

My fellow Americans, people of this great country, I reach you now in this time of need. Not one of hopeless distress, but one of a call to action, for the preservation of this nation of which we are in. We live a life of pleasantries, one of peace and relaxation. However, almost four years ago, across the seas, we witnessed the brutal, unprovoked aggression by Russia upon the small nation of Ukraine. It is no secret the rising tensions between the U.S. and other global superpowers, specifically Russia and China. We must be prepared to react to anything, specifically threats against our homeland. For this reason, there must be mandatory military conscription for all men before the age of 22.

“Since the days of Greece and Rome, when the word ‘citizen’ was a title of honor, we have often seen more emphasis put on the rights of citizenship than on its responsibilities.” This quote by Robert F. Kennedy causes a deeper reflection to be incurred on whether military service should be seen as a professional career, or instead more as a moral duty to oneself and their nation. “The highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one’s country”, according to World War Two veteran and four-star general George Patton. “It is a proud privilege to be a soldier – a good soldier ... [with] discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to comrades and to his superiors, and a self-confidence born of demonstrated ability.” Vietnam-era army veteran (serving 1966-1972) Tom Acker agrees. “I’m very proud of my service. It teaches us a lot about our nation and the people that have gone before us and served. It teaches discipline and honor to those who serve. It lets us know what the price of freedom truly is. I’m honored to have served in the United States Army, and I am a better person for having done that.” Many veterans agree on the last portion, some accrediting their service to them being a better person throughout their life. It can, and should, be

argued that general military service instructs a sense of discipline, honor, and respect into each service member, which can, in turn, be correlated to excellence in everyday life. John F. Kennedy agreed. “A young man who does not have what it takes to perform military service is not likely to have what it takes to make a living. Today's military rejects include tomorrow's hard-core unemployed.” The core traits and values instilled in our modern military are those that everyone should know. As veteran William Smith said, “[As a young man,] it was one of the best things that could have happened for me.”

Too often we as a nation take our rights and freedoms for granted. Former President John Kennedy once said the following; “Word to the Nation: Guard zealously your right to serve in the armed forces, for without them, there will be no other rights to guard.” The oath sworn when joining the armed forces is as follows: “I, (state your name), do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same...” Without the Constitution, we have no individual rights. It must be defended, many times to the death, by the brave men and women who serve in our armed forces. We simply do not recognize the cost at which our freedom was purchased, something that many veterans such as Tom Acker realized while serving.

Many currently push for Independence Day, as well as other holidays honoring our country, to be “canceled” or dishonored because they promote “genocide” or “systemic racism”. However, this is not the case. Independence Day as a holiday should not be taken lightly, as it is on the backs of these brave men and women who served, sometimes to their final breath in a foreign field, that we as a nation survive.

Some may ask about religious exemptions, and whether they would be exempt. Religion is a wonderful thing, as our nation was founded on the backs of freedom of religion. It can be seen throughout our nation, from the First Amendment and religious rights to the back of our coins reading “In God We Trust.” However, to protect against all enemies, foreign and domestic, we must call upon every young man to do their part in defending this nation. This does not mean that each must carry a weapon on the front lines, but I strongly believe all can do their part in some form. After all, it is your citizenship to the US that makes so great an honor, a duty.

“We must never forget why we have, and why we need our military. Our armed forces exist solely to ensure our nation is safe, so that each and every one of us can sleep soundly at night, knowing we have ‘guardians at the gate.’” While there may be calls to decrease the size of our military, or those arguing that we should divert military spending to other public sources, Allen West reminds us that without our armed forces, we are undefended and vulnerable to attack. It is imperative to our survival as a nation that we remain one nation with a strong military.

This great nation was founded on the concept of unity among states and unity among the people. As we near our 250th anniversary, it is imperative that we as a nation continue doing our best to ensure preserving this experiment for our children, their children, and their children as well. GK Chesterton put it well: “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” The first step begins with improving our military and the average American’s outlook on our Armed Forces.