

# NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE

## LT. DREW LEBLANC LAFAYETTE PARRISH (LA) SO



After serving our country in the United States Navy from 2005 to 2009, Drew LeBlanc began his criminal justice career as a corrections deputy with the Lafayette Parrish Sheriff's Office in 2010. He quickly transitioned to patrol deputy a year later and was then

assigned as a crimes-against-persons detective. Concurrent to that, LeBlanc also served a police sergeant with the U.S. Army (Louisiana Army National Guard). He progressed through the ranks of his organization and now serves as the research and development lieutenant, as well as the deputy SWAT commander. LeBlanc holds a master of science in criminal justice, with a concentration in criminological theory, from Arizona State University and is working on a Ph.D. in data integration and behavioral science.

**Q: YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN SEVERAL SPECIALIZED ASSIGNMENTS AND WORK FOR A VARIETY OF LEADERS. WHAT LEADERSHIP TRAITS HAVE BENEFITTED YOU ALONG THE WAY?**

**A:** The most substantial leadership traits that have been beneficial to me are integrity and self-understanding. Serving in the U.S. military and now as a law enforcement officer, what you do when no one is looking is crucial in

leadership. You have to be the man everyone thinks you are for people to follow you. Leadership is a continuous uphill battle that can go one of two ways: success or failure. Failure to lead is a failure in your understanding of yourself and where you may have shortcomings. Understanding your weaknesses will allow you to attack those shortcomings in a controlled and beneficial manner. If you are not willing to accept that you may not be the best leader in all aspects, you are doing yourself a disservice. My major, Dondi Hardin, gave me one of the best leadership statements I have received in my young career. He stated, "Leadership is a struggle every day, but embracing those struggles is what makes you better. Build yourself a team of people who will make you better, and give them the resources to accomplish their goals. Be slow to act and open to listening, and understand that leadership is a growing process. Keep your head up and believe in yourself."

**Q: YOUR CURRENT ROLE AS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LIEUTENANT, AND THE DEGREE PROGRAM YOU ARE IN, SUGGEST THAT YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPING TRENDS. WHAT LED YOU TO THIS AND HOW DO YOU SEE IT BENEFITING LAW ENFORCEMENT?**

**A:** Since I was young, my life goal was to keep people safe. I joined the military to fight for my country, and I became a deputy sheriff to protect my community. As I progressed through my law enforcement career, it was clear that we were reactive in our endeavors. As much as we try to be proactive, some things occur which always push us back on our heels. When I completed my master's degree, I finally understood where law enforcement could be proactive, and that is in the understanding of criminals, the criminalization process, lower socio-economic effects, mental health and data. Data is the most underutilized component in law enforcement. Yes, many agencies use data, but it is a 10th of the capabilities. Understanding the power in data to establish crime trends, hot spot zones, lower socio-economic downfalls, and mental health issues allows us, as law enforcement, to allocate the appropriate resources in the most beneficial manner possible. The way we, as law enforcement, disseminate information is how we continuously become proactive. Opening up the flow of information, and having someone who understands how to understand that data, is where true progression sits.

**Q: HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE BENEFITING YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS DEPUTY SWAT COMMANDER?**


**A:** I did not have pre-conceived notions of what the NTOA Command College would give me, but I can say it has joyfully exceeded my expectations. The Command College gives you the keys to become a successful leader, as long as you apply those principles effectively. Many of the lessons dial deep into the art of quality and effective leadership, but I can see where some may dismiss things that may make them uncomfortable. The biggest thing that I take away from each lesson is to humble myself and soak up all the information to make me better. I have seen a dramatic change in my leadership approach since starting the Command College. I have a better understanding of how to lead and see the benefit in collecting feedback across all aspects of my decision-making. If you are wondering if this is for you, it is in every way. It will challenge your thinking and will make you a great SWAT commander. Just as we expect the best from our operators, we must expect the best from ourselves, and the Command College will push you to be your best self.

**Q: AS PART OF THE COMMAND COLLEGE PROGRAM, YOU WERE ASKED TO SELECT A CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT. WHAT TOPIC DID YOU SELECT AND WHY?**

**A:** I wrote my paper on generational leadership within SWAT command. I chose this topic because I am young in my law enforcement career (seven years), but I have had the opportunity in my career and education to understand the multifaceted pendulum of leadership. I wanted to give constructive feedback on the generational styles of autocratic, laissez-faire and democratic leadership. The more I asked people about their leadership style, the more it was clear that their interpretations of leadership principles were misguided. Yes, as generations change so does the style that you choose to lead, but with the growing millennial workforce, leadership is more on the hot seat than ever before. Leadership is getting the best out of your employees, and making them successful. To do that we have to understand that the way we lead must adapt to the person we are leading. There is no more de facto leadership style, but a combination of different associated leadership principles. Generational leadership will continue to change as the torch of leadership is passed within organizations, but I wanted to shed light on both shortfalls and understandings of progressive leadership principles.

**Q: WHAT FEEDBACK WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER ASPIRING LEADERS WHO MAY BE CONSIDERING THE COMMAND COLLEGE PROGRAM?**

**A:** If you are an aspiring leader or one with experience, this Command College is for you. It will challenge your way of thinking and push you to be better. It will flush out your preconceived notions of how SWAT leadership is supposed to work and give you fundamental principles to make anyone successful. Understand leadership is a journey, not a race, and we owe it to the people we lead to be the best versions of ourselves every day. The Command College will get you there. SWAT command is something not everyone will have the opportunity to have in their lifetime, but leadership skills are something we can all strive to have. Yes, the Command College will help you become a better commander, but it will make you an overall better leader. I wish you all the best in your leadership journeys and hope you give the Command College serious consideration. You owe it to yourself. God bless. ■



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BEEN THERE AND DONE THAT?**

The NTOA Command College isn't just for aspiring leaders, it's also the perfect opportunity for experienced tactical team leaders and commanders to validate the leadership philosophies and tactical concepts that they may already know. Through video lectures, quizzes, discussion forums and writing assignments, you'll be able to demonstrate your knowledge of tactical leadership skills. Seasoned leaders in this program often excel at the assigned tasks, as they have numerous experiences to draw from.

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