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A commitment to senior leader development and education, the Strategic Leader Resiliency Program of the Army War College is an Army War College and TRADOC investment in the health of the force, working through its senior leaders.

Strengthening resiliency is at the heart of the Army's holistic efforts. The SL Resiliency Program incorporates a series of assessments and education throughout the year to optimize personal effectiveness at the strategic level of leadership.

The nexus of leadership, resiliency, and fitness is particularly relevant at the level of strategic leadership, where responsibilities demand a considerably higher degree of energy, stamina, resilience and fitness, said Dr. Thomas Williams, program director. The leadership feedback program, yearlong resiliency education opportunities delivered, and the Military Family Program suggest the scope of ways by which leader resiliency development is integrated into the Army War College experience for its students.

During the Combined/Joint Forces Land Component Commanders Course, in July, Williams addressed the flag officers whose future includes demanding scope of responsibilities. The senior students' reactions to his presentation revealed the important and unique context of health and fitness for senior leaders who tend to neglect themselves, to put mission first. Williams' thought-provoking review of senior leader health considerations prompted these comments:

- As senior leaders, we have to help our subordinates find a balanced approach to fitness, nutrition, sleep, etc.
- Topical subject, a long time coming. We need a culture that says, 'it's okay to look after yourself,' and that culture needs to be command led.

Williams's expertise was highlighted Aug. 3 in Orlando, Fla., when the Military division of the American Psychological Association honored him with two prestigious awards: the Nichols Award for work as a uniformed military clinical psychologist in service to military personnel and their families;

and the Uhlaner Award, shared with three others, for outstanding contributions in assessment and selection in the Special Forces community.

“I am honored,” said Williams, who is recently retired as an Army colonel. “The Robert Nichols Award would not have been possible without the great work and contributions of the Army Physical Fitness and Research Institute, where we took a program for 350 students and expanded it to 5000 in three years time.

“This [recognition] is a great tribute to the sacrifices that leaders and families have been making in support of national security,” said Williams about the former APFRI program and the new Strategic Leader Resiliency Program of the Army War College.

The Army War College’s leader-focused resiliency program is complemented by the new Army Wellness Center at Carlisle Barracks. The Army Wellness Center is one of the first across CONUS, focused on delivering personalized assessments and education for the post population.

“For 30 years, the APFRI program provided leaders the model for how to holistically integrate fitness, health and wellness programs. We served as a bridge between the operational and medical domain,” said Williams. “We’re happy to see the Army Wellness Centers championing the patient-centered medical home.”

The message at the Army War College is that leaders have the responsibility to develop themselves and those around them, suggested Williams. The Strategic Leader Resiliency Program and Army Wellness Center offer tools for leaders to better understand their own health and fitness, as well as focused and personalized ways to optimize health, fitness, and resiliency.