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STAR



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Welcome to the sixth edition of the dL STAR!

As the new TRADOC Capabilities Manager (TCM) for The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP), I am proud to introduce this issue of the dL Star. I have worked in policy and planning with the US Army and Joint Community for some time and I look forward to my endeavors in distributed Learning (dL), and to working with representatives and schools in the dL community. I hope to bring new ideas and policies to improve dL today and beyond.

This is an important time for dL in the Army, as we are taking multiple progressive steps that will allow us to further leverage technology and current capabilities to meet the training needs of the Army. TADLP has recently begun a series of sensing sessions with proponent schools designed to obtain vital, constructive feedback regarding dL from stakeholders and foster better, ongoing communication with the schools.

Our near-term priorities will be to take an enterprise level look at dL in terms of requirements and programs. Our current priorities are: 1) dL and ATIA Governance; 2) installation scheduling capability; 3) enterprise view of Black Board usage; 4) ALMS/Black Board Integration; 5) dL enterprise level review. As our customers we will look to you for input on requirements, priorities, and what our strategy needs to be.

Our office continues to receive an immense amount of feedback on the dL Star from the field and dL training community. Our subscriber list grows with each publication. If you know of anyone who would benefit from receiving the dL Star, encourage them to subscribe. For questions on dL or to share a good news dL story, contact our team at: distributed.learning@us.army.mil. We are here to serve you!

COL Robert C. Morris, Jr.
TCM TADLP



SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP

DETC's Re-Accreditation Certificate

On Feb 27, 2008, the Army Training Support Center (ATSC) Executive Director, Mr. Lou Iorizzo, presented the Director, Individual Training Support Directorate, Dr. Connie Wardell and Division Chief, Training Services Support Division, Mrs. Carol Washington with the Distance Education and Training Council's (DETC) re-accreditation certificate of the Army Institute for Professional Development (AIPD) at Building 3306.

Founded in 1926, the DETC is a non-profit educational association and nationally recognized accrediting agency located in Washington D.C. Accredited institutions include degree-granting institutions, high schools, and post-secondary institutions. Besides AIPD, the DETC also accredits the Marine Corps Institute and the Air Force Institute for Advanced Distributed Learning.

The DETC re-accreditation certificate certifies that the U.S. AIPD "has been duly examined and been found to meet the Educational and Ethical Business Standards for the Accrediting Commission of the DETC on the 1st day of June 1978 and most recently re-accredited on the 12th day of January 2008." The presentation called attention to the fact that AIPD has been accredited by DETC for 30 years.

Formerly a directorate, AIPD is currently a virtual institution used to assist ITSD in accomplishing its dL functions and responsibilities in acting as the centralized hub between TRADOC proponent schools and the individual Soldier. The re-accreditation visiting team noted that AIPD administered some **370,000 annual enrollments** in the courses managed by the institute and shipped over **170,000** courses including CD-ROMS and supplemental materials for dL courses such as maps, protractors, and other materials via the U.S. Postal Service needed by Soldiers to complete their dL learning.

Additionally, the institute annually responds to some **42,000** telephone, e-mail and letter requests for assistance and enrollments. This does not include the millions of dollars that are awarded and managed for the development of dL training products and also have to be tested and certified before they are fielded and made available to students. The re-accreditation visiting team recognized the efforts being made to best utilize technology to support Soldiers efforts to received individual training. This team also noted that while "technology is being implemented; ... [it] is not yet fully integrated and not fully operational. As a result, personnel responsible for the educational services function must manage data and processes from several sources and systems. However, one marvels at the ability of these personnel to manage and sustain quality service for so many students."

While the culmination of the re-accreditation effort was the presentation of the certificate on Feb 27, 2008, preparation for the re-accreditation effort began in October 2006. ITSD confirmed it would seek re-accreditation of its virtual institution and that the re-accreditation would include all dL programs and services managed by ITSD. They selected a tentative date for the DETC re-accreditation team visit (Aug 14-15, 2007).

Preparation for the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to be sent to DETC began. Once that preparation was completed, assignments for each section of the SER were made. These sections included institutional history (concentrating on the five years since 2002); organization (including AIPD relationship to ATSC and within TRADOC); legal form and governance; other accreditations; mission and objectives; educational program objectives, curricula, and materials; educational services; student services; student achievement and satisfaction; qualifications of institution personnel; admission practices and enrollments agreements; advertising and promotional literature; financial responsibility; plant, equipment and record protection; and research and self-improvement.



The SER looked at what the institute had accomplished since its last re-accreditation in 2002 and the current status of the institute. They stated and described its business practices, what the goals are and the challenges the institute faces to obtain these goals. Preparing the SER for AIPD was most challenging. Unlike most of the institutions which DETC accredits, their responses covered all the dL programs and services administered and managed by ITSD. This consisted of the Army Correspondence Course Program (ACCP); The Army Training Systems Courses (TATS-C) which included a dL phase; staff and faculty; and Teletraining Network/Satellite Education/Network (TNET/SEN).

The AIPD's re-accreditation effort did not solely consist of preparing a self-evaluation report (SER) with its supporting exhibits. DETC mailed student surveys to 100 students. DETC reviewed and evaluated a sampling of 20 courses in the three dL programs managed by ITSD. The AIPD coordinated with Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) to conduct a video teleconference (VTC) with training developers at three schools to discuss the proponent school's role in training development and their relationship with ITSD. The VTC was conducted Aug 15, during DETC's re-accreditation visit. During the DETC re-accreditation team's visit, team members interviewed ITSD's team chiefs, division chiefs, and the director regarding their roles, responsibilities and the functions performed by individuals under their supervision. The team was also briefed on the Army Training Help Desk (ATHD), its functions and how it related to dL training. The re-accreditation team received demonstrations on the Army Training Information Architecture – Reimer Digital Library (ATIA-RDL) with the dL courseware found within it and the Army's Interim Learning Management System (ILMS) – the TRADOC Educational System – Redesign (TREDs-R) including how testing and grading was performed.

One of the great benefits of having an outside, independent agency evaluate the institution is getting an honest appraisal of the institution and getting different insights on the challenges that institution faces. However, for evaluation and any



recommendations and/or suggestions to have real meaning, the individuals conducting that evaluation must have a firm understanding of the environment upon which to base their comments. Of the five individuals on the DETC re-accreditation visiting team, the Executive Director and the Subject Specialist are retired Army

personnel. The Educational Standards Evaluator for the team is the Academic Advisor for the U.S. Air Force Institute for Advanced Distributed Learning. In mid-October, ITSD received a copy of the Chair's Report to the Accreditation Commission.

The evaluated institution is given an opportunity to review the report and prepare a response. Typically this response is to thank the DETC re-accreditation visiting team for its visit and assistance. However, there are times when the evaluated institution may feel that the team failed to give due consideration to some things, or that some areas need additional clarification. This is the opportunity to call the Accreditation Commission's attention to those items. The response also explains to the Accreditation Commission how the institution plans to implement or deal with any recommendations that might have been made by the DETC.

AIPD's response was sent to the DETC Accreditation Commission in December, 2007. As an accredited institution, AIPD understood that the DETC Accreditation Commission could have reached one of four decisions regarding its status.

1. Continue an institution's accredited status.
2. Continue accreditation with conditions which the institution must agree to meet within a period not to exceed 12-months.
3. Defer a decision for a period not to exceed 12-months, pending receipt of a progress report, or submission of additional information, and possibly a follow-up visit.
4. Withdraw accreditation from an accredited institution.



On January 12, 2008, the DETC Accreditation Commission consisting of nine-members voted unanimously to re-accredit the AIPD without condition for a five-year period through 2012.

POC: Edward McCool, edward.mccool@us.army.mil.

Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS) Conducts Workshop for Forum Leaders

New and experienced forum facilitators exchange ideas and tips on managing online forums

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. (February 13, 2008) - "If you build it, they will come" according to the famous line in the movie *Field of Dreams*. Not necessarily so, as facilitators of Army online Professional Forums were reminded during a recent week-long workshop to sharpen their collaboration skills.

Hosted by BCKS at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, the workshop provided an opportunity for both new and experienced forum leaders and facilitators to share insights and experiences about Knowledge Management (KM) and how to enable Soldiers to connect through the online communities. Workshop members listened to guest speakers, shared experiences, and participated in practical exercises about techniques and skills for managing forum conversations.

Army Professional Forums are online spaces for leaders to create and share their knowledge and experience. The Forums offer the opportunity to connect with other community members to focus on professional development and job performance in a specific practice (operations officer or commander) or a functional area (logistics, intelligence). The [Forums](#) are similar to civilian Communities of Practice but with more structure, facilitation and a clear link to supporting the organization's mission. The workshop helped identify and transfer best practices for creating and moderating conversations among the facilitators and community leaders in attendance.

"Eighty percent of what we use on the job today we learn informally. The forums offer the Army a new way of structuring and maximizing that informal learning opportunity while building a sense of community identity and trust," said retired Lt. Col. Mike Prevou, Ph.D., BCKS Knowledge Network Division chief. "Army professional forums are transformational. They are the beginning of a revolutionary shift based on Web 2.0 capabilities. They are moving us into the next generation of learning," Prevou added.

"First and second generation knowledge management currently used by the Army is no longer sufficient to win the learning competition required of an Army at war," said BCKS Director Col. James Galvin. "The next generation of KM focuses on collaboration and this workshop helped us build collaboration skills across the force. The workshop members were able to take what someone else is doing and tailor it to their forum."

Facilitators support the Army communities and knowledge networks by helping people find what they need, connecting them with subject matter experts and conducting professional dialogue to help solve problems. Joining the group of more than 40 defense contractors, Department of the Army civilians and Leaders from across the country were two Air Force officers from the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, who run the Air Force's online professional forum, "Commander's Connection."

Richard McDermott, a leading author and consultant on designing knowledge organizations and building communities of practice, reminded workshop attendees that the key role of facilitators is one of service in connecting the members of their network to both the knowledge they need and experts in their community who can help them. McDermott commented that trust is the glue that holds communities together. Just as physical teams develop trust so must these virtual communities. Being able to go to one source for knowledge about a particular topic can help deal with the daily information overload of data and messages from the Internet, radio, TV, text messaging and newspapers.



"And it won't be getting better anytime soon," said McDermott. "Technical knowledge has doubled every 12 years...by 2010, technical knowledge will double every 72 hours, vs. the 18-month rate in 2006."

Representatives from the Army's Company Command Forum, including one of its founders, Lt. Col. Tony Burgess, Ph.D., conducted one day of the workshop. One of the Army's earliest professional forums, Company Command, is a grass-roots, voluntary forum for former, current and future company commanders to connect and share ideas and experiences.

"The first thing we learn about KM is that it is about people and that the ability of community leaders to facilitate, lead and moderate a discussion is paramount to creating and capturing knowledge that is in our heads and sharing it with others so they can learn from others' experiences," commented Dr. Rick Morris, Program Manager, Computer Sciences Corporation, who conducts BCKS for the Army. "The counter insurgency war we are engaged in is a learning competition...those who learn the fastest will prevail," said Morris. "Knowledge networks provide a powerful weapon in the Army's effort to out-think, out-learn and defeat adversaries."

BCKS hosts 80 online Professional Forums with more than 92,000 members. The Forums help Soldiers and Leaders learn better...and faster. "What are the tools I need to do my job? Where do I find them? How do I get that experience? How do I share what I know with other Soldiers doing a similar job?" said Prevou, "These questions are at the heart of what being a facilitator is all about: How do I help my peers learn faster and perform better?"

BCKS and the Combined Arms Center provide the software and servers on which the Professional Forums are run, as well as KM training courses, KM doctrine development, KM handbooks, Knowledge assessments, digital storytelling methods, tailored knowledge centers, a network of KM advisors and assistance in designing and developing professional forums.

KM trainers from BCKS travel across the Army to provide training and education on KM best practices. An 18-hour curriculum called "KM Bootcamp" prepares Brigade and Division KM cells to function as working KM organizations. Additionally, BCKS helps units create a virtual right seat ride (vRSR), which allows unit commanders and their battle-staffs to interact with forward deployed units, especially with the units they will replace, in near real-time, to transfer knowledge quicker. The vRSR also enables individual Soldiers and teams to assist peers by providing a place to transfer know-how, experience, insight and lessons learned.

BCKS creates online knowledge centers as a collaboration tool to link unit headquarters with subordinate units to exchange knowledge and participate in other online discussions. The password-protected sites are accessible worldwide from anywhere there is an Internet connection.

The workshop leaders reminded participants that the size of a forum is not important – the quality of the conversations, energy of topic leaders, exchange of knowledge and the ability of the forum to meet the needs of that community are what's important. "If there is one thing I have learned in the 7 years I have been doing this is that KM, learning and performance is about people. If we invest the time in developing, capturing and sharing our best practices, we will truly become a coaching organization capable of winning the learning competition," Prevou said.

About BCKS

Headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the BCKS is a subordinate organization of the CAC. As CAC's lead agent for implementing Army Operational Knowledge Management (AOKM) across the Army, BCKS is responsible for developing and implementing KM products and services that support collaboration among Soldiers and units. BCKS hosts 80 online professional forums that serve the needs of more than 92,000 Active, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers.

<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/bcks>



SECTION 2: TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Sensing Sessions

The TCM TADLP is conducting a series of meetings with Army dL proponents who have a proven track record and vested interest in dL. These meetings are Sensing Sessions designed to gather feedback on dL in the Army, how TADLP can improve to best meet the needs of schools and Soldiers and how dL capabilities can best support the Army training community. Feedback received from proponents during Sensing Sessions will enable the TCM TADLP to adjust policies, systems and procedures to better support the Army through dL training. If representatives from TRADOC schools are interested in participating in a Sensing Session and would like to set up a meeting via teleconference or an Adobe Connect session, please contact Ms. Kimberly McDaniels, (kimberly.mcdaniels@us.army.mil) for more information.

Army e-Learning Custom-Path Solutions Simplify Access to Training

Training managers can design a specific solution to meet their organization's unique needs

Army commands, components and functional communities are increasingly taking advantage of custom-path, web-based solutions to meet their unique training needs. The custom-path approach combines high-quality, off-the-shelf courseware into a well-defined online package that delivers a specific learning solution designed for the organization. Implementing these custom solutions enables the Army to more fully leverage its existing training content while delivering significant value to individual organizations, enabling each organization to more effectively meet its goals and develop the skills of its personnel.

Army e-Learning, a component of the Army's Distributed Learning System (DLS), works with Army organizations and training managers to help implement their requirements. Organizations identify the courses in the Army e-Learning catalog that meet their training requirements and needs, and the Army e-Learning Program Office bundles the selected courses into the specialized unique training custom path. The customized offerings ensure users can easily access and navigate through required training modules without having to struggle with multiple steps, interfaces and web-navigation styles. Personnel also find it easier to understand the big picture of how individual courses contribute to larger learning objectives.

"The Army e-Learning staff is available to assist Army organizations to implement a custom-path solution to address their individualized learning objectives," explained Stan Davis, Deputy Product Manager for DLS and Project Officer for Army e-Learning. "We provide this service not only because it extends the value of the Army's online training resources, but it also enables Army personnel and organizations to more readily acquire important skills and knowledge."

Studies conducted by the Army Research Institute and the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) corroborate findings from academic institutions and commercial enterprises on the effectiveness of web-based training solutions. Not only has web-based training been proven to be effective within a wide variety of learning situations, it has also been shown to reduce the time of instruction by 20 to 40 percent and reduce the cost of instruction by 30 to 60 percent.

There are other important reasons Army organizations are turning to web-based and custom-path solutions. Personnel are often faced with demanding day-to-day work requirements that make it difficult to attend traditional classroom-based training sessions. In addition, by centralizing administration of the Web-based courseware, Army e-Learning is able to ensure excellence in all of its training content and deliver it 24x7 to any of the Army's 1.4 million uniformed and civilian personnel worldwide.

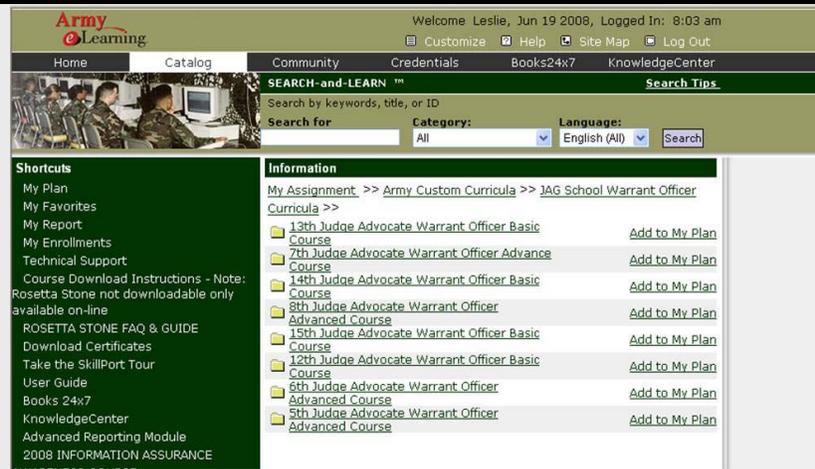


CW4 Aaron Rasmussen, who manages the Army's JAG Warrant Officer curriculum, spoke about the value of custom-path solutions, saying, "Like many organizations in today's Army, the personnel enrolled in JAG Warrant Officer training need to develop advanced skills, yet we're all constrained by time. However, by offering 145 hours of specifically selected courses within a custom-path solution, our personnel have been able to acquire key skills and knowledge in a much more flexible manner. Not only are the courses available as time permits, but some of the courses are also offered with options to either read or listen to the material."

DLS provides all of the necessary technical resources to deploy the course content and integrate it within the Army Learning Management System (ALMS) and Army Knowledge Online (AKO). Investigation is underway for Army e-Learning to integrate or interface with DLS ALMS to allow AKO type Single Sign-On. This will also streamline the processes of managing training resources and enables personnel to begin and resume training at their convenience.

All Army organizations can benefit from custom-path solutions. Army e-Learning offers more than 2,600 training courses in the areas of information technology, foreign languages, business, leadership and professional development. Additionally, Army e-Learning eliminates the cumbersome administrative processes that are often associated with registering for traditional training offerings. The program is centrally funded so the courses are offered at no charge to the Army employee and their organization, which not only greatly streamlines administration, but also reduces total training costs for the Army.

The 21st century Army requires training solutions that can rapidly adapt to changing needs, and custom-path solutions are helping to meet those needs. Web-based learning is having a strategic impact on Army training efforts by essentially eliminating the barriers of time and location that previously stood between personnel and important skills development and knowledge acquisition. And by offering custom-path



Screen shot of JAG School Warrant Officer curricula custom path

solutions, Army e-Learning is ensuring training managers have the capabilities they need to get the greatest possible results from their individual training programs.

DTF Utilization Increase Boon to Soldier Training

Since its inception in 1998, the Army's Distributed Learning System (DLS) Program's Digital Training Facilities (DTFs) utilization rates have been steadily increasing. In the first four months of fiscal year 2008, over 100,000 students - active duty, reserve and Department of Army civilians - have spent over 81,000 hours training in DTFs. And with courses like the Basic Non-Commissioned Officer's Common Core Course (BNCOC), Battle Staff, Defense Travel System, Instructors Training Course and Company First Sergeant training being routinely held in different facilities across the globe, that number is only expected to grow. And the people behind the scenes who facilitate the success of the DTFs have some very different ideas about why utilization is currently at an all-time high.

There are multiple advantages for both the Army and the individual Soldier in using DTFs for common training courses. "Digital training facilities keep the Soldiers at their home station whenever possible, save the government the costs of temporary duty (TDY) travel, and multiply the training dollars by enabling a single instructor to train Soldiers at multiple sites," says James Reynolds, DLS Fielding Manager in the Asia-Pacific region. Additional benefits are the ability for the TRADOC to standardize training materials so that Soldiers are



receiving the same instruction no matter where they take the course and the capability for Soldiers to complete mission-critical or career progression training at any location; especially important with current world events and deployment timelines.

Reserve Use

Glen Maravillas, Chief of Operations and Sustainment for the DLS Program Management Office (PMO), who oversees all of the DTFs across the globe, sees new user groups taking courses in the DTFs as a significant factor behind utilization increases. One of those is the Army Reserve. "The Army Reserve is going through a training transformation of their own," says Maravillas. "They have designated certain locations, which have DTFs, as training locations."

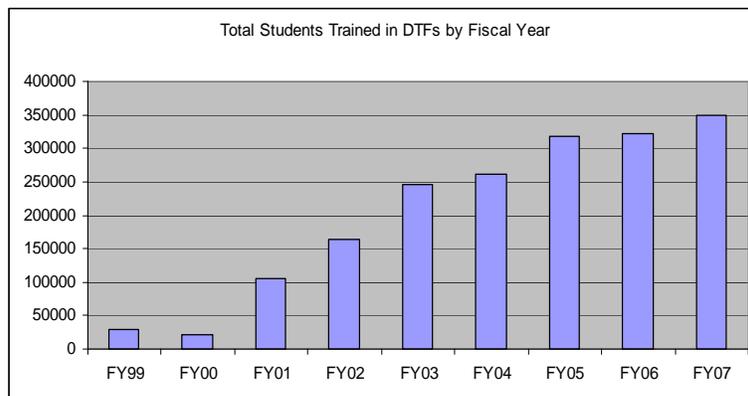
Maravillas says that the Army Reserve is using the facilities for reclassification and resident instructor-led training. "As a result, we've seen a huge increase in utilization rates in places like Fort Hunter Liggett in California, Fort Dix and Fort McCoy."

Refreshed Equipment

But even with different user populations wanting to train in DTFs, it can't be done without keeping the facilities' equipment refreshed and up-to-date. Recently, 59 DTF locations were refurbished with new personal computers, monitors, servers and printers.

"It was a big job," says Nina Robinson, DLS Fielding Manager, in charge of keeping DTFs operational. "It involved over 2,200 pieces of new equipment."

Reynolds says that having new and reliable equipment makes all the difference. "Before, a lot of times people wouldn't come into the classrooms because they felt they weren't up to the standards of Army computer equipment." But with the recent refresh, DTFs at sites like Wainwright and Fort Richardson more than doubled their utilization rates.



"The new equipment made a big difference, restoring command confidence in the DTF capability to support Soldier training events" Reynolds says. "A lot of Soldiers are coming back and they are utilizing the DTFs to take the training they need."

Good Management

Reynolds says that another factor that can't be overlooked is the individual DTF managers who work day-in and day-out at each facility. "The first line of promotion is inside the classroom," he says. "The manager tells the students what the DTF is for and how the DTF can be used to support Soldier trainer requirements. The manager then lets the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and Officers know that it's their DTF and can be used to get their Soldiers trained."

And of course, by keeping the classroom up and running to support various Soldier training events, the DTF manager is also illustrating the fact that the facility is a reliable training support product.

Command Education

And promotion is important. Some training decision-makers are still wary of distributed learning for military professional development, so those involved with DTFs need to educate Soldiers, NCOs, Commanders and Staff about the advantages of using the DTF for training.

"Schools training is universal for the Army," says Reynolds. "But if you don't have the applicable G-3 component command on track to use the DTFs for Schools training,



you won't see high utilization rates."

In the Pacific and Caribbean regions, where Reynolds oversees DTFs in Korea, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, he went to key commanders to promote the DTF capabilities and its role in supporting Soldier training events. "I made them aware of what the DTFs have to offer and how courses like BNCOC and 1SG Courses can be held in the DTF," he said.

That effort paid off. The commands instituted training plans and policies that made the Asia and Pacific region DTFs the center piece for schools training events. Pacific DTFs sites that consistently had very low utilization rates began to see their utilization rates skyrocket to new highs. Reynolds states, "DLS is very grateful to 8th Army G-3 and the United States Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) G-3 for making the DTFs part of their Soldier training support plans."

Because of all of these reasons, each day more and more Soldiers are learning about the benefits of training in the DTFs. To learn more about the Army's Distributed Learning System (DLS) program and their Digital Training Facilities, visit <http://www.dls.army.mil>.

8th Annual dL Workshop

Army Training Support Center (ATSC) will host its 8th Annual distributed Learning (dL) Workshop 10-12 March 2009. This year's theme is "Blurring the Lines between Resident and Non-resident: Blended dL Strategies." The Sergeant Major of the Army, SMA Kenneth O. Preston, is Keynote Speaker during the first day's events. In conjunction with the workshop, on 9 Mar, the Technical Change Control Board (TCCB) for the Distributed Learning Education and Training Products (DLETP) Delivery Order template will take place. Last year's workshop was very successful and we hope to make this year's just as informative. Please mark your calendars to attend the next ATSC dL Workshop in March 2009.

SECTION 3: SOLDIER'S CORNER

The dL STAR wants to hear from you!

Email the dL STAR at distributed.learning@us.army.mil if you would like to be added to our distribution list, if you know someone who would be interested in receiving the dL STAR, or if you have a dL related article or link that you would like to see posted in the next issue.

Do you have a question or issue on dL Training? Lost a password?

Contact the Army Training Help Desk (ATHD) at www.tradoc.army.mil/athd.htm for help!!

dL Resources

- @ The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP)
www.tradoc.army.mil/tadlp
- @ Distributed Learning System (DLS)
www.dls.army.mil
- @ Army e-Learning
www.us.army.mil , select "My Education"
- @ Army Training Support Center (ATSC)
www.atsc.army.mil
- @ Soldier Training Homepage
www.train.army.mil