

Lessons in leadership

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What are the most important qualities in a leader? At the recent Leadership Pre-Command Course, or LPCC, incoming Defense Distribution Center commanders, directors, and deputy directors had the chance to find out from two experienced depot commanders, United States Army Col. David Rodriguez, former commander of Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, Calif., and United States Army Lt. Col. Bernard Warrington, commander of Defense Distribution Depot Corpus Christi, Texas.

“The two most important lessons I learned about being a commander are leadership and communication,” said Warrington. “The two things I did as soon as I became commander of DDCT were to make a charter and to develop my own leadership philosophy. I didn’t want to fall into the status quo. I wanted to make the depot better than it was, and I wanted to empower my workforce to make it better too.”

“Focusing on who you have on your staff is important,” said Rodriguez. “One of the things I started was the ‘A Day in the Shoes’ program, where I spent three hours with each of the first line DDJC supervisors. I was able



United States Army Col. David Rodriguez, former Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, Calif., commander, and United States Army Lt. Col. Bernard Warrington, Defense Distribution Depot Corpus Christi, Texas, commander, speak to members of the Leadership Pre-Command Course at the Defense Distribution Center on what they have learned as leaders.

to get a great feel for the DDJC culture, and it really helped me to understand each of their jobs. It’s important for each individual to know the business.”

Warrington and Rodriguez emphasized the Defense Logistics Agency director’s third focus area, Workforce Development, helping the new commanders with ideas on how to motivate and help employees.

Warrington recently developed a wellness program at DDCT, which included health screenings, a drinking and driving discussion, and a smoking cessation discussion. He believes that healthy employees are more productive and happier in the workplace.

Warrington developed a special

book club, where participants read a work-related book, and then come together during the lunch hour to discuss how the concepts in the book apply to DDCT. Warrington noted that in the first few weeks alone, six improvements were able to be identified and applied to the DDCT mission.

Doing small things for employees gives an incentive to improve, fostering a culture of continuous process improvement in the workplace.

“Meeting my workers where they are and helping them get to where they want to go is so important,” said Warrington. “You can always find new best business practices, and every day you have to break through the status quo to improve yourself and your workplace.”