

PSYCHOLOGY for the Fighting Man

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The War Within the Man

How to be brave and safe—that is the greatest psychological problem for the soldier. Most of the war neuroses (mental illness) result from the failure of men to find any sort of satisfactory way out of that dilemma. Every man is equipped with two kinds of deep-seated desires or instincts. Often these two conflict. One set has to do with his relations with other men—he wants to be one of the gang, appreciated and admired by the others, and he even likes to sacrifice himself for the good of the group to which he belongs, whether it is family, church, army or nation. But he has also another set of desires that cannot ever be entirely denied, desires connected with himself—his life, his comfort, his personal freedom.

A move to the war theater usually brings a crisis within the soldier as well as in the battle against the enemy. When a man finds himself close indeed to death, then his instinct of self-preservation makes every fiber of his being protest against facing the danger.

Yet his comrades, his officers, his country are all counting on him. If the personal instincts win the struggle, the man will run away or surrender. If the social instincts prevail, then he is the stuff of which all good soldiers are made. For a few this struggle ends in a stalemate—a compromise. That is what a war neurosis is. The man cannot bring himself to go forward, yet he is too conscientious to give up. He is not to be blamed. He is not a coward. If he were, he would have no mental conflict. He would see to it that he was not at the front but in a soft, safe job somewhere at a good distance. If necessary, he would desert. But he does not desert and still he does not fight.

On these pages YANK presents selections from *Psychology for the Fighting Man*, the new Infantry Journal book prepared for soldier readers by a committee of the National Research Council with the collaboration of Science Service. Material in the book was written and edited by 60 outstanding American psychologists, medical and military authorities.