

Meredith Lynn

Lincoln Lyceum Summer Essay

30 July 2023

Responsibility, Necessity, and Desirability

As Americans, we are responsible for the outcome for this country, its caretaking and overall well-being. Part of our duty is to defend and protect it. To ensure our safety and secure the future of our beautiful country, the President has asked me to make the case for the draft – a one year of service for male US citizens before the age twenty two. Of course, there are those of you who doubt the necessity of this policy, and I would like to address such concerns.

The questions that have arisen while researching and interviewing on the subject are: is the draft a necessity, what harms are our soldiers exposed to, is working in the military even a supportable lifestyle, and what are the effects on families of those who are drafted? The military has been short of soldiers resulting in a sizable gap in our country's protection. In 2022, there was a predicted lack of 21,000 soldiers for the year 2023, and those numbers have only gotten worse as the year has proceeded (Tiron).

One of the best options we have for an increase in enlistment are better conditions for soldiers to make military work more desirable. The average soldier has an income of 42,039 dollars– a wage that is six percent higher than the average US income. If one were concerned about the cost of moving stations, the military provides relocation financial assistance as well as a loan repayment program. Health, dental, and vision insurance are also provided (“Soldiers yearly...”). That being said, soldiers are compensated fairly and are more well-off than the average American.

Another variable responsible for the lack of troops has been fear of injury or death— an understandably difficult subject to talk about. While financial compensations are made to help family members of those who sacrificed their lives for this country, no monetary amount can equal a human life or make up for loss in quality of life. Although these are important concerns, all Americans are in danger of loss of quality in life if valiant men step up to the plate and protect those who cannot protect themselves. Throughout history, men and women have dedicated their lives to their home land and kept their country safe. Without their sacrifices living in this beautiful country would not have been possible.

To understand the effects a draft could have I interviewed those who served during the Vietnam War, when the draft was active. I talked with Daniel Jones, who served from 1957-1968 in the navy and Charles “Chick” Holt, who served in the Marine Corp from 1968-1970. When asked how he felt about the draft Mr. Jones answered, “It was the best thing that happened to this country,” and he expressed that he thought there is a “lack of patriotism in today’s youth,” which could be a sizable cause for the absence of enlistments. Mr. Jones even mentioned that service gave so many young men a direction in life while also keeping trouble makers off the streets. It was also discussed how service in the military can result in growth of character. One of the most inspiring statements of Mr. “Chick” was this: “They can learn a lot of values; you learn about life, you learn about respect, you learn about treating people fairly. They [soldiers] treated everybody equally... when you get back out into the world [life after service], that value stays with you,”. He also said, “The service took 18-19 year olds who thought they knew everything and showed them that they really didn’t!”

Undoubtedly, to some, a draft seems like an unwise decision. To better understand the magnitude and weight of serving in the United States military, consider this statement: How

could someone expect a flourishing plant with bright leaves if he or she never watered it, left it in a dark room, and gave it dry soil with no nutrients to thrive? Thus, how could we expect a healthy country if we don't protect and work for it? A draft is the watering can to help keep this country alive and well. It would benefit those who are enlisted; teaching our youth values and lessons only taught in a military environment. Of course, there will be trials endured by military personnel, however, it gives Americans all the more reason to respect those who serve, and serving gives young men and women of today all the more reason to respect their country. Thank you.

Works Cited

“Soldier yearly salaries in the United States at U.S. Army.” Indeed, 23 July 2023, Soldier Salaries in the United States for U.S. Army | Indeed.com. 30 July 2023.

Tiron, Roxana. “US Military Faces Biggest Recruiting Hurdles in 50 Years (1).” Bloomberg Government, 21 Sept. 2022, US Military Faces Biggest Recruiting Hurdles in 50 Years (1) | Bloomberg Government (bgov.com). 30 July, 2023.