Podles, Leon. "Love in the Trenches, Masculinity and the Military, by author Leon J. Podles. Books & Articles, Online.." Leon J. Podles. http://www.podles.org/Masculinity-and-the-Military.htm (accessed June 17, 2009).

Instead, masculinity is a social construct, that is, a pattern of behavior and expectations that inform men how they ought to behave—indeed, what they ought to be. It is, to be sure, based on unalterable biological facts and tendencies, and it taps into the libidinal energy of the psyche, but masculinity is not a necessary biological development. Boys do not have to grow up to be masculine, to be men in the fullest sense of the word. Indeed, it is difficult for a boy to mature into a man.

-pp. 3

Society naturally accepts the loss of its men, because the male is less central—biologically—to the species than is the female. A society can sustain itself even if most of its males are killed; it cannot do so if most of its females are killed.

-pp. 3

Boys are trained at a very early age to bear pain.

-pp. 4

Once, during a soccer game, he got kicked hard in the face and started crying. The game had to be called briefly, and the other boys started complaining about cry babies and not being able to take it. He went on to score the only goal of the game, so the other boys shut up, but it was apparent to all that the social pressure to "play the man" begins very early for a boy.

-pp. 4-5

-societal and cultural pressure of teaching our children (mostly boys) to not be “cry babies” or emotional

Boys also are trained to sacrifice themselves for their family and their community. Only if they are willing to do so are they recognized as men. This training takes all sorts of forms. The Spartans made their boys steal for food or starve.

-pp. 5

-societal and culture pressures and norms

-suggests that the idea of soldiers are trained to endure pain and self sacrifice for others, and also because in our culture it signifies “masculinity”

\*\*Custom of sacrificing the first son to priesthood

It bears repeating: men are trained to sacrifice and even to die for their community. American men well learn this lesson, and are willing to serve their country and even to die for it. But one's "country" becomes something of an abstraction on the battlefield. Those who have been in combat report that, in fact, **the soldier fights and dies, not for his country, but for his comrades**—those in his platoon or regiment. Similarly, when facing a battle, men will go to almost certain death because they know that if they flee, someone else—a comrade—would have to fight and die instead.

-pp. 6

The only common characteristic of the identity of comradeship is masculinity, because masculinity is, at heart, a willingness to sacrifice oneself even unto violent, bloody death for the other.

-pp. 11

\*\* interesting social construction of masculinity; self sacrifice was also gendered with the first martyrs – Ste Perpetuas’ baby presented to her so that she denies her faith; young women Christian brought into prostitution houses and raped at repetition; see Ste Perpetua & Felicity, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perpetua>, which is opposed to other martyrs such as Polycarp, Polyeucte, etc