



Even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR had begun to build up our armed forces. Now that we were at war, an estimated 16-17 million men entered the military as volunteers or draftees. Starting in 1942, all young men between the ages of 18-38 were required to register with Selective Services. Of those, roughly 11 million were drafted and another 6 million rushed to recruiting stations to volunteer. Recruits had to pass a medical exam to enter the service before they were given their “Government Issue” uniforms and equipment. Basic training for most recruits lasted for 8 weeks and included physical conditioning, learning how to handle weapons, read maps, dig foxholes and work as a team. Also, for the first time, large numbers of women served in the military. Although they weren’t able to fight in combat, nearly 250,000 women served their country in support roles such as nurses, flight instructors and secretaries.

1. Describe what action is going on in the above photo.
2. Who had to register for the draft?
3. How many men were drafted into the armed services during World War II?
4. How many men volunteered for the armed services during World War II?
5. Why did American soldiers refer to themselves as “G.I.’s”?
6. Describe “Basic Training” for a World War II recruit.
7. What role did women serve in the military during World War II?
8. Video: What are the men practicing in the opening scene?
9. Video: What are the men forced to crawl through during training?
10. Video: Why do you think the director chose to show the soldiers’ friends joining him on his punishment run even though they weren’t the ones in trouble?