

## From the Surgeon:

### Is Manhood Killing You?

We have been molded by decades of 'Big boys don't cry', 'No pain-no gain', 'Mission first', 'Suck it up' & 'Push through the pain'.

We are primitive in the way we approach our health. Like animals defending our territory, we are afraid to show any sign of weakness. So for us, admitting that we need help is the same as admitting defeat.

Being a 'real man' is probably the biggest barrier between a man and his doctor. You can see this macho attitude at the forefront when a Comrade brags about not going to the doctor in years. Or when he ignores physical symptoms and carries on just like any other day. I have personally seen too many examples of the tendency for veterans to ignore symptoms and 'soldier on' regardless. I have also seen this inaction or delay result in what may well have been preventable surgeries & amputations- and even premature death.

Two related studies by Rutgers University School of Arts and Sciences researchers point out that the inherent beliefs of men on masculinity may compel them to ignore symptoms and/or delay preventative care and treatment until it is too late. Also, the usual suspects of denial, fear, apathy or simply 'being too busy' can also prevent some from taking action.

The reality is that the stereotypical macho male image of strength and invulnerability does us no favors at all; in fact it works against us by hindering our inclination towards health seeking behavior. To take charge of our own health, we need to break free of some of the personal and societal beliefs that have been instilled in us since childhood. We also need to make our personal health and wellbeing our mission-and conduct it just like we would any other mission.

**Post Surgeons (Follow-up from Aug. 2018):** How many Posts already have an AED? How many Post members are CPR qualified? Please send me your ideas about this and then let's make a plan and 'Get it Done'.

Yours in Comradeship & Well-Being,

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