

# Army War College leader heads to NASA's Mission to Mars

## Army War College leader heads to NASA's Mission to Mars

Oct. 9, 2015 -- An icon of the Army War College experience for more than a decade, Dr. Thomas Williams, retired Army colonel, is headed to NASA to be the senior psychologist for the Mission to Mars project.

Commandant Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp lauded Williams' contribution of "tremendous work" as the College leadership said

goodbye to the renowned lecturer and leader in the interrelated elements of senior leader resilience and effectiveness: health, nutrition, personal behaviors and habits, fitness, sleep, time



management, stress management and personal and professional relationships.

In the last 14 years, Williams has spread the 'good word' of senior leader resiliency knowledge to students and leaders of the Army War College, Marine War College, Air War College; he has addressed a wide variety of military, government, corporate executive development sessions about developing and sustaining leaders and about executive self-awareness. Because a key element of the leader development program is understanding of self, Williams directed the USAWC Strategic Leadership 360 Feedback Program in use at the Army and Air War

Colleges and by the flag officers of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Since 2012, Williams advised the USAWC commandant and thousands of students who have participated in any of the 16 strategic education courses here, as director of the Senior Leader Development and Resiliency Program. In his absence, that program will continue at the Army War College as part of the USAWC Center for Strategic Leadership.

Prior to 2012, then-Colonel Williams served as director of the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute. APFRI had been established in 1982, in an era unlike today's appreciation of fitness. In 1982, the APRFI was established as part of a comprehensive Army physical fitness system to promote a physical fitness lifestyle for leaders. Through the decades, APFRI's multidisciplinary staff addressed the nexus of nutrition, fitness and wellness through hard-data assessments and customized counseling -- considered a premier element of attendance at the Army War College.

Under Williams's leadership, APFRI extended the investment in hardy, resilient students by recreating the model at the Sergeants Major Academy in 2009, and the Command and General Staff College in 2007. When the U.S. Army established the Carlisle Barracks Army Wellness Center, Williams worked closely with the USAWC leadership to re-set selected educational components of the former APFRI. The Senior Leader Development and Resiliency Program was embedded in the Army War College as a senior leader educational program to complement the Army's health and wellness programs.

### ***Background***

Thomas J. Williams served as director of the USAWC Senior Leader Development and Resiliency Program, 2012-2015 and director of the USAWC Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, 2002-2012. He retired in 2010 from a 30-year Army career, during which he deployed with the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM and with Special Operations- South for OPERATION WILLING SPIRIT. During Pentagon duty, he designed the Medical Corps Optimization Study. At Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 1995 to '98, he served as both chief of the Department of Psychology and chief of the Strategic Planning Division. After duty as the command psychologist for the 902<sup>nd</sup> Military Intelligence Group, he served as director of the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, 2002-2012.

Williams holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Saint Louis University and a master's degree in Strategic Studies from the Army War College. He is co-editor of ***Ethical Practice in Operational Psychology: Military and National Intelligence Applications.***