



ROTC Instructor of the Year

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Col. George Armstrong III beats out 270 nominees for prestigious award

By Rene De La Cruz
APPLE VALLEY REVIEW

APPLE VALLEY • Out of 270 nominees, from the United States and abroad, retired U.S. Air Force Col. George Armstrong III (pictured, right) was chosen for the 2011 Outstanding Air Force Junior ROTC Instructor of the Year.

Armstrong, who teaches Senior Aerospace Science at the Academy for Academic Excellence, was honored by the Department of the Air Force, Air University.

“I was in shock when I heard the news and I’m still floored every time I think about it,” said Armstrong, who has won numerous awards during his 27-year military career.

Aside from garnering national recognition for AAE, Armstrong’s award included a special gold badge, trophy and \$200 toward a field trip.

The award is given to instructors who have made significant contributions to their school, community, ROTC unit and to their individual cadets.

Armstrong’s co-instructor, retired Master Sgt. Raymonte Britt (pictured, left), also earned the 2011 Outstanding Instructor Award with Merit, which placed him in the top 10 percent of all AFJROTC instructors.

Since Armstrong implemented the program in 2007, the AAE unit has received numerous awards and has made an impact on many cadets. About one-third of AAE’s 432 high school students participated in the AFJROTC this year.

The academy is the only public charter school in the state with an Air Force JROTC program.

Cadet Samantha Haun, 17, said she was “dead set against” joining the AFJROTC until she attended a military ball where she learned that the program is “not just a bunch of people in blue uniforms.”

“It’s infectious once you get started and Col. Armstrong is a big part of that,” Haun said. “He taught me the stick-with-it attitude and how to see a project through until completion. Col. Armstrong deserves an award.”

In April AAE cadets received the 2010-2011 Distinguished Unit with Merit Award and the Drill and Exhibition Team earning three, second-place trophies at the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet.

Brynn Hatch, a 2009 cadet who now attends Texas A&M University, said Armstrong taught him about “being professional and being fair at the same time.”

“He got the greatest joy when he saw kids that he helped through the years succeed at something,” said Hatch, who is currently studying Arabic and is contracted with the United States Marine Corps.

Armstrong said teaching has always been a passion and that winning the instructor award was a by-product of helping the school and his cadets achieve their goals.

“My wife and I are both teachers and we never had children of our own, because our children are in the classroom,” Armstrong said. “We want our focus — and our attention — to be on them.”

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