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A Tradition of Service

A policy of mandatory military service may be the best way to make this generation one of the best generations since the Great Depression. Throughout human history, service in the armed forces has formed some of the most morally strong, and physically tough people in the world. Many young adults from many generations across the history of the United States have experienced hardship and trial, and were made better people by it. The Greatest Generation, for example, earned their name by undergoing the Great Depression, as well as World War II, and still beckoning the nation into its most prosperous and powerful age

If this policy was enacted, America would not be the first country or civilization to require all able-bodied adult males to serve. In ancient Grecian times, citizenship had a strong relationship to service in the armed forces, and all soldiers were citizens of differing social positions and influence, some of them known as hoplites. This benefited Greece by ensuring that the soldiers were always Greeks, and also that they were of high quality and wealthy enough to purchase their armor. Their position in the military hierarchy was determined solely by wealth and social position. All soldiers in ancient Greece, from the meanest foot soldiers to the richest calvarymen had to provide their own equipment. All Hoplites were required to have a bronze helmet, shield, spear, and breastplate of some kind. A solid bronze cuirass was beyond many soldiers' means, so they typically used a *linthorax* constructed of hardened textiles. While this type of breastplate was light and cost effective, most hoplites who could afford a bronze piece purchased one. These types of pieces not only provided superior protection, they also signaled status on the battlefield. Wealthier Hoplites would decorate and embellish their armor, and paint emblems of family crests, or symbols for their homeland.

One of the biggest reasons soldiers can function in dangerous, extremely stressful environments is because boot camp is like no education system today. In order to make ordinary civilians into hardened, team-centered soldiers, the recruits must be broken down and disassembled. When they have unlearned all their solitariness, selfishness, and weakness, they

can be assembled again into soldiers who comprise a cohesive unit. Once you go through this kind of training, you are a changed person, for the better. In the words of my grandfather Allen Campbell, a veteran who served in Vietnam as a member of the Construction Battalion: “ We went there, and they made our life a living hell. When we first walked in, they were mean, tough, and ridiculed you if you ever opened your mouth. So you quickly learned not to.” Once you finish boot camp, however, you are ready to start serving your country in one of the best ways possible.

One potential problem with this policy is that many people can not withstand the conditions encountered in and around combat zones, but they don't usually have to. If this new policy is enacted, it does not mean every eligible male will have to serve on the front lines; in fact, depending on wartime conditions, up to 14 support roles will have to be filled to support each soldier. Even if all men of the right age and requirements must serve at some point, if they do not wish to participate primarily in combat, there are many ways to serve without firing a single shot.

Another benefit of service is that participating citizens will receive necessary testing and training at no cost. “ But in about 6 months, 5 months, we learned how to function completely different from normal people.” Those who decide to become officers can attend OCS, which is a 4 year college level education to become an officer, at no cost to the candidates. However, all these benefits don't come without a cost. Once you join the armed forces in any capacity, there is a chance that you could be killed or injured in action, no matter which position you hold. But if you do have the misfortune of being injured, any medical treatment you require will be free, provided by military doctors. Lastly, all veterans and active duty soldiers receive free burials in the unlikely event that they die.

According to statistics, veterans of the armed forces are often more successful in civilian life. Up to 10% percent of small businesses are owned by veterans, and they are 45% more likely to start a business than non veterans. Taking everything into account, military service in almost any position will provide you with the toughness, teamwork skills, and mindset conducive to thriving in civilian life.

