

## ***Total Force Fitness for the 21st Century, A New Paradigm***

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In this issue of *Military Medicine*, Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff calls for a 21<sup>st</sup> century definition of fitness that recognizes the importance of a more holistic paradigm that balances performance and readiness with health and well-being. Only in this balance can the resilience and mission of the force be sustained. Samuelli Institute collaborated with the Consortium for Human and Military Performance (CHAMP) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), Institute for Alternative Futures and the office of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to respond to this call. A group of over 70 scientists, health, social, community and spiritual leaders, and leaders from the front lines was convened to help frame, define and tell us how to evaluate and measure what we need to keep our service members resilient and flourishing in the current environment.

Total Force Fitness envisions an integrated approach to fitness and readiness across the domains of military life: spiritual, psychological, behavioral, social, physical, nutritional, medical, and environmental. Total Force Fitness is the state in which the individual service member, family and organization can sustain optimal well-being and performance under all conditions. It encompasses the whole person and is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Total Force Fitness is a broad, multi-dimensional and comprehensive approach to the development of a total force that has achieved total fitness: is healthy, ready and resilient and is capable of meeting challenges and surviving threats.

Contributors to this issue further describe the domains of Total Force Fitness and the challenges presented by the implementation of a Total Force Fitness program. The adoption of this new paradigm will require a cultural shift toward a holistic view of health and fitness that includes both mind and body in the military. There is a need for guidance and assessment tools for commanders, education and training for leaders, and program development and evaluation. Despite these challenges, the integration of programs across the Total Force Fitness domains will more comprehensively address the needs of individual warriors, their families, organizations and communities to ensure a more fit and resilient military for the future.

The goal of this issue is not to describe the many existing programs or those in development to enhance fitness in the force, as that would be beyond the scope of this effort. It does attempt to provide the foundation for how any fitness program can be evaluated and compared, along with a summary of metrics that can be used for monitoring program effectiveness, and for improving and comparing those programs already in existence.

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