



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Commissary winners announced in DeCA's 9<sup>th</sup> Produce Merchandising Contest

*By Cherie Huntington  
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**FORT LEE, Va.** – Pretty as a picture but oh so fresh and delicious, too – that describes the hundreds of mouthwatering produce displays created in the Defense Commissary Agency's 9th Annual Produce Merchandising Contest.

Fifteen commissaries earned honors this year, highlighting a theme of “Fresh Fruits and Veggies = Health and Fitness = Mission Ready.” The commissary at Yongsan, South Korea, celebrated an unprecedented fourth consecutive win as “Best Large Overseas Store.”

Winning produce teams by store category are:

### **Superstore**

First place: Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

Second place: McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Third place: McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

### **Large U.S. Store**

First place: Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

Second place: Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas

Third place: McClellan, Calif.

### **Large Overseas Store**

First place: U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea

Second place: Camp Courtney Marine Corps Base, Okinawa

Third place: Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

### **Small U.S. Store**

First place: Altus Air Force Base, Okla.

Second place: Vance Air Force Base, Okla.

Third place: Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho

### **Small Overseas Store**

First place: U.S. Army Garrison Bamberg, Germany

Second place: Camp Walker, Taegu, South Korea

Third place: U.S. Army Garrison Livorno (Camp Darby), Italy

“Produce represents the ‘crown jewel’ of the commissary benefit,” said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and chief executive officer. “We’re proud to serve the world’s most health-conscious, discerning customers when it comes to fresh fruits and vegetables, so we work extremely hard to delight them and exceed their expectations in quality, variety, presentation and personal service.”

The annual competition highlights the commissary’s role as nutritional leader for the Department of Defense. Winning stores excelled in quality and team performance in creative displays, customer education programs emphasizing healthy benefits of fresh produce, and increased produce sales. The evaluation period covered a minimum of any two weeks from May 1 through Sept. 15, 2008. Commissaries submitted digital portfolios to DeCA’s sales directorate for judging.

“The commissary is worth the trip, and produce is no exception,” said Randy Chandler, DeCA’s sales director. “Many discerning customers make extra visits to the commissary just for fresh fruits and veggies between their regular shopping trips because they demand quality produce at the peak of freshness. It’s important to our customers, and it’s important to us.”

Commissary shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their overall grocery bills compared to commercial prices. In addition, fresh produce frequently takes center stage at case lot sales or special “farmers market” events, which can deliver savings of 50 percent or more.

### **- DeCA-**

**Photo caption:** The produce department at the U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, Commissary showcases fresh fruit during Korean Thanksgiving. Yongsan won top honors in the “Large Overseas Store” category, its fourth straight first-place finish. *(DeCA photo)*

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and*

*secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*