

READ

Read this transcript of a radio call-in show.

Time to Sound Off

- MIKE: Good evening, and welcome to *Sound Off*, the international talk show where you express your uncensored opinions on today's controversial issues. I'm Mike McGaffey. Tonight's topics: Should military service be required or voluntary? Should women join the military, and if they do, should they fight in combat? Let's see if we can shed some light¹ on these issues. Here's our first caller, Jerry Burns, from Kingston, Jamaica. Where do you stand, Jerry?
- JERRY: Hi, Mike. Basically, I think military service should be voluntary. And I'm definitely against women being in combat.
- MIKE: OK. Why should it be voluntary? Why shouldn't it be required of everyone?
- JERRY: Because, overall, young people are not all the same. Some people have a military orientation. For them, military service is fine. Others aren't oriented that way. Compulsory military service interferes with their freedom, essentially.
- MIKE: But many argue that we all owe our country something. It protects us and gives us benefits. Shouldn't we give something in return?
- JERRY: We should if we're motivated to. But it shouldn't be an obligation. And I'd go further: Military forces have done a lot of evil. Maybe we shouldn't even have them.
- MIKE: Hmm. I don't know, Jerry—I'm a pretty accepting guy, but even I find that suggestion extreme. But let's go to your second point. Why shouldn't women be in combat?
- JERRY: We need to maintain the difference between the sexes. Men and women have inherent differences. If we put women in combat, we're saying that,

¹ shed some light: provide new information that makes something easier to understand

- fundamentally, they're the same as men. But women just aren't as physically strong and tough as men. Therefore, they aren't suited for combat.
- MIKE: Are you saying that only men are strong enough? That's clearly an old stereotype.
- JERRY: I'm not saying that. I just don't think fighting is feminine.
- MIKE: Wow. All right, Jerry, very interesting. I expect we'll hear some pretty spirited responses to what you've said. Our next caller is Sarah Lopez from Toronto, Canada. Sarah, does Jerry have a valid point, or is this just fuzzy² thinking?
- SARAH: Thanks, Mike. Actually, I couldn't disagree more with Jerry. It's not fuzzy thinking. He was clear in making his point, but I just don't agree with him.
- MIKE: OK. So military service shouldn't be voluntary?
- SARAH: No. If we're going to have it, it should be required.
- MIKE: Why?
- SARAH: It's the only way to ensure fair treatment for all. People in the military make major sacrifices—sometimes they risk their lives. That kind of risk should be spread out evenly. Actually, I'd go further: I'd support required national service. It wouldn't have to be only military.
- MIKE: Expand a bit on that.
- SARAH: There are lots of worthwhile things citizens can do for their country—like working in day care centers, hospitals, or the Peace Corps. National service has been started in a few countries, and hopefully it will be adopted in many more.
- MIKE: All right. Now, Jerry opposes women being in combat. What's your position? Should it be allowed?
- SARAH: Not only should it be allowed, but it should also be promoted. I should know: I've been in the military for eighteen months. So have several of my friends.
- MIKE: You have?
- SARAH: Yes. I disagree with the way Jerry characterizes women. No way is combat unfeminine!
- MIKE: Have you ever been in combat?
- SARAH: No, but if I'm ever called to combat, I'll be willing to go. Jerry also said we need to maintain the difference between the sexes. I don't agree with that, and neither do any of my friends.
- MIKE: OK, Sarah.... Oops! There goes the buzzer. Time to hear from another caller. Here's Lu Adijojo from Singapore. Lu, what's your view?...



² fuzzy: unclear, confused

AFTER YOU READ

A VOCABULARY Choose the answer that is closest in meaning to the word in **bold**.

- On this show, people express their uncensored opinions on today's **controversial** issues.
a. interesting b. causing disagreement c. well-known d. extremely important
- Should military service be required or **voluntary**?
a. done for money b. done for advancement c. done for enjoyment d. done willingly
- The first caller doesn't think military service should be **compulsory**.
a. optional b. required c. difficult d. unpleasant
- He believes forced military service would **interfere with** people's freedom.
a. limit b. increase c. have no impact on d. cancel
- Men and women have **inherent** differences.
a. natural b. accidental c. extreme d. slight
- If we put women in combat, we're saying that, **fundamentally**, they're the same as men.
a. partially b. definitely not c. possibly d. basically
- That's an old **stereotype**, clearly.
a. idea b. recording c. rule d. characteristic
- Not only should it be allowed, but it should also be **promoted**.
a. considered b. financed c. encouraged d. opposed

B COMPREHENSION Complete the sentences based on the reading.

- Jerry, the first caller, thinks _____ service should be voluntary.
- Jerry thinks that only people who have a military _____ should have to join the military.
- Jerry is _____ women being in combat.
- Jerry doesn't think fighting is _____.
- Sarah, the second caller, thinks military service should be _____.
- In her opinion, it's the only way to ensure _____ treatment for everyone.
- Sarah does not believe combat is _____.
- If Sarah were called to combat, she would go _____.

C DISCUSSION Work with a partner. Discuss your viewpoints on the questions.

- Should military service be required or voluntary?
- Should women fight in combat?