THOUGH much has been written about the forces which contributed to the adoption of the federal Constitution of 1787,¹ the possible influence of the military experiences of the Revolutionary War has been relatively neglected. One of the purposes of the writers of the Constitution was "to provide for the common defence." The Federalist treats military issues at some length. If provision for military defense of the United States was an important matter to the writers of the Constitution, it should also have seemed important to the former officers of the Revolutionary army, who remembered the severe trials of the war.

Certain assumptions about the probable attitudes of the Revolutionary officers towards the Constitution immediately suggest themselves. It would not be surprising to discover that the Revolutionary officers, remembering how the weakness of the central government had contributed to their trials, were among the advocates of a stronger central government through the Constitution. It seems likely, too, that officers who had witnessed the numerous failures of the militia so often deplored by George Washington might have favored the Constitution as a means of substituting a stronger standing army for reliance on the militia. This article will attempt to test such assumptions with respect to the Pennsylvania veterans of the Revolutionary officer corps. It will examine the part they took in the ratification struggle in Pennsylvania, the possibility that the issue of a standing army

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versus the militia system affected their judgments, and the possibility that other factors, such as economics, religion, and geography, influenced the ex-officers.

In attempting to approach these issues I have limited myself to studying men who held the rank of major or above. This method offers a manageable number of subjects and concentrates on the more prominent Pennsylvania officers. In analyzing these men I have divided them into three general classifications: Continental Army officers, militia officers who became Federalists, and militia officers who became Antifederalists.2

One of the most serious questions to be answered in the establishment of a new federal government was whether a standing army should be formed or the militia of the various states should continue to be virtually the only protection which the country had against foreign invasion or Indian attack. This issue was one upon which the ex-military officer was likely to focus his war experiences, to enable him to reach a decision.

Article One, Section Eight of the United States Constitution states:

The Congress shall have Power To ... declare War ... , raise and support Armies ... , make rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces: To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress.3

Article Two, Section Two says:

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of

2 Those officers who served in both the Continental Army and in militia units will be considered as Continental Army officers for the purposes of this discussion. In all cases they spent more time in the national service than in active militia service.

3 First published in Pennsylvania in the Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser, September 19, 1787.
These two sections of the Constitution provide for a national standing army with the President of the United States as Commander in Chief. As it was likely that George Washington would be the first President, the officers who had served under him during the Revolution would seem likely to have given strong support to these sections of the proposed Constitution. Under the Articles of Confederation it was virtually impossible to raise a standing army or even to appoint a commander in chief, since unless nine states agreed, Congress was powerless. When Arthur St. Clair was president of Congress he wrote to the governor of Connecticut bemoaning this fact:

We have appointed an assembly, and invested it with the sole and exclusive power of Peace and War, and the management of all national concerns. And during the course of, almost, a whole year, it has not been capable, except for a few days, for want of a sufficient number of Members to attend to these matters. Since the first Monday in November last to this time there has been a Representation of nine States, only Thirty Days—and ten States, only three days.

The issue of a standing army raised a question in Pennsylvania, and in the rest of the United States, upon which Federalists and Antifederalists could not agree. To the Federalists a standing army was a necessary part of the powers of the government-to-be. And the ratification struggle proved, as we might expect, that this issue found the ex-Continental Army officers among the Federalists. During the Revolution these officers had seen militia troops refuse to serve outside the borders of their own states, panic due to inadequate training, or leave when their enlistments were over—even if they left the remainder of the army in an untenable position.

Soon after the battle of Long Island, General George Wash-

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1Ibid.
3Arthur St. Clair to Samuel Huntington, August 13, 1787, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP), Gratz Collection.
Washington wrote to the Continental Congress saying that the defeat had
disspirited to [sic] great a proportion of our troops and filled their minds with apprehension and dispair. The militia ... are dismayed, intractable and impatient. ... Great numbers of them have gone off; in some instances, almost by whole regiments. ... I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops.

Washington had declared that American liberty might be lost
if their defence is left to any but a permanent standing army. 7

The Federalists believed that a standing, permanent army was necessary. They held that the United States needed one for purposes of internal and external defense. James Wilson, although not an officer during the Revolution, 8 expressed the issue very clearly when he said in the Pennsylvania Constitutional ratifying convention:

Ought Congress be deprived of power to prepare for the defense and safety of our country? Ought they to be restrained from arming until they divulge the motive which induced them to arm? I believe the power of raising and keeping up an army in time of peace is essential to every government. No government can secure its citizens against dangers, internal and external, without possessing it. ...
When we consider the situation of the United States, we must be satisfied that it will be necessary to keep up some troops for the protection of the western frontiers

3 James Wilson served in the Continental Congress throughout the war years and was a strong supporter of the Continental Army, although he held a commission as a brigadier general in the Pennsylvania militia. Because of his support of the Continental Army he was attacked in Philadelphia on October 4, 1779, by an ill-disciplined mob of militia soldiers. This incident is generally called the "Battle of Fort Wilson." With Wilson were Colonel Stephen Chambers, Colonel Mark Bird, Lt. Col. Daniel Clymer, and Major General Thomas Mifflin, among others. They were besieged in Wilson's house. All of these men later became Federalists. Charles P. Smith, James Wilson, Founding Father, 1742-1789 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), pp. 133-136.
and to secure our interest in the internal navigation of that country."

In what is probably the greatest and most important work in political science written in the United States, *The Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay devoted eight essays to the issue of a standing army and the inadequacy of the militia system. Their most succinct argument was presented by John Jay when he wrote:

>[The United States government] can apply the resources and power of the whole to the defense of any particular part, and that more easily and expeditiously than State governments or separate confederacies can possibly do, for want of concert and unity of system. It can place the militia under one plan of discipline, and, by putting their officers in a proper line of subordination to the Chief Magistrate, will, in a manner, consolidate them into one corps, and thereby render them more efficient than if divided into thirteen . . . independent bodies."

In contrast, the military sections of the Constitution were abhorrent to the Antifederalists and were vigorously repudiated by them. They believed that a standing army was inimical to the freedom and liberty of the people of the United States. The militia system was capable of dealing with any emergency which could possibly arise to threaten the freedom of the country, while securing the country from tyranny by affording a civilian army. An impassioned plea to this effect was published on September 23, 1787, shortly after the Constitution was first published in Pennsylvania:

Had we a standing army when the British invaded our peaceful shores? Was it a standing army that gained the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, and took the ill-fated Burgoyne? Is not a well regulated militia sufficient for every purpose of internal defense? And which of you,
my fellow citizens, is afraid of any invasion from foreign powers that our brave militia would not be able imme-
diately to repel?\(^2\)

On December 13, 1787, the Constitution was ratified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The vote in the ratifying con-
vention was 46 for ratification, 23 opposed. The Constitution was adopted, but the Antifederalists still did not give up in their fight to oppose a standing army. On December 18, they published their "Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of the State of Pennsylvania to their Constituents." In this address they gave a prominent place to four objections to Article One, Section Eight, and Article Two. Section Two of the recently adopted Federal Constitution:

Standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty. They ought not to be kept up. . . . Congress shall not have authority to call or march any of the militia out of their own State, without the consent of such State. . . . A standing army in the hands of a government placed so independent of the people, may be made a fatal instru-
tment to overturn the public liberties. . . . An ambitious man who may have the army at his devotion, may step into the throne, and seize upon absolute power. The absolute, unqualified command that Congress have over the militia may be made instrumental to the destruc-
tion of all liberty, both public and private: whether of a personal, civil, or religious nature.\(^3\)

Although they had lost the fight over ratification, the Pennsylvania Antifederalists did not give up their fight to retain an independent militia system and ban a standing army. In September 1788 a large group of them met in Harrisburg to decide upon a slate of candidates for the coming state and congressional elections. They also proposed amendments to the Constitution. Among these amendments were:

That no standing army of regular troops shall be raised or kept up in time of peace, without the consent of two-

\(^2\) *Pennsylvania Packet*, September 23, 1787. Other Antifederalist tracts opposing the creation of a standing army and extolling the virtues of the militia system appeared in *ibid.*, October 4, 1787, and in the *Independent Gazetteer or Chronicle of Freedom*, December 19, 1787, among others.

\(^3\) *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 18, 1787.
thirds of both Houses in Congress. That each state respectively shall have power to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia thereof. . . . That the militia shall not be subject to martial law, but when in actual service in time of war . . . nor shall the militia of any state be continued in actual service longer than two months under any call of Congress, without the consent of the legislature of such state.14

Thus one of the prime issues of contention between the Federalists and Antifederalists was the issue of a standing army, to be controlled by the national government, as opposed to the state-controlled militia system which was then current. The Antifederalists did not give up their opposition to a standing army even after the Constitution had been adopted.

The ex-officers of Pennsylvania played their part in this controversy. As it developed, the ex-militia officers generally favored the militia system, unless they had served nationally during the Revolution. On the other hand, service outside the state seemingly demonstrated the inadequacies of the militia system through travel with the Continental Army and contact with the militia of other states; those militia officers who had served outside Pennsylvania proved more likely to be Federalists than those who had not. The ex-Continental Army officers generally became firm supporters of a standing, national army.

The ex-Continental Army officers were well organized through their membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. This organization was founded in 1783, ostensibly to continue and strengthen the ties of friendship which had been developed during the Revolution among the Continental Army officers.15 But one of the main purposes of the organization in the eyes of many of its founders was to create an hereditary officer corps.16 Many of the officers had a desire to continue in the military establishment and wanted to create an army on the European model: on the European pat-

14 Independent Gazetteer, September 15, 1788. These amendments were signed by 33 Antifederalists, of whom 9 were ex-high ranking officers of the militia.
tern they wanted, and demanded, one-half pay for life and the establishment of a military caste system based upon an hereditary officer corps. The Confederation offered none of these things for them. The officers who had founded the Society of the Cincinnati, therefore wanted to see the Articles of Confederation changed, and welcomed the Constitution with its standing army.

Pennsylvanians were prominent among the ex-Revolutionary officers who took advantage of the opportunities presented when the Constitution opened the way to a new standing army. Brigadier General Richard Butler became a major general in the United States Army in 1789 and was second in command to a fellow Pennsylvanian, Arthur St. Clair, in the Northwest Territory. Lieutenant Colonel Josiah Harmar became General in Chief of the army until 1792, when he retired and was succeeded by Major General Anthony Wayne. All of these men were Pennsylvanians, members of the Society of the Cincinnati, and wished to maintain the military connection.

Some of the ex-Continental officers, notably two Pennsylvanians, Lewis Nicola and Anthony Wayne, wanted a more authoritarian central government than was established by the Constitution. As early as May, 1782, Nicola was advocating the creation of a monarchy with George Washington as king. Anthony Wayne seems to have had a similar idea soon after the Constitution was adopted. He wrote: "Our illustrious friend General Washington will be her first 'president' (or by whatever name the world may please to call him). I wish he had a Son." Yet short of a more authoritarian government, they accepted the Constitution and were ardent Federalists.

The ex-army officers were well represented in the Pennsylvania ratifying convention. Of the 69 members, 17 had been high-ranking officers in the Continental Army or the militia during the Revolution. Three of these were Antifederalists, the remainder were Federalists. Nicholas Lutz, Antifederalist leader of Berks

17 Ibid., p. 261.
20 Anthony Wayne to the Marquis de Lafayette, July 4, 1788, HSP, Wayne Papers, XIX, 68.
County, had been a lieutenant colonel in the state militia. The Federalist delegation was led by such men as Colonel Thomas McKean of Philadelphia, Major General Anthony Wayne of Chester County, Colonel Stephen Chambers of Lancaster County, and Colonel Timothy Pickering of Luzerne County. These men were among the leaders of their respective parties. Their importance, along with the importance of such men as the following, was very great in Pennsylvania politics: Major General Edward Hand, Federalist of Lancaster County and presidential elector in 1789; Major General Thomas Mifflin, first governor of Pennsylvania and a Federalist; Major General Arthur St. Clair, Westmoreland County Federalist and president of Congress in 1787; Brigadier General Samuel Meredith, Federalist and first Treasurer of the United States; Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Maclay, Antifederalist of Northumberland County and member of the United States House of Representatives; Major General James Potter, Northumberland County Antifederalist; and Colonel Timothy Matlack, Philadelphia Antifederalist. The ex-officers from Pennsylvania who were Federalists were generally a more influential and prominent group than were their Antifederalist counterparts. The Antifederalist officers seem to have had influence only within their respective counties, while many of the Federalists had statewide, if not national, prominence.

In attempting to discover whether other factors, besides military service, influenced these officers, I have compiled and analyzed data concerning the branches of service, positions on the Constitution, ages, occupations, membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, religions, and counties of residence of as many of the 590 officers of Pennsylvania who held the rank of major or above, as possible. Sixty of these officers either died or moved from Pennsylvania before the United States Constitution was written. I was able to discover the political views of only 99 of the remaining men. Of the original 590 officers, 131 served in the Continental Army during the Revolution and 459 in the militia.

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21 Pennsylvania Packet, November 27, 1787, and December 13, 1787.
22 Compiled from the Pennsylvania Archives, 5th Series, volumes 2-8; 6th Series, volumes 1 and 2; and Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army . . . (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914).
23 Clarence S. Peterson, ed., Known Military Dead During the American Revolutionary War, 1775-1783 (Baltimore, 1959) and other sources.
There were 3½ times as many militia officers because the militia usually served for only short periods of time. Their enlistments were never of more than six months' duration, and the same officers rarely served more than one enlistment. Continental Army officers were commissioned for the duration of the war and there was a much smaller turnover in personnel.

Of the 99 officers whose political opinions are known to me, 44 served in the Continental Army and 55 in the state militia. Of the 60 officers who had died by 1787, 24 were Continentals and 36 militia officers. My results are therefore based upon a knowledge of 41 per cent of all the Continental Army officers and 13 per cent of the militia officers. This result is 19 per cent of the total number of officers. Therefore, while it is possible to reach a fairly definite conclusion about the Continentals, only tentative conclusions can be reached concerning the militia officers.

The results of a branch of service—politics survey are extremely revealing. Of the 44 Continentals whose political opinions are recorded, all were Federalists. The militia officers were divided: 23 of them were Federalists, 32 were Antifederalists. It appears that this division was based at least in part upon the type of service seen by these militia officers. Of the 23 Federalist militia officers, 13 are known to have served outside of the state of Pennsylvania, either in Canada, New York, or in the southern campaigns. Only four of them are known not to have served outside the state.

An examination of the Antifederalist militia officers tells us a different story. Only one of them is known to have served outside Pennsylvania's borders, while 24 are known not to have served outside the state. These facts lead us to the tentative conclusion that the militia officer who served outside the state became a Federalist more readily than one who served only within the state. This may well have been true because, having served outside Pennsylvania, a militia officer, like the Continental Army officers, saw the meaning of national unity and national defense, and realized the need for these things in the United States.

The Society of the Cincinnati plays an interesting role in this analysis. Of the 44 Pennsylvania Continental Army officers who were Federalists, 32 were members of the society. There were 16 militia officers who were eligible for membership in the society, having had three years of service during the Revolution. Yet only
three of them chose to join. All three were Federalists. Eight Antifederalists were eligible for membership, but not one of them chose to join the society. It would seem, therefore, that membership in the Society of the Cincinnati is one way of obtaining an indication as to whether or not an ex-officer became a Federalist or an Antifederalist. This is not surprising, as the society's major goal was the preservation of the officer class. The Constitution, with the standing army which it authorized, seemed to re-establish an officer class. The members of the Society of the Cincinnati would, therefore, support the adoption of the Constitution.

Several historians, notably Charles Warren, have made an age distinction between Federalists and Antifederalists. Using a select group of ten Antifederalists and nine Federalists, Warren found that Antifederalists were much older than Federalists. Jackson Turner Main rejects this view and makes the statement that the Federalists were younger than their opponents by an average of about two years, which is not a significant age difference. My own investigation shows that the Pennsylvania Antifederalist officers averaged seven years older than their Federalist opponents. My sampling might or might not be representative of the age of the Antifederalists, as the ages of only 15 out of 32 are known. In any case, I do not believe that this age difference is a particularly notable distinction. The four oldest officers were Colonel Jacob Morgan (71 in 1787), Lieutenant Colonel James Read (71), Major General John Armstrong (70), and Colonel Lewis Nicola (70). Two of these men were Antifederalists, two Federalists. It is, therefore, not likely that age was much of a factor in determining whether or not one of the ex-officers became a Federalist.

Whether a man was native or foreign born did not make any difference when he took a position on the adoption of the Constitution, at least not in Pennsylvania. Thirteen Federalists and four Antifederalists were not born in America, about 15 per cent of each group. There is no significance in these figures, although

26 Jackson T. Main, *The Antifederalists, passim.*
27 The 15 Antifederalists whose ages are known averaged 53 years of age in 1787, while 55 Federalists averaged 46 years; 24 Continentals averaged 43 years of age; 18 militia Federalists, 48 years of age.
it is interesting to note that 11 of the 17 were born in Ireland, and 14 of the 17 in the British Isles.

An analysis of the religions of the 99 officers reveals that this factor seems to have played a very small role in determining a man's politics. The religions of 29 of the Federalists and 9 of the Antifederalists are known. These results are somewhat fragmentary but are instructive because they reveal no difference between Federalists and Antifederalists. There were fewer Quakers in the Antifederalist ranks, and more Calvinists and Catholics in the Federalist ranks. The Quakers in this survey were "Free Quakers." They were barred from the regular Quaker meetings because of their military service and organized their own churches, or meetings. These results do not reveal anything significant to us, since the Antifederalist results are so scanty. A wider sampling of both would probably reveal little difference between the two sides.

Several historians, notably Charles Beard and Jackson Turner Main, have attributed economic motives to the writers and supporters of the Constitution. I have therefore investigated the civilian occupations of the 99 officers in order to determine whether or not there was any division along occupational lines in this group. This is not a survey of the wealth of these individuals, but of their occupations.

Jackson Turner Main analyzed the occupations of the 69 members of the Pennsylvania ratifying convention and came to the conclusion that 54 per cent of the Federalists but only 22 per cent of the Antifederalists were in the wealthy or educated classes. Thirteen per cent of the Federalists were farmers, compared with 48 per cent of the Antifederalists. This data would seem to be significant, except for the fact that my results, on the same type of survey and using Main's criteria, for the officer group reveal an entirely different picture. I found that some 84 per cent of the Federalists and 83 per cent of the Antifederalists belonged to the wealthy or educated classes, while 11 per cent of the Federalists and 11 per cent of the Antifederalists were farmers. There is no significant difference of any kind.

29 It is of interest to note that at least two leading Federalists were debtors in 1787. Anthony Wayne was sued for debt and asked Pennsylvania, and then Georgia, to appoint him to Congress where he would enjoy
One significant occupational difference does come to light, however. Twelve per cent of the Federalists were professional military officers, while none of the Antifederalists were. It is also noteworthy that six of the seven professional officers were members of the Society of the Cincinnati and ex-Continental Army officers. This is a striking contrast and one which seems to emphasize the importance of the role played by the military in the adoption of the Constitution.

So far we have seen that, except for the professional soldiers, there was little difference in the social status or ages of the Federalist and Antifederalist officers from the state of Pennsylvania. The only difference between them seems to have been in their branches of military service, but this conclusion has not yet been conclusively proven. The next group of figures is extremely revealing, as this table reveals that military service was an important criterion in determining the political position of these men in 1787.

John Bach McMaster and Frederick Stone, and Orin G. Libby have made case studies of the geographical distribution of the vote on the Constitution in Pennsylvania. The people of the late 1780's did the same, and saw a definite correlation between residence and politics. Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Lancaster, York, Northampton, Northumberland, Montgomery, Luzerne, and Huntingdon counties were overwhelmingly Federalist in sentiment; while Berks, Bedford, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Fayette, and Dauphin were Antifederalist. Washington and Franklin counties were split in their voting. If the officers do not follow this pattern, then it must be assumed that other factors influenced their opinions about the adoption of the Constitution.

Analysis of the residences of the officers, by county, reveals some striking results. Two per cent of the Federalists and six per cent of the Antifederalists came from counties which were split on immunity from arrest. Harry E. Wildes, Anthony Wayz, Trouble Shooter of the American Revolution (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941), pp. 320-334. Mark Bird, James Wilson’s brother-in-law, declared bankruptcy in May 1787, because he could not pay his debts or obtain credit. William Hamilton to Jasper Yeates, May 10, 1787, HSP, Yeates Papers.

By professional military officers I mean those men who devoted their lives to military service after the Revolution.


the issue of the Constitution, and can therefore be discounted. What cannot be discounted is that 27 per cent of the Federalists came from Antifederalist counties, and 56 per cent of the Antifederalists came from Federalist counties. These results are very significant. Philadelphia and Cumberland counties, the former strongly Federalist and the latter strongly Antifederalist, account for 42 per cent of the total number of officers. Forty-four per cent of the Federalists came from these two counties, 30 per cent from Philadelphia, and 14 per cent from Antifederalist Cumberland. The residences of the Antifederalists are even more significant. Fifteen per cent of them came from Cumberland County, while 25 per cent came from Philadelphia. It is very clear that we must look beyond local issues to find why these people stood as they did upon the adoption of the Constitution.

The officers with whom I am dealing do not conform to any pattern or theory which has been evolved to explain why people stood as they did upon the issue of the adoption of the Constitution in the years 1787 and 1788. To be sure, this small percentage of the population was specialized, but they do represent a cross-section of Pennsylvania life in the period following the American Revolution. Anthony Wayne, Arthur St. Clair, James Potter, Edward Hand, and John Armstrong were respected as the state's leading military officers. Samuel Meredith and Jacob Morgan were among the wealthiest men of the state; others were average industrious citizens. They were representative of the Pennsylvania of their day.

Many of these officers gained national prominence after the Revolution, if this had not already been accomplished. Josiah Harmar, Arthur St. Clair, and Anthony Wayne became generals in chief of the army. John Armstrong, Jr., an ardent Federalist who later became a Jeffersonian Republican, was United States Minister to France from 1804 to 1810, and was Secretary of War during the War of 1812.\textsuperscript{33} Samuel Meredith was made first Treasurer of the United States by President Washington in 1789 in recognition of his financial ability. He served in that capacity until 1801.\textsuperscript{34} Arthur St. Clair was president of Congress in 1787 and served as the first governor of the Northwest Territory from

\textsuperscript{33} Dictionary of American Biography, I, 355.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., XII, 548.
1787 to 1802. Ten other officers served in Congress, representing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Other officers were prominent on the state level. Thomas McKean was chief justice of Pennsylvania, and later, governor of the state. Joseph Hiester also served a term as governor, as did Thomas Mifflin.

It is fair to assume that the ex-Revolutionary officers had a greater influence upon public affairs than their numbers can account for. It would therefore be instructive to attempt to discover why they became Federalists or Antifederalists. The statistical evidence for this question has already been presented, although much of it is of a negative nature. But the negative factors are important, for if it can be shown that the generally accepted theories do not apply to this group of officers, then a new approach to the reasons for the adoption of the Constitution must be found, at least for the officer class. Occupational, religious, and residential factors have all been shown to have had little or no influence upon the group with which we are dealing, while the difference in ages has been discounted.

What then were the differences between the Federalist and Antifederalist officers? There were three major factors separating the two groups, none of which is a complete answer in itself. The first was the officer's branch of service. No officer from Pennsylvania who had served in the Continental Army became a known Antifederalist. This factor is not difficult to account for. As has been related above, I believe that the Continental Army officer, due to his nationwide service, developed a nationalistic outlook and saw the necessity of a strong central government. Josiah Harmar, soon to be general in chief of the army, wrote just before the Constitutional Convention:

I sincerely hope that the proposed convention will be able to revise and amend the Confederation, or frame an entire new government, as without a federal head, and proper powers rested in Congress, the country must soon become a scene of Anarchy and Confusion.

William Irvine was worried about the external threat to the

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Ibid., XVI, 293.


Ibid., 735.

Josiah Harmar to William Irvine, May 25, 1787. HSP. Irvine Papers, IX.
United States, especially from British North America, due to the weakness of the national government under the Confederation:

We are entering in a critical situation, and should the Convention break up and leave us in the unsettled state we now are, I am really afraid of the Consequences. By the last accounts from Canada it appears that Lord Dorchester is using every exertion to [place(?)] the Militia of his province on a respectable footing... If something is not done to cure or at least alleviate the disorders in the federal government, our situation may invite the attack of nations who have fewer resentments to gratify than Great Britain.

A second way of distinguishing between the two parties is by the extent of officer service in each group. In this manner it is possible to distinguish between the militia officers who became Federalists and those who became Antifederalists. The Continental Army officers all served outside the state, as did at least 13 of the Federalist militia officers. The Antifederalists were distinguished mostly by short lengths of service, limited to within the state of Pennsylvania. Only one Antifederalist, Nicholas Lutz, is known to have served outside the state. Many of the others served for short lengths of time; Frederick Antes, Christian Lower, Timothy Matlack, William Montgomery, and Jonathan B. Smith served only for a short time in 1775, while Samuel Maclay served for three months in 1776. Many of the militia Federalists served for longer periods of time; Stephen Balliet, John Nixon, Thomas Smith, Henry Slagle, and many others served for over a year. Some, notably Nixon and Slagle, served for more than two years. It would seem, therefore, that the more time an officer served on active duty, the more likely he was to have become a Federalist.

The third distinction between the two groups is membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. Much has already been said about this organization, but it must be reiterated that over 50 per cent of the Federalists were members, while no Antifederalists were, although at least eight were eligible for membership.

The only distinctions between the two groups are those mentioned above. All deal with the military service of these officers.

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30 William Irvine to ?, June 26, 1787, ibid.
31 Ibid., 5th Series, V, 19-80; VIII, 14; 6th Series, I, 183-185; II, 475-575.
during the Revolution. These factors seem to have had a decisive influence upon the political opinions of the officer class. Perhaps this influence was subconscious in many cases. The men themselves probably did not recognize it at the time, yet their military service did influence them in 1787.

Military service during the Revolution helps to explain why these officers either supported or rejected the Constitution in Pennsylvania in 1787. If this theory can be extended to the high ranking officers of the other states, then it helps to explain why the Constitution was written and adopted. I do not believe that I am superseding, or even disputing, the generally accepted theories which have been offered concerning the adoption of the Constitution. My conclusions are valid solely for those who served in a military capacity during the Revolution. The writings of Charles Beard, Forrest McDonald, Orin Libby, Merrill Jensen, George Bancroft, and Jackson Main are ample proof of the fact that my approach to this problem, although valid, is a narrow one.