

The Benefits of Mandatory Military Service

Mandatory military service is a common practice seen in Israel, South Korea, Russia, Switzerland, and many more countries. Putting this into practice in the USA would greatly benefit the country, as a whole, and the individual young men who serve. One of the greatest character traits that develop from serving in the military is fortitude. Sam Guzman defines fortitude as this:

“Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions.”¹

Guzman gives an example from “The Lord of the Rings”. In the Two Towers, there is a point at which Frodo and Sam are about to enter Mordor. They were weak and dead tired. He does not want to keep going, but Sam gives Frodo a speech to persevere. “Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn’t. They kept going.” That right there is the one of the most perfect examples of true fortitude.

When looking at American culture, we do not see many people like Sam. We do not see many examples of perseverance in young American men, but instead we see laziness and weakness. As Texas representative Dan Crenshaw says in Fortitude: Resilience in the Age of Outrage:

¹ Guzman, Sam. “The Cardinal Virtues: Fortitude - the Catholic Gentleman.” *The Catholic Gentleman*, 30 Aug. 2013, catholicgentleman.com/2013/08/the-cardinal-virtues-fortitude/#:~:text=Fortitude%20is%20the%20moral%20virtue,to%20face%20trials%20and%20persecutions. Accessed 29 July 2023.

“Unfortunately, these days, too many people are overcoming their knowledge deficits with passion, and too many more people are mistaking “passion” and “authenticity” for righteousness and sophistication. It is an unhealthy trend.”²

What Dan Crenshaw said is true. People these days do not come across difficult situations with fortitude and bravery, they come at it with passion, which will not work. It is not fortitude. It is foolishness.

What would be wise to do is what other nations have done since the dawn of time, and what America did in her revolutionary struggle, requiring military service of our citizens. The military needs more people to meet their recruiting goals, and they will give the training and necessary experience for the job. It will show young men how to overcome trials and persecutions. Military training will give young men real fortitude, or what is commonly called grit, the willingness to go on and persevere.

As Louis de Bernières said, “No man is a man until he has been a soldier.”³ Louis de Bernières was an English novelist best known for his historical war novel Captain Corelli's Mandolin. While some could say he made an extreme statement, he does have a point. Fortitude is a quality needed to really achieve manhood, and fortitude can and will be acquired in the military. In serving in the military, there are many great lessons to learn, obstacles to overcome, which develop many qualities, in addition to fortitude, that will help out the young men later in their lives.

² “Fortitude Quotes by Dan Crenshaw.” *Goodreads.com*, 2023, www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/67409882-fortitude-resilience-in-the-age-of-outrage. Accessed 29 July 2023.

³ Palmer, Ian. “20 Patriotic Quotes Honoring Soldiers.” *Country Living*, Country Living, 8 May 2020, www.countryliving.com/life/g32418286/quotes-about-soldiers/?slide=16. Accessed 30 July 2023.

The main counterargument to the idea of a year of mandatory military service in the USA is that the whole idea is just un-American, as it seems to go against our individual rights. With these mandatory commands from the government would America start to become fascist and authoritarian? That would go against what America believes in and is. The argument against that is the very American idea of “the citizen soldier”. The citizen soldier in the American revolution was a normal citizen who was required to join the army and stepped up to aid the army. An article on the citizen soldier in the American Revolution says this:

“Over time, there evolved two basic types of militia units. One, “common militia,” was based on the idea of compulsory service. Units regarded as common militia were seldom called up for emergency service.”⁴

So America actually has had mandatory military service at its origin, and it would be consistent with our long-held American traditions of excellence.

John Lynn was an Eagle Scout, employed by the Boy Scouts of America, even though he never served in the military, he believes it is beneficial to character. He argues that “There are more benefits to the military, like learning skills for jobs that you will use lifelong.” He said he saw young men in the boy scouts grow up, and so he saw what character traits they were lacking that could be solved with military service.⁵

Chris Becker, a Helicopter mechanic in the military, thought that serving in the military was highly beneficial. He was able to meet his goals

⁴ “The Citizen-Soldier: Militia in Early America.” *Warfare History Network*, 25 Oct. 2018, warfarehistorynetwork.com/the-citizen-soldier-militia-in-early-america/#:~:text=Whereas%20European%20warfare%20depending%20increasingly,%20soldiers%E2%80%9D%2C%20or%20militia. Accessed 31 July 2023.

⁵ Lynn, John: Mandatory military service. Conducted by Tim Kitchens, 30th, July, 2023

he couldn't otherwise, and take his skills he learned from the military of being a helicopter repairman and use it later in the job force. Businesses look for the sort of skills that the military gives you. He was thankful for having marketable job skills that he wouldn't have gotten otherwise.

The voluntary military goals in the United States are at an all time low right now. Army's top officials said this in an article:

“The service's recruiting slump won't end this year, making fiscal 2023 the second year in a row that the branch won't meet its recruiting targets”.⁶

Other countries' volunteer services are at an all time high! We need to be strong in the face of China and Russia and preserve the world order that the great generation fought so hard to preserve. Young men don't know what they are missing when they don't volunteer for the military. They are missing the opportunity to forge their character into true manhood and gain fortitude. Young men having fortitude isn't something you see very often today, and a year of military service will solve that. The President is right to do this and we should support him, because mandatory military service is something that will be a great benefit to our country.

⁶ Winkie, Davis. "Short-Handed Army to Miss Recruiting Goal for Second Year in a Row." *Army Times*, Army Times, 3 May 2023, www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2023/05/03/short-handed-army-to-miss-recruiting-goal-for-second-year-in-a-row/#:~:text=Your%20Army-,Short%2Dhanded%20Army%20to%20miss%20recruiting%20goal,second%20year%20in%20a%20row&text=The%20Army's%20top%20officials%20to%20meet%20its%20recruiting%20targets. Accessed 31 July 2023.