

World War I

With America's entry into World War I in 1917, hundreds of thousands of military personnel were drafted and trained for combat. After the war was fought and won, disturbing information became available regarding the readiness of our troops: One out of every three draftees had been unfit for combat, and many of those drafted were highly unfit prior to military training (Barrow & Brown 1988; Wuest & Bucher 1995). As a result of these dismal findings, the government passed legislation dictating that physical education programs within the public schools be improved. However, the heightened interest in physical education and concern over low fitness levels would prove short-lived as the United States entered the 1920s and the Depression.