

## A Civil War soldier's satirical take on the news, 1863

### Introduction

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Between battles, marches, and military exercises, Civil War soldiers spent their free time in camp playing music, writing and reading letters, and, for those with the skill, sketching scenes from the day. This unknown soldier's sketchbook from 1863, "A Few Scenes in the Life of a 'SOJER' in the Mass 44th," recounts the adventures of a soldier named "Gorge," or "George," and follows the movements of the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in New Bern, North Carolina. The cartoons satirize the war, army life, and the way Northern newspapers reported the war.

Newspapers, like letters, were a source of camp entertainment. In the sketches below, the artist juxtaposes images of newspaper headlines with the humorous and less exciting reality he saw in camp.

### Questions for Discussion

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#### **Sketchbook-Drawing No. 1 (page 25)**

Effective communication and transportation were important factors in determining military victory in the Civil War.

1. In the first sketch, how does the Union soldier disrupt and destroy the communication and transportation capability of the Confederacy in North Carolina?
2. How are exaggeration, humor, and satire employed by the soldier-artist to convey the vital importance of communication and transportation for ultimate Union victory in the Civil War?

#### **Sketchbook-Drawing No. 2 (page 26)**

1. Based on the "newspaper" headline and byline of the second sketchbook drawing, briefly explain a "highly important . . . strategy" of the Union Army to weaken the Confederacy and win the Civil War.
2. How are exaggeration, humor, and satire employed soldier-artist to convey and highlight the importance of this "strategy" to weaken the Confederacy and win the Civil War?

#### **Sketchbook-Drawing No. 3 (page 27)**

A *catapult* is a military device that was used in ancient and medieval times to hurl stones and arrows against one's enemy in war.

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1. After examining the third sketch, briefly explain the military approach and strategy, advocated by the soldier-artist, that the Union army should employ to defeat the Confederacy in the Civil War.
2. Select three or four key words from the “newspaper” headline and byline in the drawing and use them in a sentence to convey the main idea and/or message of this sketch.
3. How are exaggeration, humor, and satire employed by the soldier-artist to convey the military approach and strategy that the North should use to defeat the South in the Civil War?

### **Sketchbook-Drawing No. 4 (page 28)**

A *metaphor* is a term or phrase that is used to represent, suggest, or indirectly (not literally) depict the image or symbol of something else.

1. Explain how the metaphors of the “wheelbarrow,” “baggage train,” and “specimen of captured items” are employed by the soldier-artist to convey the main idea or message of this drawing.
2. How are exaggeration, humor, and satire employed by the soldier-artist to convey the military approach and strategy that the North should employ to defeat the South in the Civil War?

### **Summary Questions**

1. Why do you think that the soldier drew these sketches about his Civil War experiences employing exaggeration, humor, and satire?
2. To what extent do you think that these sketches would have a positive or negative impact on military morale, when shared and viewed by his fellow soldiers? Please explain your viewpoint, citing details and evidence from the four sketchbook drawings.

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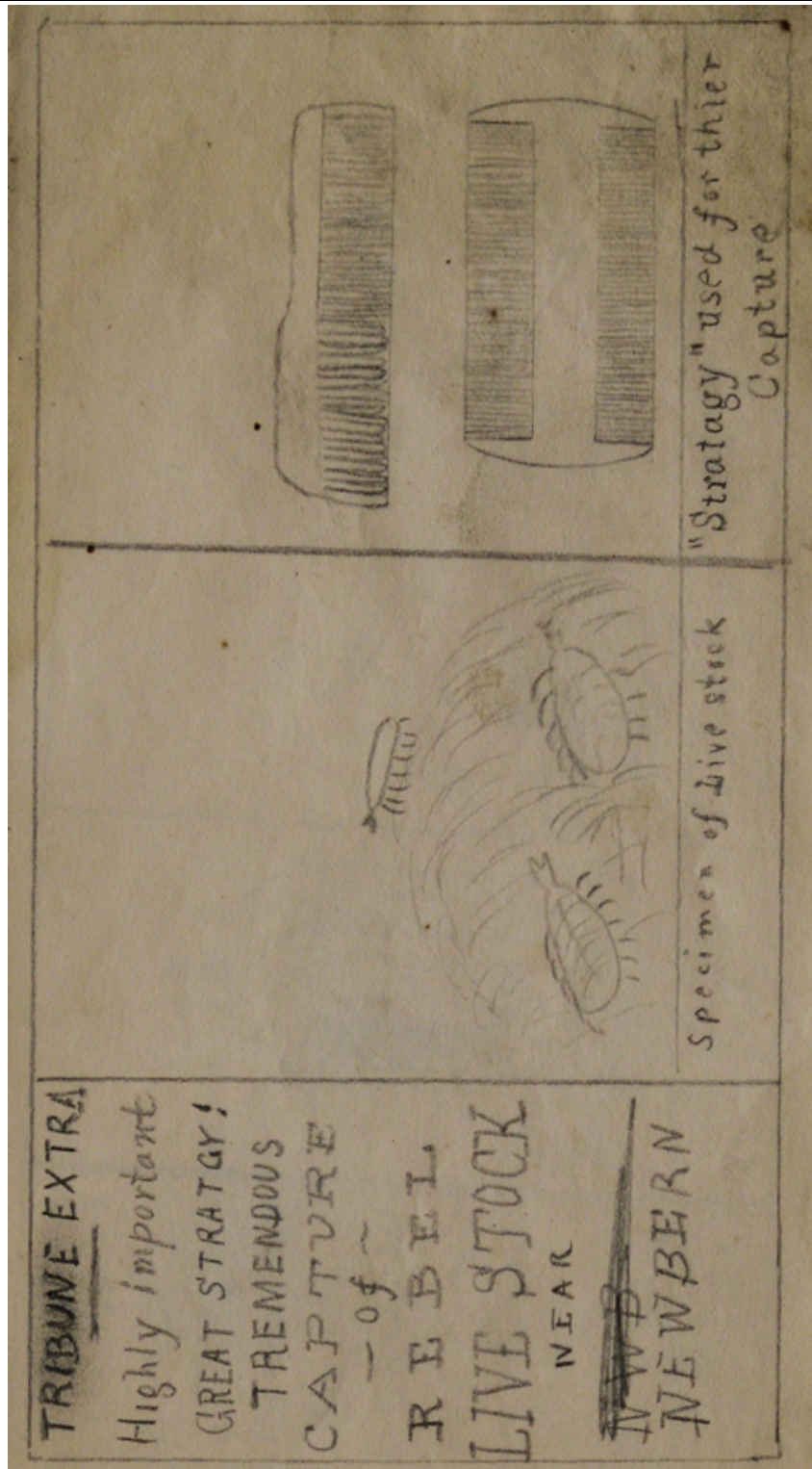
Image 1



"A Few Scenes in the life of A 'SOJER' in the Mass 44th." (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08200, p. 25)

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Image 2

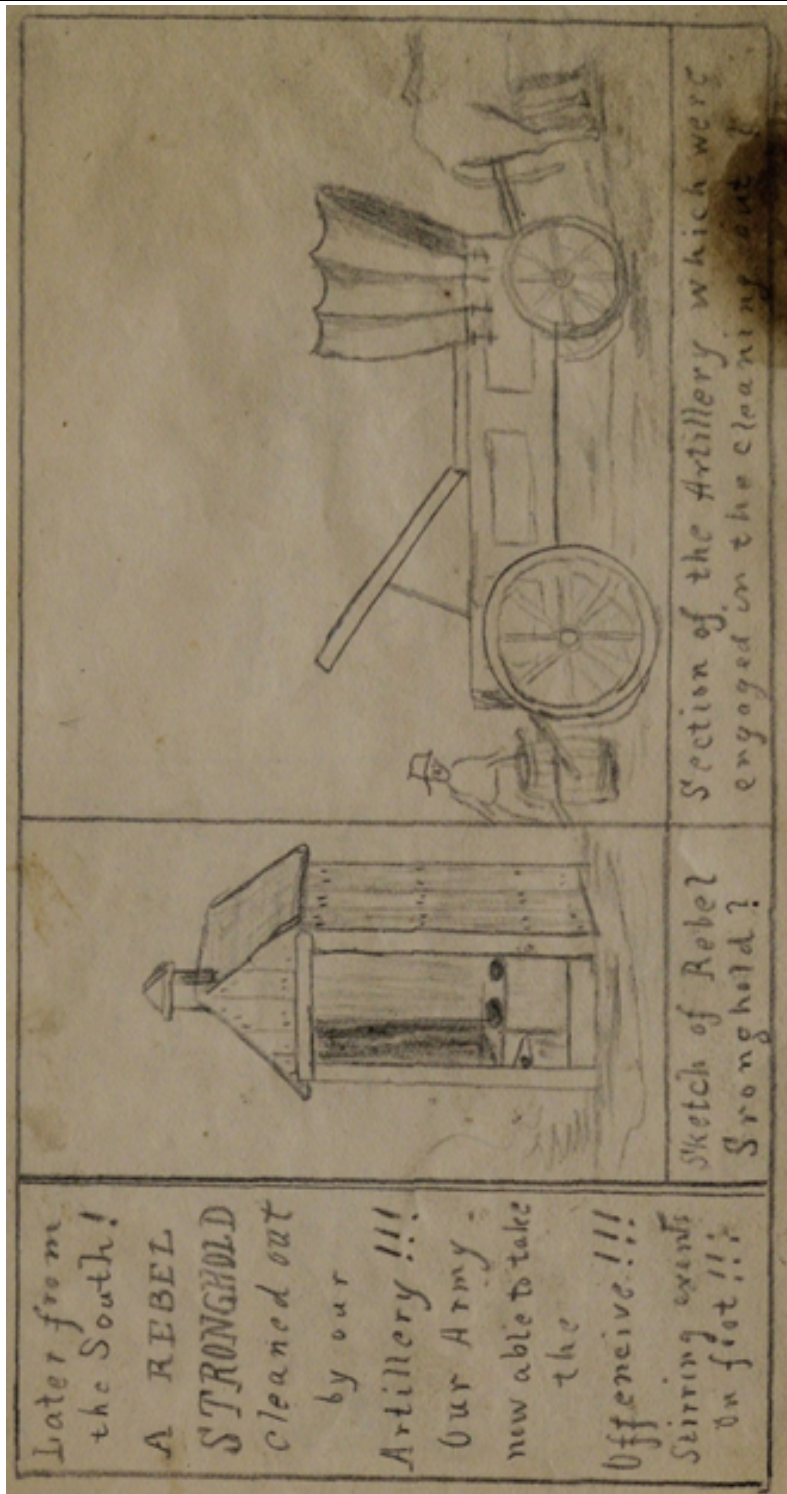


"A Few Scenes in the life of A 'SOJER' in the Mass 44th." (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08200, p.26 )



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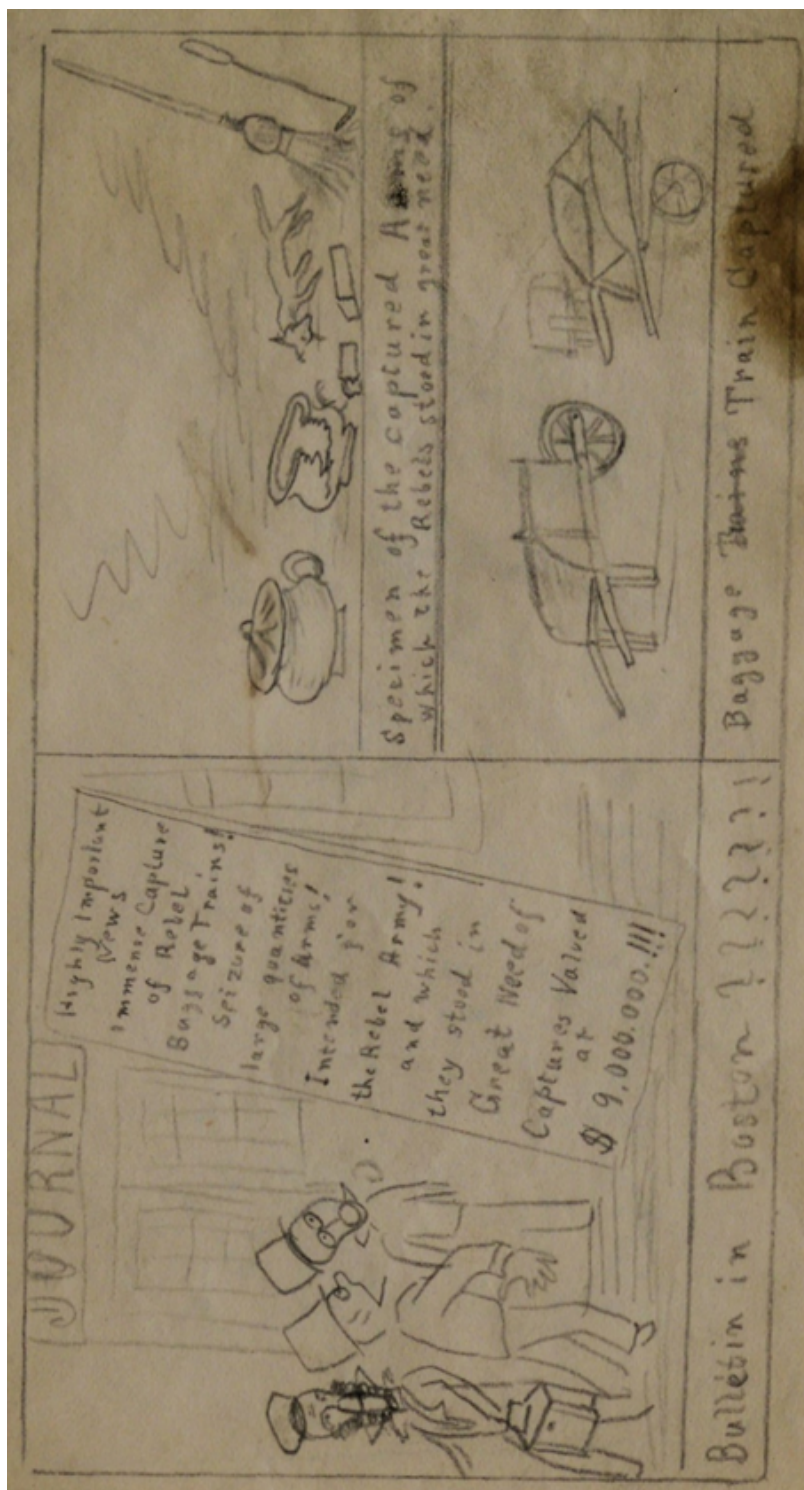
Image 3



"A Few Scenes in the life of A 'SOJER' in the Mass 44th." (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08200, p. 27)

# A Civil War soldier's satirical take on the news, 1863

Image 4



"A Few Scenes in the life of A 'SOJER' in the Mass 44th." (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08200, p. 28)