

APFRI opens new CGSC satellite facility

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Lt. Gen. William Caldwell IV, Commander of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth; Lt. Col. Georgette Diggs, deputy director CGSC APFRI annex; Maj. Gen. Robert Williams, commandant Army War College; Col. Tom Williams, director APFRI Army War College, cut the ribbon opening the new APFRI annex at the Command and General Staff College. U.S. Army photo by Prudence Siebert.



Jan. 8, 2009 -- A strong body and mind are vital to make any leader successful, no matter what level. That was the message as the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute celebrated the opening of their new \$1 million satellite facility at the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

This new collaboration brings 24 years of APFRI expertise to the 1,200 mid-grade officers attending the Command and General Staff College annually, as well as the staff and faculty of CGSC. APFRI has also opened its services to the family members of Soldiers in order to increase awareness, and to allow families as a whole to implement healthy lifestyle changes.

"While at Command and General Staff College, I ask each of our students to do three things -- reflect, rebalance, and refocus," said Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell, IV, commander, Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth. "For many, the rebalancing of their lives is the most difficult, especially in their physical fitness. This program will help them to do just that by providing not only an assessment but also a road map for physical fitness and wellness, both of which are crucial in our Soldiers today and tomorrow."

Since 1982, the Army Physical Fitness and Research Institute has assessed the health of senior officers during their time at the U.S. Army War College. They have developed a state-of-the-art health and fitness program specializing in the over 40 population.

"The expansion of APFRI's leader education program at CGSC reflects the Army's commitment to healthy, fit and strong leaders who will sustain healthy, fit and strong Soldiers," said Maj. Gen. Robert Williams, Army War College commandant.

In 2006, Gen. William Wallace, commanding general, Training and Doctrine Command, directed APFRI to expand their program to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. Through the years, the APFRI leader education programs evolved to address the complex interplay of leadership, health and fitness as a component of professional military education.

The Army is well known for its demanding and rigorous physical training, culminating semi-annually in a physical fitness test for all of its Soldiers. In the past, mid to upper level leaders have maintained the fitness level specified in the APFT, but have not necessarily focused on the "Formula for Fitness." This formula focuses on linking leader development with an enhanced understanding of how nutrition, aerobic conditioning and strength training combine in relation to disease prevention and body composition, enhancing both endurance and resiliency for our leaders. The stress and challenges of leadership can lead to increased blood pressure and high cholesterol which could develop into more serious conditions such as strokes or heart attacks.



The "Bod Pod" at the newly opening APFRI annex at the Command and General Staff College. U.S. Army photo.

"This program is changing lives – we've seen it happen right here already," said Caldwell. "We're excited to know the future impact it will have on the students and our entire force as they go out and share what they've learned with those

they will lead in the future."

The APFRI education process begins with an in-depth analysis of the individual's level of fitness and health, along with identified risk factors. The personalized and comprehensive assessment becomes the foundation for learning how to "reset" and "balance the Soldier" while reducing their risk for

life-threatening illnesses. Leaders then take these lessons to teach, coach, and mentor their subordinate leaders into developing a new and healthier force.

"It's about educating the force so they can be role models and they can go out and be those role models for their subordinates in the future," said Williams. "To show them what health and fitness means, and carry that forward in a century where we're going to have challenges as a nation and a people."

Education

Changing behavior through education is the goal of the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, according to Col. Tom Williams, APFRI director.

As part of the APFRI program, leaders undergo a complete health assessment. The assessments help to give the APFRI staff a baseline for each student's health, fitness, nutrition and well-being. From that information the staff is able to identify each individual's strengths and identify fitness and nutrition and behavioral changes that may be necessary. Then the APFRI staff provides information and guidance through classes and other educational opportunities.



Williams talks with visitors prior to the APFRI ribbon-cutting at the Command and General Staff College. U.S. Army photo.

"Almost everyone realizes that exercise and living a healthy lifestyle are important, but we seldom give ourselves time to do so," said Williams. "We try and help that by giving you the knowledge of what your risk factors are and by providing opportunities to learn how to deal with them."

The education aspect is one of the most important, according to Williams.

"The underpinning of the program is to push you into lessening your risk factors," he said. "The best way to do that is to educate you on what they are and what you can do to mitigate them. The benefit of the program is that it gives you an idea of your health relative to that of others in your age group."

(Editor Note: Some information in this story came from a CAC release)

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