

# THE CASE FOR AMERICAN MANDATORY MILITARY SERVICE

Ian Rippon  
ACCS Lincoln Lyceum Essay Contest  
July 19, 2023

Fellow Americans,

War is dreadful. Thousands of books have painted this picture since ancient times. Then why should we have mandatory military service? To have our young men be forced to serve, and die, in a war they want nothing to do with? It is no secret that our military is undermanned, and is having trouble recruiting. While this is partially due to many young people being unfit for service due to obesity or drugs, the main reason is that they just do not *want* to serve, and are scared of any physical or emotional damage they may receive while serving.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, I believe the military is helpful to all young men. We need mandatory military service for three reasons: it will provide men with good jobs and skills, it will produce new friendships by uniting men that otherwise would never meet, and it will ensure that we continue to have a strong, active military for defending our citizens and those of other nations.

First, mandatory service will provide men with good jobs. Fresh from high school at the age of 18 or 19, men will be given work that allows them to provide for themselves, and save money for college. Military service not only provides jobs, but also teaches the skills necessary to fulfill these various duties, whether in medicine, technology, or other fields.

Today, we often see young men, lacking purpose, drop out of school and turn to drugs or other unhelpful activities to try to fill that void. The solution is military service. Being in the military requires a soldier to be fit: not just physically, but mentally and spiritually.<sup>2</sup> These men, upon completing their duty to our country, will depart the military and go out into the world as

---

<sup>1</sup>. Courtney Kube, "Every Branch of the Military Is Struggling to Make Its 2022 Recruiting goals," NBC News, June 27, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/every-branch-us-military-struggling-meet-2022-recruiting-goals-official-rcna35078>.

<sup>2</sup>. "Understanding the Army Combat Fitness Test," U.S. Army, 2023, <https://www.goarmy.com/how-to-join/requirements/fitness>.

stronger, more experienced, and more mature adults, ready to pursue a multitude of successful careers.

Second, mandatory military service will promote friendships. The men will be drawn closer together as they face challenges together. Many soldiers' autobiographies chronicle the "brotherhood" they shared while in the military. Despite being from different regions or economic statuses, these men are brought together and meet friends they otherwise would never have met. Unity and friendship between brothers from different backgrounds could lead to some men being exposed to new ideas, such as Christianity.

My grandfather, who retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1994, realized he was likely to be drafted due to his low draft number, and so joined the U.S. Air Force in 1972. He notes the importance of friendship: "It is important to have friendship with people who are supportive to you, who encourage you, and understand what you're going through." He shares a story of how he and a group of fellow personnel got together to play golf and have a Bible study, and of how they kept track of each of their friends' lives and families.

Mandatory military service would also ensure equality. No matter how rich, no one can escape his duty to his country. Consider a young millionaire from Los Angeles and a poor man from Brooklyn. These men would likely never meet each other. What if both were to spend one year in the military, and during that year they must both receive the same pay, sleep in the same room, and eat the same food? While in the ranks of the military, the men are treated equally.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, mandatory military service will ensure that we continue to have the strongest military in the world. With the help of every young man, we will be able to actively defend our nation's values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with greater efficiency and power. We

---

<sup>3</sup>. National Archives, *Executive Order 9981*, (Washington, D.C., National Archives, 1948), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9981>.

will continue to be a global superpower, and continue our helpful, life-saving work of spreading peace and supporting other nations. A larger military benefits not just Americans, but other countries as well, for example, how we assisted South Korea in the Korean War.

Some of you might be concerned that, while this mandatory service might help protect these values for most citizens, the life and liberty of the men who are forced to serve in the military are violated, since they have no freedom to choose whether they are prepared to risk their lives or not. And what happens to the men who have pacifist religious objections to fighting in war or are convinced that this war is unjust?

My response to this concern is that serving in the military is the least you can do for your country. Which freedom of yours is violated? It is the very same freedom that veterans in decades past sacrificed so *you* could have it! You should fulfill your duty with gratitude to veterans, and even though sacrificing your freedom for just one year, you, in that year, ensure that all other citizens continue to have the freedom which our country so fervently defends.

I also interviewed my other grandfather, a retired medical technician. He had a student deferment for many years during the war, but when he did become eligible for the draft, he received a number so high that he had a very small chance of being drafted. He proposes another option for those who object to warfare: "I am in favor of the draft, as long as there is an alternative for religious reasons, such as working in a hospital." Not everyone needs to shoot a gun or fly a bomber to serve.

In conclusion, we need mandatory military service because it will provide men with good jobs and skills, unify young men, and ensure that the US continues to have a strong military for defending the values Americans hold dear. Those unable to physically fight may fulfill their duty

in other ways, like medical service. Men, be ready to serve your country with gratitude and strength; do not shrink from your duty!