



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Oestreich to retire after nearly 30 years of service

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Jerry Oestreich, director of human resources for the Defense Commissary Agency since 2002, will retire from the federal government after nearly 30 years of civil service, effective April 2. Kaye Kennedy, former headquarters human resources operating officer, was selected to follow Oestreich as the next HR director.

“The man we affectionately call ‘Jerry O’ has helped lead this agency through some challenging personnel changes,” said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. “We know that the qualities that served DeCA so well – his tremendous knowledge of human resources and his ability to communicate his expertise in this field – will continue to illuminate his future. We wish him the best and thank him for his service.”

Oestreich became the agency’s HR director in September 2002, following the retirement of Wynn Hasty. He had come to DeCA headquarters after serving as director of the human and financial resources business area of what is now DeCA Europe, headquartered at Kapaun Air Station, Germany.

Within a few years of his arrival at headquarters, Oestreich was at the helm of HR during an agency re-engineering initiative that restructured DeCA’s directorates. For human resources, it meant transitioning from region ownership of HR assets to a more centralized management from the Fort Lee headquarters. Before the ink could dry on DeCA’s restructuring, the Department of Defense unveiled the National Security Personnel System in 2005, a modern-day overhaul of the military’s civil service process.

By 2007, Oestreich supervised the agency's initial conversion to NSPS of more than 2,200 employees including the entire DeCA workforce overseas, and stateside managers, supervisors and store directors. When NSPS was repealed in 2009, Oestreich took charge of beginning the process to reflow employees back to the traditional General Schedule system.

Oestreich began his service to the federal government in 1969 as a soldier, later serving a 14-month tour in Vietnam. His civil service career began in 1980 with the U.S. Navy in Oakland, Calif. By 1986, he moved on to the U.S. Air Force, where he worked as a staffing specialist. Eventually, he became a staffing and employee relations supervisor at Zweibrucken Air Base, Germany.

After DeCA was activated in 1991, Oestreich was hired into the personnel division in what is now DeCA Europe. By 1996, he became chief of human resources for the region, and four years later became chief of the region's human and financial resources business area.

Oestreich is a native of Centralia, Ill. He graduated with honors from Columbia College, Chicago, in 1979, receiving a bachelor's degree in literature and writing.

His awards and decorations include three DeCA Meritorious Civilian Service Awards.

His plans after retirement include plenty of summertime relaxation, but he also said he wants to keep busy as a human resources consultant and trainer.

"I will be eternally grateful to DeCA for putting food on my table and a roof over my head, exposing me to foreign places and cultures, and presenting me with some significant professional challenges," Oestreich said. "I have complete admiration and respect for the DeCA workforce. I wish you all well!"

-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 \$3,300 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.*