



# What it takes to do distribution: Employee health and well-being

By Emily Blubaugh, DDC Public Affairs

It takes more than millions of square feet of warehouse space, Materiel Handling Equipment, commercial carriers, and intricate transportation routes and schedules for the Defense Distribution Center to meet its goal of providing effective and efficient support to military customers worldwide. Another important part of the equation is DDC's employees. With over 8,500 employees, DDC relies on those employees to be healthy in order to successfully and safely meet its mission of support to the Warfighter daily. This is why the Defense Distribution Depot Corpus Christi, Texas, has developed multiple health and fitness initiatives, enhancing each DDCT employee's individual fitness and well-being, as well as collectively improving DDC support to the Warfighter.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity is vital for one's overall health and well-being, and being active for 30-60 minutes on most days can help build strength and fitness, relax and reduce stress, increase energy, and improve sleep. As these benefits increase, risk to heart disease and other conditions, such as colon cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, and high blood pressure decrease. Thus, a healthier and fit workforce is a safer workforce.

DDCT has created a 1-year health and fitness challenge, which encourages employees to actively work towards a lifestyle change geared toward long-term results, rather than quick-fix weight loss, with emphasis on exercise and nutrition. With nearly fifty percent of DDCT personnel participating, the program was created to include numerous competitive categories, so that everyone be challenged and potentially win one of the competitive awards, which include greatest weight loss, greatest amount of body fat loss, greatest amount of workout sessions completed, and greatest distance walked or run amongst all competitors, all with over

and under 40 categories.

Accountability for participation is monitored by DDCT safety officer David Howard through the use of the "Visitor Log" located at the base fitness center, GPS running logs, or daily walking/running logs maintained by each individual and later reviewed by Howard. The "challenge" portion is monitored quarterly by Howard, with a quarterly winner awarded for each category.

To date, DDCT has experienced a total weight loss of 333 lbs, with over 1,000 miles and over 400 workout sessions logged, which not only benefits DDCT and its customers, but employees' personal goals as well.

Supplementing the fitness challenge, DDCT also recently hosted a Wellness Day, with the goal of providing employees with the resources and points of contact to enable them to take control of their health. The event provided the necessary tools for participants in the Fitness Challenge to reach their goals, as well as any employees who are simply interested in working toward a healthier lifestyle.

Employees had the opportunity to participate in various voluntary health screenings, which included lipid panel with glucose, blood pressure, body composition analysis, weight and body mass index measurements, counseling, and C-reactive protein tests.

"After speaking with the health professionals, there are participants that



**Warfighters rely on Defense Distribution Depot Corpus Christi, Texas, employees to complete helicopter repairs missions, and to do so, employees need to lead healthy, active lives. Photo by CCAD Public Affairs.**

will be following up with their personal doctors. This tells me that we certainly helped individuals to discover potential health problems earlier than they may have otherwise," said Howard

Over 120 employees took advantage of the opportunity to receive valuable information from professionals in various health related fields, which included overall health and wellness, dental health, smoking cessation, substance abuse, and nutrition.

"We know that a fitter, healthier workforce tends to be a safer workforce. However, the best part of this initiative is a happier workforce, and to know that these folks are taking these lifestyle changes home to their loved ones and improving their everyday lives is fantastic, and I look forward to everyone reaching their goals," said DDCT commander United States Army Lt. Col. Bernard Warrington, Jr.

Without a healthy workforce, DDCT would be unable to complete helicopter repair missions, supporting Warfighters worldwide. The receipt, storage, packing, preservation, and issue mission relies on DDCT employees, and with current fitness and well-being initiatives in place, DDCT's future looks healthy.