter how
distant - in which you can enjoy, as citizens, the liberty
which you will no longer be able to enjoy here.23

22 George Pugh, Speech of Mr. Pugh, to 50,000 Voters Who Nominated
Vallandigham and Resolved to Elect Him Governor of Ohio, Society

23 Ibid., 5.
At the end of this speech was reprinted the Democratic platform for 1863 which was designed to appeal to the soldiers. It will be discussed in detail later.

Another pamphlet used to influence the military vote was a reprint of a speech delivered by S. S. Cox, Ohio member of Congress, before the Democratic Union Association, New York City, in January 1863. Cox's speech appealed to the worst sectional prejudices of the Ohio soldier and civilian. His address was mainly a tirade against what he called the dominance of New England Puritanism in national politics. Cox was careful to say that he did not hate New England, just "its arrogant, selfish, narrow and Puritan policy, now dominant in the Federal Government." New England fanaticism, he continued, had made compromise impossible and started the war. He also played upon the economic troubles of Ohio soldiers and their families by saying in part:

In New England, the merchants and manufacturers have accumulated fortunes with Aladdin-like rapidity. Their wages are high and contracts abundant, while the west, with the Mississippi sealed, is charged extortionate rates in the transportation of its produce and in the price of its purchases. Its people are robbed by tariff, and robbed on what they sell and buy.  

Within Ohio the Democrats were quick to realize that they must appeal directly to the soldier if they were to repudiate the charges leveled against them by the Union party. Consequently a special pamphlet was prepared exclusively for the "volunteers." It was given

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25 Ibid., 4.
wide distribution by the Democratic State Central Committee and was almost wholly concerned with soldier problems. This Address to the Soldiers of Ohio opens with an appeal to all Democrats to see that the pamphlet is distributed to all Ohio soldiers wherever they might be.

During and after the campaign the Democrats frequently charged that their papers and books were not distributed and often burned by Abolition army officers. In this connection they reprinted in the Address a letter from General Rosecrans stating his position on freedom of the press in the army. The section of the General's letter noted below probably expresses as clearly as possible the army attitude toward Democratic propaganda designed to snare the soldier vote.

General Rosecrans is quoted as writing that he believed that newspapers, pamphlets, and other publications should not be excluded from the army "on grounds of party politics." He continued to say:

But I do not belong to that sentimental class who weakly and timidly allow brawling license to stab true liberty. Hence, when any publication appears among us so licentious, lying or traitorous as to endanger the morality or be likely to impair the vigor of the army, I feel bound by reason, justice, and duty to my country, to use my authority to prevent its circulation. 26

After giving their Address what seemed to be the army blessing, the Democrats went on to point out to the Ohio soldiers that it was the Democrats who first suggested letting them vote. Next, the State Central Committee said that they realized that it was hard for the soldier away from home to make political decisions when deprived of the counsel of his friends, and without the interchange of sentiment

26 The Union and the Constitution, Address to the Soldiers of Ohio, Democratic State Central Committee, Columbus, 1863, 1.
found in public discussions. The Democrats also told the soldier that the Republican papers had misrepresented the Democrats greatly and that the party was, "as it ever has been, the consistent friend of the Constitution and the Union, and has never harbored a thought inimical to either, or to their gallant defenders." In the next breath war causes were discussed and the pamphlet declared that the war was the result of "misguided sectionalism, engendered by fanatical agitators North as well as South."  

In this pamphlet the Democrats tried to prove their loyalty to the Union by quotations from various earlier platforms. The state platform of August, 1861, was cited to show that the party had always been grateful to the Ohio soldiers, who, "at the call of their country, promptly went forth to do battle in defense of its Constitution and laws, and who, in many cases, have been compelled to fight under inexperienced officers." The July, 1862, platform was quoted to show that "the history of the Democracy is a record of unceasing and unvaried devotion to the union of the states...indignantly frowning upon every attempt...to enfeeble the sacred ties which link together the various parts." An economic note was struck in the next sentence that reminded the Democratic soldier that the party's tolerance of slavery was for his own good. In 1862 the platform had opposed emancipation as the free Negroes would come to Ohio, "to compete with and

27 Ibid., 5.
28 Ibid., 5.
29 Ibid., 6.
underwork the white laborers...we would deem it most unjust to our
gallant soldiers to see them compelled to free the Negroes of the
South, and thereby fill Ohio with a degraded population, to compete
with these same soldiers upon their return to the peaceful avocations
of life." 30

After thus surveying the general position of the Democratic party
and the war, The Address went on to defend the often maligned character
of candidate Vallandigham. Contrary to Republican charges, it was
stated, "Mr. Vallandigham is not a disunionist, an enemy of the soldiers,
nor a convicted traitor. On the contrary, he is now and has at all
times, through the whole period of his politicial career, in every
speech, and every act of his life, a firm, able, and consistent friend
and defender of the Union." 31 To show that this statement was true
a very flowery quotation was lifted from a speech delivered by
Vallandigham in the Congress of the United States on December 15, 1859.
He said in part:

   From the Arctic Ocean to the Isthmus of Darien; from
   the Atlantic to the Alleghenies; stretching far and wide
   over the vast basin of the Mississippi, scaling the Rocky
   Mountains, and lost at last in the blue waters of the Pacific,
   I behold, in holy and patriotic vision, one Union, one
   Constitution, one Destiny. But this grand and magnificent
   destiny can not be fulfilled by us, except as a united people. 32

This quotation was included to prove to the soldier that Republican
charges that Vallandigham wanted to divide the Union into four inde-
pendent sections were false.

30 Ibid., 6.
31 Ibid., 8.
32 Ibid., 9.
The Democrats next took up the charges that their candidate had been against various financial proposals designed to benefit the soldiers. In his defense it was said that Vallandigham had voted against certain payments because he wanted them paid in good solid gold rather than the unstable greenbacks. Other falsehoods like this were sometimes believed by the soldiers, the pamphlet stated, because "the interested misrepresentations of enemies, war contractors, and abolition disunionists, are the only reports in regard to Mr. Vallandigham that have obtained a free circulation in the Army." 33

This pamphlet closed with an appeal to the soldiers to stand for the Constitution and their constitutional rights. Vallandigham's trial and subsequent banishment were held unconstitutional. The last paragraph summed up this appeal to the soldiers in the following words:

If Mr. Vallandigham may be banished in defiance of the Constitution and the laws, then may another citizen be banished in like manner? And if this can be done, who is safe? You desire when you return to civil life to be secure in person and in property. Then stand by the Constitution and the Laws which guarantee that security. Vote the Democratic ticket, and when you return to your homes you will have the satisfaction of remembering that in this contest you took the right side." 34

Despite repeated Democratic denials, the Republicans kept charging that while in Congress Vallandigham had consistently voted against the soldiers. To counteract this further the Democrats gave wide circulation during the campaign to a letter which Vallandigham had written to Dr. McClwee in October, 1862. Vallandigham had written as follows:

33 Ibid., 11.
34 Ibid., 12.
In reply to yours of yesterday, I have to say that I supported all the measures in the last Congress looking to the giving of invalid pensions to all soldiers, 'wounded or incurring disability in the military service.' Upon a question like that, no just or humane man could hesitate for a moment. Every soldier who has performed service is entitled to the pay and bounty promised him by law, and all disabled in any way during service are entitled to pensions; and I have never, either directly by vote or indirectly by refusing to vote, withheld either, where the service had been rendered or the disability incurred; nor would I do so.\textsuperscript{35}

On the lighter side of this serious political conflict was a song book published by the Democrats and given wide circulation at political meetings and among the soldiers. Called The Vallandigham Song Book, this collection made use of many folk and popular melodies. One song expressing the sentiment of the party ran in part:

\begin{quote}
O, won't old Abe be furious,
And won't Burnside look blue,
When they find that we've elected
Vallandigham and Pugh.

O, brothers don't forget that time
When Burnside was our fate,
And laws were suspended,
By order thirty-eight.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

Some of the other songs contained bitter references to the Abolitionists and were Negro-baiting to the extreme. One song implied that Vallandigham's name was one, "which nigger-lovers quake to hear, and, shuddering, look if he is near."\textsuperscript{37} Another song told in words and music of the dire results that would come with emancipation. The


\textsuperscript{36} The Vallandigham Song Book, J. Walter and Co., Columbus, 1863, 5.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, 2.
Negroes all expected to be guests at "de U. S. Hotel" and live in luxury when they got their freedom and the Union won the war.

These songs may have been of some general help for the Democratic cause in the field and at home. It is doubtful, however, if they added much more than color to an otherwise very tragic election year. It is a safe guess to say that soldiers in the Union army did not generally spend their evenings singing, "We are coming from the east boys, we are coming from the west, shouting Vallandigham for Governor."

In addition to the pamphlets examined so far, both parties adopted formal platforms during the 1863 election. These platforms contained planks designed for soldier support and along with the other campaign literature were distributed widely to the army.

The Union party, or Union Republican, as this political potpourri called itself, began its 1863 platform by denouncing John C. Calhoun and blaming his doctrine of nullification for the war. The party then went on to pledge a continuation of the war with the resolution, "That the war must go on with utmost vigor, till...the old flag floats again securely and triumphantly over every state and territory of the Union."\(^{38}\)

The real net designed to trap the soldier's vote and perhaps induce a gentle tear as well was the flag-waving fourth plank which read:

Resolved, that immortal honor and gratitude is due to our brave and patriotic soldiers in the field, and everlasting shame and disgrace to any citizen or party who withholds it.

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\(^{38}\) The Ohio Platforms of the Republican and Democratic Parties, from the collection of The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, Columbus, no date or publisher given, page 19.
That sympathizing with the army and its hardships, and proud of its gallantry, the lovers of the Union will stand by it and will remember and support those who are disabled and the families of those who fall fighting for their country. 39

The Democratic platform devoted much more space to the soldier voter. After saying that they would not give up their right of free discussion these Copperheads went on to oppose the Emancipation Proclamation and the arbitrary arrest of their candidate for Governor. Section ten of the platform was aimed directly at the Ohio soldier vote. It read:

Resolved, that the soldiers composing our army merit the warmest thanks of the nation. Their country called and nobly did they respond. Living they shall know a nation's gratitude, wounded a nation's care; and dying, they shall live in our memories, and monuments shall be raised to teach posterity to honor the patriots and heroes who offered their lives at their country's altar. Their widows and orphans shall be adopted by the nation, to be watched over and cared for as objects worthy of a nation's guardianship. 40

In section twenty-two of the same platform the Democrats took issue with those who charged that the party was working against the Ohio volunteers. They said:

We denounce as libelers of the Democratic party and enemies of their country, the men who are engaged in representing the Democratic party as wanting in sympathy with our soldiers in the field. It is a base slander upon human nature to assert that Democrats who have hundreds of thousands of brothers and sons in the army, do not sympathize with them and it is an outrage upon the Democratic party, that has always stood by the country, to assert that it is not the friend of its gallant defenders. 41

39 Ibid., 19.
40 Ibid., 21.
41 Ibid., 22.
The War Democrats also held a state convention in 1863 and called upon all loyal Democrats to vote against Vallandigham. These War Democrats were generally considered to be members of the Union coalition during the war. They did little active campaigning as a party and preferred to work through the Union party which was nominally headed by John Brough, one of their comrades.

In their platform drawn up in September the War Democrats called upon the people and the soldiers to support the ideas of Jackson and vote against the nullification principles of Vallandigham. It was charged by this group that if Vallandigham were to be elected he would "call home the fleets, and give up all the vantage ground which our brave soldiers have won at the cost of so much blood and treasure."\(^2\)

The War Democrats also called upon all Douglas Democrats to preserve the Union. The platform asked, "Democrats who have sons, brothers and fathers, now fighting the battles of your country, who are standing guard in the silent hour of midnight over your houses and homes, and braving death in every form - we appeal to you, can you, will you cast your votes for a man holding the opinions and advocating the doctrines which Mr. Vallandigham does?"\(^3\)

Another one of the planks in this platform was also designed to catch the eye of the soldier voter. Section nine read, "Resolved, that the gratitude of the nation is due to the noble defenders of our flag,

\(^2\) Address to the Democrats of Ohio, State Convention of War Democrats, Columbus, 1863, 3.

\(^3\) Ibid., 4.
and while they fight the battles of the war in the field, we at home will give them the support and encouragement due to the soldiers of the Republic." The War Democrats ended their appeal by calling again to the people of Ohio to save the Union in the name of Jackson and Douglas. Jefferson was conspicuously absent.

It is difficult to assess just how much influence these three platforms had and how many votes they changed. People are usually more willing to believe the promises of the politicians during wartime and these platforms promised much. A great effort was made to get them publicized and to the soldiers in the field. This would indicate that the parties considered them of prime importance in the battle to win the soldier's ballot.

During the 1863 campaign pamphlets were also distributed which had been written by soldiers expressing their views on the state of the war and Ohio politics. Two such documents distributed in the state upheld the Union party and appealed to the people to support the armies and the government of the "Union party."

The Crisis and its Demands was written by Private Robert Scott, 76 Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry. It was sent to the soldier voters and also used at home to show that "our brave boys" supported the Union party. Private Scott's pamphlet does not deal with specific candidates but rather with the broader aspects of the war and war-time politics. The essay begins by noting that "the sword of treason has

\[\text{Ibid., 4.}\]
been drawn, and we must conquer or die."\(^{45}\)

Scott then went on to say that agriculture, industry, and geography all demanded that the United States remain a united country. Despite this, he continued, Southern leaders want to build a society of their own founded on human slavery in which "capital would rule and own labor, and men of capital would strive with each other to possess the bodies of their fellow beings."\(^{46}\)

Supposedly speaking as the voice of all privates in the Union Armies, Scott went on to say that the Union soldiers did not want to quit fighting. "From every battle-field of the war and from the grave of every fallen soldier comes this cry to us, 'Fight the rebellion, and keep on fighting it through years, centuries, ages, forever if need be, until it shall be suppressed.'"\(^{47}\)

A long discussion of slavery follows with Scott placing particular emphasis on the political power of the slave states in the federal government. The South is held to be opposed to free government everywhere in the United States because of the very nature of its own government. Private Scott concludes his pamphlet with a vigorous appeal that the war be continued despite discouraging reverses. He writes:

\(^{45}\) Robert Scott, *The Crisis and its Demands*, from the collection of pamphlets relating to the Civil War, The Ohio State Museum, Columbus, 1.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 8.
The formidable proportions and menacing power of the rebellion should furnish no ground for discouragement, and none for fear. Our cause is founded on truth and justice; and our trust is in the God who fills the heavens! Even now the light of victory shines brightly upon our path. The air is filled with the inspiration of future success; and it is written in letters of fire on the sky, that the armies of the Union will triumph!\textsuperscript{48}

Another series of articles utilizing sentiments from the battle-field for the Union party cause were published under the somewhat misleading title \textit{Address of the Ohio Soldiers in the Army of the Cumberland to the People of Ohio}. Rather than just one address this pamphlet, when distributed to the electorate, contained several soldier-written letters with the corresponding civilian replies. Several additional speeches, letters, and telegrams, all urging a more relentless prosecution of the war, were also included.

The first address in this collection is from Ohio soldiers who took part in the battle of Stone River and is dated Murfreesboro, Tenn., Feb., 12, 1863. The letter asks what has caused "this wild, shameless party strife at home," and "wherefore a foolish cry for a cessation of hostilities on our part, to give time to the traitors to strengthen their defenses and discipline their armies?"\textsuperscript{49} The soldiers of Stone River go on to point out that the Union can only be restored by complete military victory and that all parties at home must work for that day. The people of Ohio, say the soldiers, must

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{49} Address of the Ohio Soldiers in the Army of the Cumberland to the People of Ohio, 1863, 1, From The Ohio State Museum collection of pamphlets relating to the Civil War.
pronounce this a just rebellion, or admit that the administration is a
"weak, helpless Government, powerless to sustain itself, and to be
destroyed whenever conspirators enough can be allied for the purpose."\textsuperscript{50}

The soldiers next ask the people at home a question and give some
rather pointed political advice:

Are you with us? or will you now desert us, sell your
national birthright for a mess of pottage, and, for success
in local politics, barter away your country...If treason
must run riot in the North, keep it there - insult not your
soldiers by sending to them the vile emanations of the
traitors who are riding into office, place and power, over
the ruins of the government...Insult us not by letters,
speeches and papers, which tell us we are engaged as hirings
in an unholy Abolition war, which make mob idols of the hour
of those whose hypocritical demagoguery takes shape in
cowardly, overt treason - whose constant vocation is denun-
ciation of their Government and its armed defenders.\textsuperscript{51}

In another section some of the front line hardships are described
to impress on the voters at home the rigors of fighting a war. The
soldiers declare:

You know not now, the hardships and sufferings of your
soldiers in their chill tents, their shelterless bivouacs,
their long, weary marches, and their battle thinned ranks.
If there be any honesty and purity in human motives, it must
be found among your long-enduring soldiers. Hear us, and
for your country's sake, if not for ours, stop your wild
political strifes, unite for the common cause, and never
think or speak of peace and compromise until the now empty
terms mean: the Republic as it was, peacefully if it may be,
but forcibly at all events. It is said war and force can not
restore the Union! What can?\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 2.
This communication was answered by a reply from the people of the Toledo area at a mass meeting held in that city on March 2, 1863. The soldiers at Murfreesboro were told that the people of Ohio were grateful "for the words of wise and patriotic counsel you send back to us from the battle fields." The men in Tennessee were also reminded that:

Soldiers! The work before you is a noble one. It is nothing less than to make that 'good old flag' which was born on the battlefields of the Revolution and baptized in the blood of our fathers, again respected on every foot of soil which has been honored by its protecting care. That, soldiers, is the work of our age....There is no power on earth that can, and none in heaven that will, prevent our triumph. 54

This reply concluded with a general pledge to God, to the country, and to each other, to maintain the Union "now and forever, one and inseparable." Then followed the printed names of twenty-four hundred people who had signed this reply when it had been circulated in petition form.

This same booklet also contained an account of a subsequent Union rally in Toledo on March 18. At that time Chaplain George Taylor of the Michigan Eighth Volunteers addressed this Ohio audience. His speech is interesting in that it shows the part often played by chaplains and other officers on furlough in arousing Union sentiment. Chaplain Taylor said that he could not understand the disunion at

53 Ibid., 3.
54 Ibid., 3.
home which was quite opposed to the feeling at the front. He said of
the soldiers, "You talk to them about Generals; one man is in favor of
McClellan, another for Joe Hooker, and another for somebody else; but
they are all in favor of going to the front."\(^{55}\)

At the close of Chaplain Taylor's remarks several telegrams and
resolutions were read to the assembly. A resolution from the Ohio
38th Volunteer Infantry presented at this time said in part, "Resolved,
that while Red, White, and Blue are known colors; while nature produces
fiber and human industry clothes, we will keep the old flag flying
though traitors be so numerous and ranks so thinned by death that a
cripple has to hold the staff and a Corporal's guard do the fighting."\(^{56}\)
A telegram was also read into the minutes of this meeting from the
111th Ohio Regiment. Part of it was later published in this propaganda
pamphlet and stated, "Resolved, that if we are defeated in the contest,
it will be not so much by the power and hostility of the enemy in the
front, as by the treachery of pretended friends at home." The 111th
Regiment then asked those at home to "suppress treason in your midst
and overcome the cowardly assassins who would stab us in the back."\(^{57}\)

The theme of all these communications between the battlefields and
the voters of Ohio can best be summed up in the four-line stanza
included in this collection and written by W. A. C. Converse:

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 15.
From twice ten thousand graves there comes
The earnest voice we hear to-night,
And twice ten-thousand mourning homes
Echo the words, 'Unite! Unite!' 58

There is little doubt that these pamphlets, by both soldiers and
civilians, played a very important part in the election of 1863. It
is impossible to tell how many votes each tract may have influenced
but it is most certainly true that this type of propaganda was in no
small way responsible for the Union Republican victory in Ohio in this
campaign.

As the tempo of the election year increased in the summer and
early fall the soldiers received more and more attention in the public
press and forum. There is ample evidence that many of the men in
service were genuinely and sincerely interested in the coming October
election. Political meetings were held in the camps and often soldiers
were involved in political riots and fights.

One such fight occurred at Camp Chase, Columbus, in June, long
before the fall election. A group of Madison County Democrats were
returning home from a political rally and were stopped by convalescent
soldiers on guard duty near the camp. Some of the Democrats, perhaps
as full of alcohol as politics, were singing and shouting for
Vallandigham and Pugh. The guards stopped them and made them take an
oath of loyalty and an oath not to vote for Vallandigham or Pugh. One
of the celebrating Copperheads said he would rather die than take the
oath against the party's leaders. The Crisis reported, however, that

58 Ibid., 16.
he promptly changed his mind when a soldier ordered a rope to carry out his choice by hanging him "as high as Haman." 59 Another time a near riot occurred at Camp Chase when representatives of both parties went in before the election to deliver ballots.

As it became clear that the war was not going to end in the near future the soldiers in camp renewed their demands for better pay, better pensions for the disabled, and better care for their dependents. In October, 1863, the Cleveland Leader reprinted from the Akron Beacon a document signed by one-hundred and twenty-five members of the 115th Ohio Volunteers. They said that upon enlisting they had been promised that their families would be cared for. These promises had not been kept, they complained, and furthermore they charged, "Scarcely were we beyond our district, ere you shamelessly neglected those you promised to protect, deserted your principles, and went over to support a man whose record is blackened by an attempt to decrease the small pay of the soldiers." 60

The Democrats tried to discredit such charges as best they could. As has been noted, one of their favorite replies was that Vallandigham had always wanted the soldiers to receive gold instead of the paper money against which he voted. The Marietta Republican, a radically Democratic paper, dug into history and remembered that:

59 The Crisis, June 17, 1863.

60 Leader, October 3, 1863.
When Abraham Lincoln was in Congress in 1846 he voted against giving the soldiers who had served in the Mexican War one hundred and sixty acres of land.

But Clement L. Vallandigham on the 28th day of February, 1862, voted in Congress to give each soldier engaged in putting down the rebellion one hundred and sixty acres of land in addition to his one hundred dollars bounty.61

This Marietta paper also played on class differences by reminding the soldiers that the rich could always buy their way out of the army while "the poor man is seized, put in irons, and sent to the army."62

The Crisis also liked to stir up discontent in the ranks by reminding the enlisted men how well paid the officers were. The Crisis explained to the soldiers that many of their officers were against Vallandigham because he wanted to even out this discrepancy to favor the soldiers. The Crisis also charged that the Republicans were giving the public lands away to those who stayed at home. Vallandigham opposed this, the paper said, and wanted the lands to be saved and distributed to the soldiers at the end of the war.63

In the months prior to the election the newspapers began to devote more and more space to letters from soldiers. Usually they printed only those letters which tended to follow the editorial policy of the paper, an old and honorable ruse in American journalism.

One particularly bitter letter printed just before the election was from "Union" to his Copperhead cousin at home. "Union" was writing from

61 Republican, October 1, 1863.
62 Ibid.
63 The Crisis, September 16, 1863.
the Army of the Cumberland and spared none of his cousin's feelings:

As I heard last night that you were one of Vallandigham's cowardly vagabonds that would rather see the cursed rag of the Southern Confederacy float over the United States than the glorious stars and stripes...I am writing to you Mr. Cousin. Two brothers fighting for the Union, the best government ever established, and, you, like another dog, stay at home, and bark at them; not courage enough to take up arms against them, but work with your traitorous tongue, which is prolonging this war and keeping us from our homes.

They say all bad men will go to hell; but I think there will be a special part of it fitted out for just such men as you are....This is my last letter; for I will not write to a devil dressed in sheep's clothing. 64

Another particularly vitriolic aspect of this campaign of letters and editorials was the race prejudice appealed to by the many Copperhead papers. This was designed to woo the soldier away from the Abolitionists by playing on his fears of competition from the freed Negro. The Marietta Republican classed all pro-Negro literature as "black vomit." This is the same paper that charged many loyal patriots in the butchering business with buying up disabled cavalry horses and reselling them to the army as "good beef." 65

The Crisis also exploited race hatred in its columns as a means of winning the soldier vote. In a pre-election article the paper told of picnics given by General Saxton's wife for Negroes in the south. Good government food was given to the freed slaves while Union prisoners in the south were left starving by the Confederate government. Union troops were also employed wastefully to guard these Negro picnics,

64 Daily Ohio State Journal, October 3, 1863.
65 Republican, September 3, 1863.
said the paper. If it is to be made a crime to discourage enlistments, continued *The Crisis*, then "Lincoln should be prosecuted for activity like this."66 This article ends with a call to all soldiers to rebuke the government for this activity in the coming election.

As the campaign continued the papers began to try to attract the soldier vote with statements from high ranking army officers. As a general rule most of these appeals were from Republican officers. The Democratic officers either kept a respectful silence or openly supported the Union war government.

Writing just before the election to the *Daily Ohio State Journal*, Chaplain Randall Ross, 15th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, told of the sentiments of the men with whom he came in contact. After telling of the toils of combat the Chaplain noted that many men had received letters from home asking them to vote for Vallandigham. Ross reported realistically:

I have seen soldiers receive letters from Copperhead candidates, very smoothly asking them for their votes. I have seen those letters answered with a 'no, no, never, never,' accompanied with a piece of rope, and 'we'll settle with you when we get home.' I have seen soldiers receive papers from home advocating the election of the Copperhead ticket in Ohio; and I have seen them torn in strips and stamped in the dust, with a, 'damn all such papers, and damn all such editors. If we were at home we'd clean them out...'

Are the citizens of Ohio, then, prepared to turn their backs upon their soldiers in the field, and risk themselves in the hands of the enemies of the soldiers and themselves?67

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66 *The Crisis*, July 1, 1863.

The *Journal* also published another letter a few days earlier which typifies the use made of general officers in the campaign. General Thomas Meagher had been invited to Ohio by the Union State Central Committee. Unable to come, he addressed an open letter to the New York City papers on the effect of a Vallandigham victory in Ohio. This letter was reprinted by the *Journal* and quotes the General as writing:

ELECTING MR. VALLANDIGHAM, OHIO ABANDONS, AND, SO FAR AS ONE STATE CAN DO, WEAKENS AND PROSTRATES IT. ELECTING MR. BROUGH, OHIO STANDS TRUE TO THE SPLENDID SOLDIERS WHO, FROM THE ROCKS OF GETTYSBURG, HURLED BACK A BOLD INVASION.... ELECTING MR. VALLANDIGHAM, OHIO TURNS HER BACK ON THESE BRAVE MEN, DISOWNS THEIR SERVICES, DISCARDS THE VICTORIES THEY HAVE WON, SENDS THEM A VOTE OF REPUDIATION INSTEAD OF A VOTE OF THANKS, AND IN PLACE OF CHEERING THEM ON IN THEIR NEW ENTERPRISES, CASTS A CLOUD BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR FAME, THEIR PROUD MEMORIES, THEIR EXALTED PURPOSES AND HOPES, MAKING THEM FEEL THEY HAVE Poured OUT THEIR BLOOD IN THE DEFEAT OF ARMED TRAITORS IN THEIR FRONT BUT TO ENCOUNTER THE FAITHFULNESS AND BASE INGRATITUDE, OR AT LEAST THE EQUIVOCAL RECOGNITION AND IMPOVERISHED PRAISE, OF THE MUTINUOUS PARTY IN THE REAR.

In the immediate months before the campaign the Democratic papers were flooded with letters from soldiers saying that they were not able to get Democratic papers. *The Crisis* and *The Statesman* even complained about civilian Republican postmasters refusing to deliver their papers so it is not unnatural that this complaint should arise in the army. The soldiers said that Democratic newspapers were not allowed to reach them and that they were flooded with Abolition publications. The letters complaining about this censorship usually contained some

comment on the current political situation. Writing to The Statesman, "A Soldier" offered some advice to the president by saying:

If old Abe Lincoln wants to keep Democrats in his army as soldiers, who are or were three-fourths when they came out, why don't his commanders permit Democratic newspapers to circulate in the army as well as Republican papers, those being sheets that are constantly thrown into camps day by day? I tell you, there is something rotten with old Abe in this respect.69

Earlier in the campaign The Crisis printed a letter from a soldier in the Seminary Hospital, Columbus. This serviceman wanted to subscribe to The Crisis and said he was "getting tired of reading the lies and Abolition slang of the Ohio State Journal."70 He went on to say that he could not pay for The Crisis in advance because he had been in the army a year and as yet had not received a single month's pay. One-half of the men in the hospital, he said, were for Vallandigham, and if they could read The Crisis, three-fourths of them would support the Democratic candidate. This letter shows how army inefficiency and delay often helped influence the soldiers' political opinions. In commenting on this letter The Crisis went on to charge that the camps were flooded with the New York Tribune by Abolitionist army officers.

Another soldier wrote to complain that at his camp only Abolition papers were available. "Consequently," he said, "many of our soldiers are prejudiced against Vallandigham and the Democratic party." This serviceman in the 81st Ohio Volunteers went on to say that more Democratic papers sent to the army would help away some of the "milk

69 Daily Ohio Statesman, October 3, 1863.
70 The Crisis, August 5, 1863.
and water" Democrats. 71

Under the provisions made by the legislature for soldier voting
the elections in camp and at the front were held several days before
or after the regular election date in Ohio. The date obviously was
dependent on local conditions. With the delay involved in sending
the results back for counting, the final statistics were not assembled
until late in October. By that time it was clear what had happened.
Vallandigham and the Copperheads had suffered a smashing defeat
throughout the state. Both soldiers and civilians repudiated him
and what was widely believed to be his traitorous program.

The soldier vote in 1863 comprised about nine per cent of the
total vote or 43,755 ballots. Of this number 2,288 votes were cast
for Vallandigham and 41,467 for Brough and the Union ticket. 72 In the
home vote Vallandigham got 185,464 votes to Brough's 247,216. Thus it
is evident that the ratio of Brough and Union supporters was much
higher in the army than at home. 73 It is quite natural that the
soldiers should vote more solidly for the Union cause but the election
was hardly over when the charge of fraud and corruption was leveled
at the army vote by the leading Democratic newspapers.

Several weeks before the election the Democratic papers had started
to print letters from soldiers which said that a fair election in the
army was impossible as it would be conducted by Abolitionist officers.

71 Ibid., July 1, 1863.
72 J. H. Benton, Voting in the Field, Privately Printed, Boston, 1915,
78. Also see official election returns, The Crisis, November 4, 1863.
73 The Crisis, November 4, 1863.
After the election the tempo of such reports increased and led the Democratic papers to oppose soldier voting in 1864 on the basis of these charges.

A few days before the election the Cincinnati Commercial, a Republican paper, reported that "Democratic missionaries" sent to the Army of the Cumberland had been able to get no farther than Nashville. These men were being sent by the Democratic State Central Committee to make sure that the soldiers in this famous army would have ample Democratic ballots and propaganda. The super-Democratic Statesman took up the Commercial's "regrets" about the missionaries' lack of progress. The Statesman explained that the Democrats got no farther than Nashville because "the military authorities did not permit them to go farther, as we are informed. It [the army] does not want 'Democratic missionaries' to reach Ohio regiments anywhere." 74

Immediately after the election The Crisis also printed a letter from "Seneca", an Ohio soldier stationed in Tennessee. Seneca made the frequently repeated charge that soldiers from all the non-Ohio regiments in the vicinity were invited in to vote on election day. He also wrote that the election was unfair and should not be counted because there were many Democratic soldiers who would have voted for Vallandigham, "but they were afraid." Seneca concluded by saying:

I want it fairly understood that the election in the army has been no fair one, and should not be counted. There are many Democratic soldiers and they would have voted for

74 The Daily Ohio Statesman, October 9, 1863.
Vallandigham. I want the state of Ohio to know that there are thousands of her brave boys now doing all they can for their country and would be glad to hear of the election of Vallandigham.75

A few days later The Statesman reprinted a story from the Louisville Democrat, October 14. The news item read in full:

Yesterday being the day of the election of Governor of Ohio, the vote of the Ohio soldiers stationed in this city was taken. There were two polls opened, one at Exchange Barracks and the other at Camp Joe Holt. We understand that at the Exchange Barracks 310 votes were cast, only two of which were for Vallandigham. The two that voted for Vallandigham were immediately arrested and placed under guard.76

The Statesman's only comment was that "such an act of tyranny should make the cheek of every Ohio citizen mantle with shame and indignation."77

One more such story will serve to show the low level of political morality in the army as painted by the Democratic newspapers. On December 23, The Crisis printed a letter from "a Private" of the 107th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The soldier wrote that in his camp most of the Democratic soldiers were sent out of camp on election day. After this had been done, only twenty-four men could be found who would vote for Brough, so "they let the Negro cook vote." This soldier said that the men were told by their commanding officer that if Vallandigham was elected there would be civil war in Ohio.78

75 The Crisis, October 14, 1863.
76 The Statesman, October 17, 1863.
77 Ibid.
78 The Crisis, December 23, 1863.
That some of these charges were true there can be no doubt. Their continued persistence in the public press and the variety of the charges made indicates that they were not trumped up. Since the victors in politics seldom investigate the validity of their victory no official inquiry was held to verify or prove false these charges of fraud. Even if the soldier vote had not been counted at all, however, Brough and the Union Republican ticket would still have been the majority choices. These charges of corruption in the soldier vote, on the other hand, did add to the domestic bitterness of the war and made the Democrats less willing to support soldier voting in the elections of 1864.
CHAPTER IV

THE ELECTION OF 1864

After the bitter campaign of 1863 the elections of 1864 were somewhat of an anti-climax to most Ohioans. To many of them the great decision had been made the year before when Vallandigham and the Copperheads had been defeated. Then it had seemed as though the whole Civil War might explode on their doorsteps. By 1864 the air had cleared considerably. Victory seemed to be closer and public confidence in the national administration increased rapidly with the improvement in the military situation.

While these favorable signs tended to cheer the Union party and its supporters they also did much to increase their bitterness toward the Peace Democrats and the Copperheads. Thus in some respects the campaigns of 1864 generated more heat, if not as much light, as the campaign of the previous year. Name calling reached a new high and any political foul was considered fair if it embarrassed the enemy.

The campaign of 1864 differed in one respect from that of 1863. In 1863 emphasis had been placed largely on local issues. Ohio problems and Ohio personalities figured largely in the effort to win the soldier vote. In 1864, with the exception of the Congressional elections, emphasis was placed mainly on national problems and national issues. The appeals to the soldier and civilian voter thus contained more references to national leaders, national problems, and national policies.
Despite this major difference the general techniques used in 1864 very closely resembled those used in the previous year. Pamphlets, letters, and newspapers were all employed to win the soldiers' vote. The same charges of fraud appeared and the politicians played heavily on the soldiers' problems. Complaints about pay, pensions, and care of the disabled were voiced by the leading Democratic orators and newspapers. A new group, made up of veterans, was also beginning to appear even before the war ended and their demands became important in the campaign. The problem of many thousands of prisoners of war also entered the party press and provided ammunition for name calling. In hundreds of other ways the politicians played on the war-wearyed nerves of the soldiers and civilians to try to influence their votes.

As the election of 1864 was a national affair it is easy to understand why a good bit of the printed material distributed to the soldiers was of national origin. Propaganda for the presidential election could be given to servicemen from New York, Pennsylvania, or Ohio with little regard for local politics. The Loyal Publication Society which had contributed much literature to the campaign of 1863 in Ohio was again active and sent materials into the state to be used in campaigning in the army and at home.

In addition to the Loyal Publication Society a new and seemingly more effective group appeared to spread the Union Republican gospel to the soldiers in every northern state. This organization, known as the Union Congressional Committee, was composed of prominent men in the legislative branch of the federal government and often made use of
official sources for the information it printed. There is no evidence
to indicate that government money was used directly in financing these
pamphlets but their quasi-official character undoubtedly involved
government time and research. In some instances these pamphlets were
"ghosted" and distributed without an author's name. In other cases
newspaper articles favorable to the Union cause were reprinted by this
group and given wide distribution.

One of the most important booklets distributed by the Union
Congressional Committee among the Ohio soldiers was A Few Plain Words
with the Rank and File of the Union Army. Designed to get the soldier
vote for Abraham Lincoln, this essay appealed to the soldiers as
"thundering bayonets" and reminded them of their civic duty to vote
despite the fact that they were in uniform.

A Few Plain Words pointed out that the election coming on November
8, was more important to the soldiers than the civilians as it would
determine "whether this war for the Union in which you are battling
is a delusion and a mockery - whether the priceless blood shed shall
go for no more than water spilt upon the ground - whether you shall
lay down your arms and sue rebels to make on their terms the peace
you thought your valor had nearly won."

Following this appeal selected quotations from both party plat-
forms were presented to show the nobleness of the Unionists and the
perfidy of the Democrats. In large bold type "Unconditional Surrender"

79 A Few Plain Words with the Rank and File of the Union Armies,
Union Congressional Committee, 1864, 1.
was lifted from the Union platform while "Four Years of Failure to
Restore the Union by the Experiment of War" and "Immediate Effort be
made for a Cessation of Hostilities" were selected from the Democratic
platform.

Next the Copperheads were described as "muddering for the army
vote" and the Committee said of them, "They know that their doctrines
are a stench in your nostrils. They will try to hide this by pretense
and palaver." A Few Plain Words also charged that the nomination of
McClellan as the presidential candidate of the Democrats was just a
ruse de guerre. It was charged, and with some degree of truth, that
McClellan's selection was an expedient to get votes and that to the
Copperheads his name was just "a name to conjure by, a tub thrown to
the whale." McClellan's military reputation was also attacked. He
was said to have employed a "feeble and fruitless style of warfare"
which did not attract the men who had fought under Grant, Rosencrans,
or Sherman. This pamphlet closed with the following prediction on
the soldier vote:

The voice of the Army will on the 8th of November,
proclaim in thunder-tonges that the war must be prosecuted
till the rebellion is quelled and the Union restored. And
as the rebels chose to secede from the administration of
Abraham Lincoln, you are going to see to it that they
swallow that particular pill by succumbing to the adminis-
tration of Abraham Lincoln.

80 Ibid., 3.
81 Ibid., 4.
82 Ibid., 6.
General McClellan was attacked viciously in another leaflet published by the Union Congressional Committee and distributed to the army. Entitled McClellan's Military Career Reviewed and Exposed, this article was written by the Washington editor of the New York Times and was first published in that newspaper. The author, William Swinton, said that McClellan's presidential prospects would brighten in proportion to the number of disasters suffered in the field by the Union armies. Swinton wrote, "...he will only be certain of being president of our country when it is certain we have no country at all." It was also charged that McClellan dreamed of Napoleonic glory in the White House and that "while his soldiers were being struck down by thousands with the fevers of the Chukahoming, the fever of the White House struck him."

Whatever might be said about McClellan's military ability it was rather difficult to know and attack his political beliefs. His life in the army had made him inconspicuous politically and isolated him from the principles of the party whose standard bearer he was. His running mate for vice-president, George H. Pendleton, on the other hand made a good target for all of the old Copperhead charges. It was also a little easier to attack the civilian Pendleton than the soldier McClellan when addressing the soldier audience. This attack on Pendleton was made by another Union Congressional Committee pamphlet

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84 Ibid., 5.
dealing almost exclusively with him. Excerpts from the records of
Congress were quoted at length to prove Pendleton's disloyalty and it
was argued that he had consented to division of the country, opposed
the raising of military forces to suppress the rebellion, and opposed
the punishment of armed traitors. The soldiers were also told that
Pendleton had voted against various proposals looking to a land bounty
for them out of lands confiscated in the Confederacy. Thus Pendleton
was made a scapegoat for any of the soldiers' grievances that might be
charged to him.

One other pamphlet distributed to the armies by the Union
Congressional Committee contained an expose of the Sons of Liberty or
Knights of the Golden Circle. These secret organizations were charged
with being the power behind the Democratic throne and the soldiers
were treated to a full resume of the society's history in attempting
a northwestern confederacy. The men in the army were told that these
orders believed in absolute state sovereignty and a law of races "of
Caucasian supremacy and of African servitude." This paper concluded
by warning the soldiers that all loyal patriots were against the
election of McClellan:

  Every patriot is against it. Every soldier in the
field is against it. The blood of the thousands slain by
rebel hands cries from the ground against it, and we
fervently believe, the Great Ruler of the Universe is
against it. 85

85 George H. Pendleton, the Copperhead Candidate for Vice-President,

86 The Copperhead Conspiracy in the North-West, An Expose of the
Treasonable Order of the "Sons of Liberty." 4.
The Loyal Publication Society was also active in 1864 and among its publications was *The Echo of the Army* which quoted many soldiers on the state of contemporary politics. The pamphlet contained a series of pro-Union statements made by the officers and men of various Ohio regiments and was designed to prove the solidarity of the soldier vote.

This pamphlet opened with some advice from the regiments of General Rosecran's army to the people at home. The men were quoted as "enthusiastically" saying, "If some miserable demagogues among you must vomit forth their treason, let them keep it at home. We want none of their vile letters, speeches, or papers here." The 116th Ohio Volunteers at Romney, Virginia, also wrote:

> We regard the efforts of the Copperheads of Ohio to demoralize the army by writing treasonable letters to the soldiers in the field, by urging them to desert their flag, by misrepresenting the Administration and the objects of the war, and by all the means conceived only by traitors, as unworthy American citizens, and more dangerous and heinous than the efforts of armed rebels who meet us in deadly conflict on the battlefield.

The rest of this tract played on the theme that the traitors at home were helping the Confederacy "by keeping up a fire in our rear." Violence was proposed to stop this activity by a group of soldiers in the Fifteenth Corps who said that if the traitors at home went too far they would willingly shoot them down. This threat was followed by

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87 *The Echo from the Army*, The Loyal Publication Society, New York, 1864, 2.

88 Ibid., 3.
a concluding paragraph written by Colonei Leggett, 78th Ohio Volunteers. Leggett said that he joined the military service to restore the Union and "for that object I have fought and bled, and for that I am still willing to fight and bleed, and no blunder or mistake upon the part of the President can justify me in withdrawing from the army, while the enemies of the Government are in arms against it." 89

While the national organization of the Union party was distributing these pamphlets to all Union soldiers, the party organization in Ohio was busy preparing propaganda which would specialize in Ohio issues and personalities. These booklets with their highly specialized appeal were sent with all possible haste to the Ohio volunteers wherever they might be.

One of the outstanding Union campaign tracts of the year was a speech delivered at Circleville by John Brough in September. This address served the same purpose as his Marietta speech had in 1863. It was reprinted and distributed to the soldiers in pamphlet form and given much publicity by the party's newspapers.

The occasion for the address was a picnic given at Circleville for the soldiers of Pickaway County who were at home on furlough. After calling the soldiers "the very cream of the population" and "the bone and sinew of the state", Brough went on to discuss the coming fall election with his audience. He said the election was a contest which would determine whether the Union would be restored or whether "we shall

89 Ibid., 4.
submit to terms of conciliation and degradation, that will end in the establishment of the arrogant rebel authority." 90 Brough went on to remind the soldiers of their duty to vote and remarked, "You have the right to choose your rulers, and to change them when you see proper, but you have no right to allow your government to be overturned." 91

The Governor, who in 1863 had said he would support a better man than Lincoln if one could be found, continued his support of the President and said of the national government, "Criticism might be made, but this is not the time for it; that time will come by and by, when criticism may be indulged in without injury to our country's cause." 92 Brough next examined the Chicago platform for his audience and said of it, "They have taken Christ's sermon on the mount for their platform and put the devil on it for their candidate." 93 The Democrats, he charged, "have placed before the people a platform full of hypocrisy and inconsistency that is a base attempt to deceive the people of this country, and they have set a military man upon it with epaulets upon his shoulders, under the impression that the people would run after him regardless of the platform." 94 The Chicago platform had offered

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91 Ibid., 2.

92 Ibid., 3.

93 Ibid., 3.

94 Ibid., 4.
sympathy to the Union soldiers but this was mere sham, Brough charged. He said that no man at the Chicago convention had ever rejoiced over a Union victory. The soldiers and civilians of Ohio must remember this and get to work getting out the vote in the next few weeks. Brough advised his audience that every man "must consider that it is his duty to enlighten one man who sits in darkness, and convince one man, at least, of the error of his way." 95

Another Ohio pamphlet distributed in this campaign was one which included a speech given before the National Union Association, Cincinnati, in October by Charles D. Drake. Drake told his audience that slavery had been the chief cause of the rebellion and that the Peace Democrats, for obvious reasons, were worse than the rebels. He also said that there was no such thing as a War Democrat. That, said Drake, was a contradiction of terms. His address included a fervent appeal to the soldier voter which read:

The heroism of the field, when the bullet deals death to the traitors in the south, will be nobly answered from the field where the ballot smites down their brother traitors in the north. The day of judgment for both is at hand, and it will be the day of their country's redemption at once from the power of a heartless Southern aristocracy, and from the influence of a corrupt Northern Democracy. 96

As they had done the year before the newspapers tried to win the soldier's vote in almost every conceivable way. The news stories, the

95 Ibid., 6.

96 Charles D. Drake, Speech Delivered before the National Union Association, Cincinnati, 1864, 6. From The Ohio State Museum collection of pamphlets relating to the Civil War in Ohio.
letters, and the editorials, all contained a large percentage of material designed to influence the military voters. Personal attacks were made on the candidates with no mercy shown. At the same time the party newspapers tried to prove by "looking at the record" that their party was the one for the soldiers.

The attacks on Lincoln made by the Democratic press in 1864 show the wide variety of these personal abuses. The soldiers were told to vote for "Abe" if they wanted another draft to grab the few fathers and brothers that were left at home. It was also charged by the Dayton Empire that the President had "removed nearly all the officers of West Point because they expressed themselves in favor of McClellan."97 Lincoln was often described in this paper as "that smutty joker" and everything from high prices to military despotism was blamed on him. The Statesman even charged that the only soldiers who would support Lincoln were the "shieks, hangers-on, dead beats, and hospital bumsers."98

One of the most often repeated stories about the President was one which was designed to show Lincoln's disrespect for "our dead heroes." It was alleged that after Lincoln visited the Union graves at Antietam he called on a friend to sing Picayune Butler "as if to throw off from his mind the effect of the scene he had witnessed."99 Picayune Butler was variously described by the Democratic press as being a

97 Dayton Empire, October 1, 1864.
98 The Statesman, October 3, 1864.
99 Ibid., October 12, 1864.
Negro comic song, a dirty song, or a smutty song. This story was repeated often in the party press and seemed to be addressed to the soldier voters.

The Republican press played this game with equal skill and never missed an opportunity to deride McClellan and his military career. He was accused of being weak, ineffectual, and timid. It was also charged that if McClellan lost the fall election he would still move into the White House with the aid of military force. The Philadelphia Press, in an article reprinted in the Cleveland Leader, said that if McClellan lost the November election he would "place himself at the head of a million men and by virtue of military power, declare himself President of the United States."100 The Republican press also attacked the Democrats' Chicago platform and blamed McClellan for some of its planks for which he was not responsible. The Democratic press was able to counter these claims very well and the Dayton Empire wrote, "Let every Union man remember that George B. McClellan has announced that, with him, 'the Union is the one condition of peace.'"101 George H. Pendleton was also quoted by the Dayton paper as having said, "The Union is the guarantee of the peace, the power, and the prosperity of this people."102 This statement was about as general as possible but the Empire seemed to think it proved the loyalty of Pendleton beyond doubt.

100 Cleveland Leader, September 29, 1864.
101 Dayton Empire, November 4, 1864.
102 Ibid.
Since the campaign of 1864 included a Congressional election as well as the Presidential election, the papers were quick to build up their favorite Congressional candidate as a "friend of the soldier." A good example of this type of electioneering was a long editorial which appeared in The Statesman urging every soldier whose residence was in his district to vote for the reelection of S. S. Cox. The Statesman said of Cox:

Our brave and gallant soldiers will never forget how faithfully Samuel S. Cox has looked after their interests at Washington and elsewhere. How he esteemed it a privilege to devote much time to them wherever he could do them a favor. In Congress, every measure tending to benefit or relieve them, has had his efficient and earnest support. The hours he has spent in visiting the hospitals, and ministering to the sick and wounded heroes of our glorious army, were not spent in vain, as the living and the kindred and friends of the dead will gladly testify. All these things are gratefully appreciated. The vote of the soldiers from this Congressional District, on next Tuesday, will make it manifest.103

The question of slavery continued to be used by the politicians in talking politics to the soldier. The Dayton Empire printed a letter just before the Congressional election in October which was supposed to indicate the white soldier's fear of the Negro. Writing to his father, "A Soldier" of the 57th Ohio Volunteers said that he had no objection to the Negro being free but "I don't propose to do it at the expense of white men, filling the country with woe, impoverishing and desolating our fair land, for the sake of accomplishing that purpose; and I thank God that many of my fellow soldiers are of the

103 The Statesman, October 7, 1864.
same opinion. In addition to the fear of economic competition this paper also used racial hatred as a means of discrediting the Abolitionist war government. The Empire told of Negro troops being used to guard white recruits in Cincinnati and reported that "the downcast look of the white men, and the leer and swagger of the Negro soldiers brought tears to the eyes of many a witness of this culmination of the Lincoln dynasty."105

The Democratic papers also used the question of soldiers' pay in trying to win votes for McClellan and the party's other candidates. The Democrats charged that the stay-at-homes were making huge fortunes on the war while the Abolitionist government refused to pay the soldier a decent wage. The Dayton Empire struck a responsive chord with the soldiers when it reported in May, 1864, that "It will be seen from the Congressional proceeding, that the Republicans refused to advance the soldiers' pay in proportion to the high prices of the necessities of life, though urged to do so by Messrs. Dawson, Cox, and other leading Democrats."106 It was not enough for these papers just to cry shame! shame! shame! at the pay scale. They also reported cases of soldiers not receiving their pay for periods as long as a year or more. The Statesman reported just before the presidential election that papers all over the country were receiving letters from servicemen complaining that they had not received the money due them for many months.

104 Dayton Empire, October 7, 1864.
105 Ibid., October 4, 1864.
106 Ibid., May 4, 1864.
It then reprinted an article from the Louisville Journal which had been sent in by an observing soldier in Sherman's army. The soldier was quoted as writing about the dead bodies he had seen on the battlefield in the following manner:

Many a stout heart I saw stilled and many an eye glazed in death, through the hills and defiles of Georgia, that beat its last beat for home, and turned with unutterable anguish toward the North, anxious to behold the cloudless sky that covered those the hero loved, whose destitute condition caused the last pang in that bleeding heart before the icy hand of death claimed it forever.107

The soldier went on to inquire if something could be done so that the men in the army could face death knowing that they had received their pay which would take care of the loved ones at home.

In 1864 there was also a new class of soldiers to be considered in making the appeal for military votes. Many veterans were at home by this time and the influence they were to exert later in the Grand Army of the Republic was just beginning to be felt. In 1864 appeals were addressed to this group on a large scale for the first time. Among these veterans were many disabled soldiers whose sympathy the major parties hoped to win in order to prove their "friendship to the soldier." There were also many Union soldiers in Confederate prison camps by this time and the Democrats tried to get the votes of the families of these men by charging that Lincoln could get these prisoners repatriated if he were not afraid of them politically.

The Democratic papers also told the soldiers that even before the

107 The Statesman, October 17, 1864.
war was over they were being discriminated against in getting jobs. To prove this point the Dayton Empire told of a New York veteran who was refused a job at a government carpenter shop because he said he would vote for McClellan. The Empire observed that "this shows conclusively...that Republicans have no regard for soldiers unless they can coax or constrain them to vote the party ticket....Their wounds, and scars, and mangled limbs fail to entitle them to respect or consideration....Will soldiers read and make note of this?"  

In another article of this type the same paper reported that a lame soldier at a Dayton political rally had given a cheer for McClellan. He was told to "shut his mouth or it would be broken." The article continued by saying, "It is the right of an American citizen to vote as he pleases. This right the Republicans do not accord to the soldiers. He must vote to please Republicans, or be told to shut his mouth, on pain of having it broken." The Empire also noted that the War Department had discharged from the Invalid Corps all the men who had lost a leg or an arm. The paper editorialized: "That is the way the Administration treats those who have become disabled in its defense. As soon as they are helpless, it turns them out to die." This is a good example of the tug on the heart strings without a full explanation of the facts.

108 Dayton Empire, October 14, 1864.
109 Ibid., September 28, 1864.
110 Ibid., October 8, 1864.
Both the Republicans and the Democrats used the prisoner-of-war situation to stir up hatred of each other. The Statesman ran a long series of articles reiterating the charge that Lincoln could bring home many of the Union soldiers in southern military prisons if he were not afraid that the released men would vote for McClellan. The paper said that "Mr. Lincoln's apathy is cruel, heartless, inhuman, barbarous, brutal, and it is part and parcel of that management of the war for which he claims a re-election and reckons confidently upon the support of the armies."

While the Democrats were charging that Lincoln would not bring home McClellan-voting soldiers the Republicans were condemning the Confederacy for releasing only those soldiers who said they would vote for McClellan. The Journal said that at Richmond northern military prisoners were being released if they said they would go home and vote the Democratic ticket. If, however, the soldiers were inclined toward President Lincoln they were sent further south to rot in the "vile rebel prisons."

As the election of 1864 came in two sections, the papers were full of campaign material from late summer, through the October Congressional and state elections, until the November Presidential election. As the Congressional elections approached the papers of both parties kept reminding the families of soldiers to be sure and send copies of the

111 The Statesman, October 14, 1864.
112 The Daily Ohio State Journal, October 28, 1864.
official ballots to the men in service. This was the common practice as ballots might be distributed by party or private agencies and entered official channels only after they had been cast. The Republicans seemed to be confident that their tickets would get to the army but the Democratic papers printed constant reminders for the public not to let "our boys" down by depriving them of their right to vote for the Democratic party and its "hero-statesman", George B. McClellan. The Statesman told its readers to "see that every soldier who will be at all likely to vote with us, is supplied with McClellan tickets."\(^{113}\) The Dayton Empire also offered some pointed advice on how the Democratic ballots could be sent to the army and get past the Abolitionist mail officers. The paper advised:

Send them Democratic tickets. There is no way, now, by which more valuable assistance can be rendered to the Democratic cause, than by supplying Democratic soldiers in the field with Democratic tickets. We therefore propose to all who have friends or relatives in the army, that they make it their business, during the coming week, to attend to this imperative duty without fail. We would also recommend that the tickets thus sent, be enclosed nicely in envelopes, and carefully directed in a lady's hand. This will increase the chances of their running the black republican blockade, and reaching the persons to whom they are addressed. Call at this office for the tickets, and the sooner the better.\(^{114}\)

Another interesting aspect of this campaign was the charge made by some Republicans that the Democrats planned to buy the soldier's vote. They were going to do this, so the charges went, by treating

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\(^{113}\) Ibid., October 17, 1864.

\(^{114}\) The Dayton Empire, October 14, 1864.
the soldier with a glass of grog or a mug of beer. The Democrats were quick to refute this charge and made it look as though the Republicans were the real political adulterers. The Empire replied to this slander by saying in part:

Who ever before dared to intimate that the vote of a soldier could be bought for a glass of grog, or a mug of beer? No one. It was left to the mean and malignant Journal to utter this atrocious calumny. Democrats will be proud to receive soldier's votes, and they will receive many of them. But if any soldier chooses to vote otherwise, he will be allowed to do so, and will not be abused or slandered because he chooses to exercise his birthright as an American citizen. He will not be told 'shut his mouth or have it broken' as Republicans have told him. He will not be told that he has sold his vote for a mug of beer, or a glass of grog. All dirty work like this is left to the Republicans.\footnote{115}

In the days immediately preceding the presidential election the papers of both parties tried to show that the soldiers were with them. No scientific sampling was used but straw ballot results were frequently published. The Statesman reported on October 4, that a vote on the presidency had been taken a few days before "on a car loaded with soldiers whose time had expired, between Cincinnati and Columbus." The results showed 108 for McClellan while only four were reported as voting for Lincoln.\footnote{116} In direct contrast to these figures the Journal reported the results of a trial heat at the General Hospital in Gallipolis. At that time 116 votes were polled for Lincoln and McClellan got not a single vote. The Journal said that the

\footnote{115} Ibid., October 22, 1864.
\footnote{116} The Statesman, October 4, 1864.
supply of Democratic ballots on hand for November 8 would go unused.\footnote{117}

This same type of "band wagon" electioneering is demonstrated by a story in the \textit{Cleveland Leader}. It was reported that a Mr. Jerome who managed a soldiers' rest-camp had kept a tally of the political preferences of the soldiers stopping at his hotel. The \textit{Leader} explained the results of this straw vote as follows:

\begin{quote}
After a week or more it became so monotonous that Mr. Jerome gave it up in disgust. It was like playing at 'sparking' alone. Soldiers were so unanimous for Lincoln that Jerome might as well have been chewing gum, so far as profit is concerned, as taking votes. 'How Mac does run in the Army! Like a crab, backwards.'\footnote{118}
\end{quote}

Despite these straw votes the actual elections passed and neither party was able to come through on its pre-election predictions. The Union-Republicans did not win the overwhelming victory they expected and at the same time the Democrats were not crushed as completely as some of the political soothsayers expected.

The soldier vote showed an increase in the number of soldiers voting over 1863. In 1864 the military vote was about nine per cent in the Congressional election in October and in November the soldier vote equaled about twelve per cent of the total in the Presidential election. In the October election the soldier vote was 1,599 for the Democratic party and 32,751 for the Union-Republicans. These figures are for the candidates for Secretary of State and give a fair indication

\footnote{117} The \textit{Daily Ohio State Journal}, October 27, 1864.\
\footnote{118} \textit{Cleveland Leader}, October 3, 1864.
of the way the soldiers lined up on the party vote.119

In the presidential election of 1864 more soldiers voted in Ohio than in any other Civil War election in the state. In this election the Democrats also got their greatest number of votes for any of the war-time elections in which the soldiers voted. General McClellan got 9,757 soldier votes but President Lincoln overwhelmed the General by receiving 111,146 of the military votes.120 The soldier vote, however, did not influence the Presidential election in Ohio. It served only to give the President and his administration a more overwhelming majority in the state. Lincoln's civilian vote was 224,006 while McClellan received 195,811 ballots.121

It was a different story in the Congressional elections where, for the only time during the war, the soldiers' votes did make an appreciable difference in the election returns. In every Congressional district the soldier vote, counted separately, showed a Union-Republican majority. In three districts the soldier vote was pro-Union enough to counteract the Democratic majority at home and send a Republican to Congress. Thus in the 10th, 13th, and 16th Congressional districts the Democrats lost seats to their Republican rivals because of the soldier vote.122

119 The Crisis, November 2, 1864.
120 Josiah H. Benton, op. cit., 78, 79.
121 The Crisis, December 11, 1864.
122 Josiah H. Benton, op. cit., 78, 79; also The Crisis, November 2, 1864.
The discussion of soldier voting did not end with these last Civil War elections. The charges of fraud that first appeared in 1863 were repeated. At the same time articles were printed which showed the effect of these elections on the Confederacy and its soldiers. In this connection a story called *Election Day in Sherman's Army* appeared in the *Journal*. The paper told of how a Captain of the 99th Ohio Volunteer Infantry had returned to Ohio with the election returns of that organization. The Captain, unidentified by the *Journal*, said that the rebels knew which day the election was to be held in the 99th and subsequently "demonstrated heavily along our lines." The Captain also said that the Confederates wanted to keep the Ohioans so busy that an election would be impossible. He told that the election was held despite the rebel activity and reported that:

> The election judges and clerks moved along our lines in an ambulance. It was a day of constant marching and fighting. At every halt of a few minutes' duration balloting progressed vigorously, votes being more than once sandwiched in between volleys of musketry scarcely fifteen minutes apart.

> The rebels at every charge advanced with vociferous cheers for McClellan to which our boys reacted with cheers for Lincoln and solid arguments from their Enfields. It produced a marked effect upon our soldiers. What wonder that they voted almost unanimously for the Union ticket? How could they fight rebels one moment, hazarding life and limb for the dear old government, and the next undo all that they were doing by voting for Treason's cowardly allies at the rear? 123

Not all of the soldier elections were held with such a display of unanimity. Quite a contest developed over the alleged fraudulent

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123 *Daily Ohio State Journal*, October 24, 1864. The election for president was held before the election at home so that the returns might be counted early.
balloting at Camp Chase. This was of particular importance to the Democratic papers of Columbus since S. S. Cox was a candidate for reelection to Congress from the Columbus area. The Democratic papers said that the balloting at Camp Chase was going peacefully and Cox had a three to one majority "when the ballot-boxes were closed and the election stopped" without explanation. The Democrats charged that this was done because Cox was leading, which was against the wishes of the Abolitionist officers. The Statesman called this an intolerable outrage and pointed out that "the First Ohio Cavalry showed their appreciation of this yesterday when, in going through the city, they shouted for Cox."\textsuperscript{124}

The Dayton Empire also got into this post-election argument and defended the Democrats' record in supporting the soldiers and the war. In spite of this, the paper said, the Republicans cheated on election day whenever they could. After the presidential election the paper wrote, "In the army...many men at the peril of their lives, were constrained to vote as their officers dictated. The uniformed masses were made to believe that the Democracy was leagued in dark and infernal conspiracy, not only to subvert the Government, but to massacre the poor innocent Black Republicans in their beds."\textsuperscript{125}

The federal government had realized from experience with soldier voting in almost all of the Union states that such charges would be made.

\textsuperscript{124} The Statesman, October 13, 1864.

\textsuperscript{125} Dayton Empire, November 14, 1864.
Consequently, on October 8, a month before the presidential election, an order had been issued by the War Department prohibiting "political speeches, harangues, or canvassing among the troops." The order had further provided for the dismissal and court-martial of any one interfering with the elections or destroying ballots. This directive proved of little value in the Ohio regiments as can be seen from the charges examined above. That such an order was necessary, on the other hand, there can be little doubt. The fact that no official examination was ever made by the victors in Ohio indicates that there was a very sound basis for many of the charges made after the election.

In conclusion it can be said that while soldier voting did not alter the general election results to any great degree it did have a marked effect on war-time morale. The consistent Union majorities in the army vote indicated that the soldiers were in favor of fighting the war to its bitter end. Their support of the war government also indicated that they were fairly well satisfied with their leadership and direction. The type of appeal made for the soldier vote also indicates that the question of war or peace was seldom put to the soldiers directly. Instead the opposition preferred to magnify the petty war-time annoyances, hoping by this means to win the soldier's favor. To deprive the soldiers of the right to vote would have been an injustice incompatible with democracy. To give them the right to vote in war-time was a tribute to the strength of that democracy.

126 The Daily Ohio State Journal, October 8, 1864.
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