



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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**NOTE:** To access photos from the Robins Commissary grand opening, click on the following link: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary\\_news/sets/72157620593370798/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary_news/sets/72157620593370798/). From there, select the photo(s) you want and click on the "all sizes" button above the picture.

## Customers flock to new commissary at Robins

*By Rick Brink,  
DeCA East public affairs officer*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Commissary shoppers at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., got their new \$16 million store off to a rousing start with opening day sales May 28 of \$201,000, contributing to a four-day opening weekend total that exceeded \$698,000.

“It’s a great store,” said Paula Lewis, store director. “We knew our sales would rock. Watching this store being built just across the street the last two years stirred such anticipation for customers and employees alike that everyone I’ve talked to is so excited and pleased about shopping here.”

Opening-day activities featured a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony that followed remarks by DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., and Maj. Gen. Polly Peyer, commander of Warner Robins Air Logistics Center.

“All we have to do is look over there at the old commissary to compare it to what’s before us today. Let me tell you, it’s as different inside as it is outside,” Sakowitz told the crowd of about 200 people gathered outside the new store entrance.

He pointed to the former commissary, a converted warehouse building that featured ramps, steps and an elevator at the front entrance, which contrasted with the street-level entrance

of the new store where Sakowitz stood. A brightly lit, expansive interior; larger produce and fresh meat departments; larger frozen and chilled sections; a large delicatessen and fresh bakery; and aisles wide enough to accommodate three carts passing at once were among other differences of the new commissary that drew rave reviews from customers.

“There’s not a store in town that’s any better than this one,” said 71-year-old William James, who remarked that it was the third commissary he’s shopped in at Robins since he’s lived in the area for more than 33 years.

“We’ve been waiting so eagerly for this day to come that we had to make the grand opening, so I don’t mind the crowd. I come to the commissary all the time because the food here is so affordable,” said Andrea Landez, who along with her 3-year-old daughter was among shoppers who formed a long serpentine line with their shopping carts outside the store as they waited for the opening ceremony.

The opening was a festive event with numerous prizes, product mascots, food demonstrations and great prices for shoppers to enjoy. It didn’t take long for customers to catch the shopping spirit. Shoppers waiting in line for the grand opening started filling their carts to take advantage of special deals on melons, pineapples and potatoes on display outside the front entrance.

At the end of her shopping run, Chris Virgilio joined her husband, Steve, for a photo with Sakowitz and Peyer as one of the first shoppers to be checked out. She bought only a few items, using the visit to check out the store. “This is a big improvement,” she said. “It’s going to be great shopping here.”

**- DeCA-**

**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.*