

World War II

Like World War I, the “War That Would End All Wars” again underscored the low fitness levels among Americans serving in the military. When the war was over, the public learned that the armed forces had needed to reject nearly half of all draftees or give them noncombat positions (Rice, Hutchinson & Lee 1958). Once again, these embarrassing statistics helped focus the country’s attention on the importance of fitness. Other significant developments during this time included the application of research to fitness practice, particularly by Dr. Thomas K. Cureton at the University of Illinois. Cureton also introduced fitness testing for cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and flexibility and identified exercise intensity guidelines for improving fitness levels.