

## Enlist or Be Drafted

When the United States entered World War I in April of 1917, the United States Army consisted of 121,000 men, while the total of all the state National Guard organizations was 181,000. Since the estimate of the number of men needed to win the war was between 2 and 4 million, a large army had to be raised quickly.

On May 18, 1917, the Selective Service Act of 1917 passed. Initially, all males aged 21 to 30 were required to register. After August 1918, Congress voted to expand the age range to include all men 18 to 45. By the end of World War I, some two million men volunteered for various branches of the armed services, and some 2.8 million had been drafted.

**DRAFTING TO BEGIN  
EARLY NEXT MONTH**

**625,000 Registered Men To Be Called  
to the Colors; No Class Exemptions—May Be in Camp Sept. 1.**

Out of the 10,200,000 names of men registered 50,000 will be drawn at a clip by the jury wheel system next month. These men then will be examined for exemptions and those found not to be exempt in any other way will be physically examined for service. For the first draft the physical requirements will be the same as those for the regular army. Fully 50 per cent will pass the physical examination, it is believed. Those who fail to pass the first time are still subject to later drafts when some physical requirements may be waived.

The process of drawing 50,000 names will be repeated until the first draft of 625,000 is secured. It became known that Provost Marshal General Crowder has determined to call out that number in the first draft instead of 500,000 previously announced. General Crowder himself told the Senate military affairs committee at a hearing. The additional 125,000 men are required, he said, as a reserve to fill vacancies left by men withdrawn through sickness or death.

General Crowder said the government will permit no class exemptions. All will be personal. Because a man is employed on government work or is a farmer or munitions worker does it not follow that he will be exempt. The drawing being made early in July, the government will give all men drafted an opportunity to arrange their personal affairs before calling them to the colors. According to present plans, the call to the colors will be September 1. On that date all those selected for army service must report at mobilization camps. Each will be told to what camp to report and will be furnished transportation.

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Draftees left for the service in groups. The newspaper published their names and departure date. Their friends and relatives often gave a party for them the night before they left. They took the train from Morristown through Madison where these same friends and relatives would cheer them as they passed through the station.

Volunteers left for the service individually, and their departure was usually acknowledged after they had gone. Some of them felt slighted as this poem describes.

**VOLUNTEERS BELIEVE THEY  
ARE ENTIRELY FORGOTTEN**

At times during the past The Eagle has received letters from volunteers in Uncle Sam's service expressing grievance at the great attention given drafted men while the volunteers receive little attention. One of the Madison volunteers has sent the following letter and poem to The Eagle:

"Enclosed you will find a poem of the feelings of the "boys", from Camp McClellan, that have been forgotten by the people excepting their parents and sweethearts. You don't realize how slighted we have felt, so please publish this and make us happy. This poem which I have written has been read by many a hundred and was cheered heartily. A lot of boys have copied it and are sending it to their home papers. Well, here is the poem:

*By a Volunteer at Camp McClellan.*

Why didn't I wait to be drafted,  
And led to the train by a band,  
And put in my claim for exemption.  
Oh, why did I hold up my hand;  
Why didn't I wait for the banquets?  
Why didn't I wait for a cheer?  
For the drafted men get all the credit.  
While I am merely a volunteer.

Nobody gave me a banquet.  
Nobody said a kind word.  
The puff of the engine, the grind of the  
wheel,  
Was all the goodbye that I heard.  
Then to the training camp hustled,  
To be trained for the next half a year;  
And in the shuffle forgotten.

I was merely a volunteer.

And perhaps some day in the future  
When my little boy sits on my knee  
And asks what I did in the great war  
And his little eyes look up at me,  
I'll have to look back into those eyes,  
That at me so trustingly peer,  
And tell him that I wasn't drafted.  
I was merely a volunteer.

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