



United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
INSIDE SWCS

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SWCS-
MAVERICKS OF TRAINING

By Angela E. Kershner

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Years of innovation and hard work were officially recognized March 15 when Preston Short, a training specialist at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, was presented with the prestigious dL Maverick Award at the ninth annual Army Distributed Learning Conference.

Created in 2007 by self-professed “maverick” Dr. Connie Wardell, the director of the Individual Training Support Directorate for the U.S. Army Training Support Center, the purpose of the award is to salute fellow mavericks in the field of distributive learning.

“[The award] is to recognize personnel who are out-of-the-box thinkers,” said Trientje Tippens, Army dL Conference Coordinator for the ATSC.

Short, one of eight dL Maverick finalists Army-wide, serves as the supervisory training specialist for the Office of Interactive Multimedia Instruction in the SWCS Directorate of Training and Doctrine.

Returning to government service after Sept. 11, Short draws on his own training and real world experience as a former Special Forces operator as well his passion for and knowledge of video gaming to run the unique and progressive in-house gaming development division.

In less than five years, Short brought the concept of using gaming in SWCS distributed learning from an idea to reality, building a team that has the capabilities to make it happen.

“I surrounded myself with people that could get me to the vision of where we were going,” said Short. With another former-SF operator and

“SWICK” HITS

VIRTUAL BATTLE SPACE

For more information on Virtual Battlespace 2, please visit their Web site at <http://www.vbs2.com/>

POLICY CHANGE

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has announced a change in the enforcement of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

For Public Affairs Guidance on this change check out the USASOC portal.

<https://portal.soc.mil/C7/C12/PA%20Guidance/default.aspx>

SAFETY AWARD

Congratulations to Maj. Stephen Wargo, 1st SWTG (A) and Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Ceballos, SWMG(A), for earning Department of the Army level safety awards; look for an article on the SWCS safety program in next week's edition of the Paraglide.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.
-Mark Twain

gaming enthusiast Andy Brittenham, and two programmers lured from high-end gaming companies, Short's office is creating dL materials that they hope will compete with commercial video games.

Short credits that team, the products they have created and many others who made the gaming division possible, with winning the dL Maverick award.

"I felt proud initially — then awkward," said Short. "Those are the guys that bring it to life. For me to accept the award as if I'm the only one that completed the race ... it's just awkward. To me, dL has always been a team effort, not an individual effort. That was kind of a humbling thing."

Col. David Witty, director of DOTD, nominated Short for the award because he is a recognized pioneer in his field.

"It's just phenomenal what all he's done," said Witty. "Anything that happens in the battlefield we can recreate digitally with very good effects in VBS2."

Virtual Battle Space 2 is the program Short and his team uses that allows for realistic battlefield simulations.

"Gaming teaches you collaboration," said Short. "We can do stuff in real time. It minimizes inaccuracies of interpretation and allows guys to rehearse, replay, rewind, redact and recount — all in an illustrative way."

Witty appreciates the future possibilities of using gaming to train troops. "This new generation of kids — we call them digital natives — this just attracts young people," said Witty. "They absorb information differently than we do."

Aside from the efforts of his team and the quality of the products IMI is producing, Short sees the dL Maverick Award as much more than a recognition of their efforts.

"The special thing about that Maverick Award," said Short, "is that it recognizes the out-of-the-box thinking that's prevalent here at SWCS."



Supervisory Training Specialist Preston Short, Directorate of Training and Doctrine at SWCS was presented with the dL Maverick Award during the dL Conference at the Marriott in Newport News, Va. on Monday, March 15, 2010. (Photo by Charlie Alston)