

Document B: Overview of the Selective Service Lottery

If and when the Congress and the President reinstate a military draft, the Selective Service System would conduct a National Draft Lottery to determine the order in which young men would be drafted.

The lottery would establish the priority of call based on the birth dates of registrants. The first men drafted would be those turning age 20 during the calendar year of the lottery. For example, if a draft were held in 2012, those men born in 1992 would be considered first. If a young man turns 21 in the year of the draft, he would be in the second priority, in turning 22 he would be in the third priority, and so forth until the year in which he turns 26 at which time he is over the age of liability. Younger men would not be called in that year until men in the 20-25 age group are called.

Because of the enormous impact of this lottery, it would be conducted publicly, with full coverage by the media. Accredited observers from public interest groups will have full access to observe the proceedings.

HERE IS HOW THE LOTTERY WOULD WORK:

The lottery process begins with two large air mix drums. First, the air mix balls having date and month on them are loaded in one of the large drums. Using this same method, number from 1 to 365 (366 for men born in a leap year) on the air mix balls are loaded in the second drum. Official observers certify that all air mix balls were loaded in the Titan drawing machines.

One air mix ball is drawn from the drum containing birth dates January 1 through December 31. One air mix ball is then drawn from the drum containing the sequence numbers from 1 through 365 (366 if the draft will call men born during a leap year) and the date and number are paired to establish the sequence number for each birth date. This is done in full view of all observers, officials, and the media.

For example, if the date of August 4 is drawn first from the "date" drum, and the sequence number of 32 is drawn from the "number's" drum at the same time, then those men turning 20 on August 4 would be ordered for induction processing only after men whose birthdays drew sequence numbers 1 through 31. The drawings continue until all 365 (or 366) birthdays of the year are paired with a sequence number.

After the lottery is completed and results certified, the sequence of call is transmitted to the Selective Service System's Data Management Center. Almost immediately the first induction notices are prepared and sent via the U.S. Postal Service to men whose birth dates drew the lowest lottery numbers.

This system, based on random selection of birth dates, with the order of priority for reporting assigned in a random manner, is a fair and equitable method of calling men to serve.

THE VIETNAM LOTTERIES:

A lottery drawing - the first since 1942 - was held on December 1, 1969, at Selective Service National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This event determined the order of call for induction during calendar year 1970; that is, for registrants born between January 1, 1944, and December 31, 1950. Reinstitution of the lottery was a

change from the "draft the oldest man first" method, which had been the determining method for deciding order of call.

There were 366 blue plastic capsules containing birth dates placed in a large glass container and drawn by hand to assign order-of-call numbers to all men within the 18-26 age range specified in Selective Service law. With radio, film, and TV coverage, the capsules were drawn from the container, opened, and the dates inside posted in order. The first capsule - drawn by Congressman Alexander Pirnie (R-NY) of the House Armed Services Committee - contained the date September 14, so all men born on September 14 in any year between 1944 and 1950 were assigned lottery number 1. The drawing continued until all days of the year had been paired with sequence numbers.

The last draft call was on December 7, 1972, and the authority to induct expired on June 30, 1973. The date of the last drawing for the lottery was on March 12, 1975. Registration with the Selective Service System was suspended on April 1, 1975, and registrant processing was suspended on January 27, 1976.

Registration was resumed in July 1980 for men born in 1960 and later, and is in effect to this present time. Men are required to register within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

CLASSIFICATIONS:

Men are not classified now. Classification is the process of determining who is available for military service and who is deferred or exempted. Classifications are based on each individual registrant's circumstances and beliefs. A classification program would go into effect when Congress and the President decide to resume a draft. Then, men who are qualified for induction would have the opportunity to file a claim for exemptions, deferments, and postponements from military service. Here is a list of some, though not all, classifications and what they mean:

- **1-A** - Available immediately for military service.
- **1-O Conscientious Objector** - Conscientiously opposed to both types (combatant and non-combatant) of military training and service - fulfills his service obligation as a civilian alternative service worker.
- **1-A-O Conscientious Objector** - Conscientiously opposed to training and military service requiring the use of arms - fulfills his service obligation in a noncombatant position within the military.
- **2-D Ministerial Students** - Deferred from military service.
- **3-A Hardship Deferment** - Deferred from military service because service would cause hardship upon his family.
- **4-C Alien or Dual National** - Sometimes exempt from military service.
- **4-D Ministers of Religion** - Exempted from military service.
- **Student Postponements** – A college student may have his induction postponed until he finishes the current semester or, if a senior, the end of the academic year. A high school student may have his induction postponed until he graduates or until he reaches age 20.
- **Appealing a Classification** – A man may appeal his classification to a Selective Service Appeal Board.