



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissaries, exchanges, MWR partner for Family Fun Fitness Festival in May

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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NOTE: Check out the DeCA Web page at http://www.commissaries.com/case_lot_sale.cfm. If you see an asterisk by the commissary noted on the case lot sale listing, that location also is participating in the Family Fun Fitness festival event. Media outlets also can download logos and graphics related to this event by clicking on http://www.commissaries.com/press_room/campaigns.cfm.

FORT LEE, Va. – Cynthia Six, a Defense Commissary Agency store director at Parris Island, S.C., has a thing for losing, and it’s being celebrated all over the Marine Corps recruit depot.

“When I received the e-mail about the ‘Family Fun Fitness Festival,’ I hit the ground running,” she said. “In December, I contacted the installation exchange, gym, physical fitness directors, naval hospital dietitian and anyone who would listen to me.” Six’s gung-ho hustle at Parris Island resulted in a depotwide series of weight-challenge events, inspired by NBC TV’s “The Biggest Loser,” that began in January and will continue into National Physical Fitness Month in May.

Six’s fitness splash is part of a tidal wave of activity across the military resale community as commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation activities worldwide prepare for the Family Fun Fitness Festival in May. As of April 13, more than 180 installations worldwide have signed on to participate in various festival events.

The festival is designed to combine commissary case lot sales, exchange sidewalk sales, MWR fitness events, demos, music, free nutritious food samples, prize giveaways, discount coupon offers, health and wellness, outreach, and children's programs.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for commissaries, exchanges, MWR services and our industry partners to show our customers why visiting their military communities' facilities is 'worth the trip!'" said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. "We believe this is going to be one of the largest partnership efforts in resale history."

Many of the participating installations are tipping the scales of creativity in combining fitness, fun and family with the savings of their resale benefit. At U.S. Army Garrison Heidelberg, Germany, they are featuring events such as a fun run with pets, a relay race with cases, a circuit course where trainers work with families in eight exercises and a family recipe exchange. Misawa Air Base, Japan, is scheduling a nutritional scavenger hunt along with a yoga demo, massages, a 100-yard dash race and a weight-lifting competition. At Naval Support Activity Memphis, Tenn., members of USA Karate will be giving demonstrations in karate, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and cage fitness, offering free classes to three different age groups.

Preparations for the festival began in earnest in November 2009. With May being National Physical Fitness Month and commissaries already scheduled to conduct the first of two worldwide case lot sales during that time, the idea was to maximize the ability of all of an installation's military resale components to offer customers a bonanza of savings and health and wellness information, said C. Brad McMinn, chief of the perishables division for DeCA's sales directorate.

As interest in the event has increased, McMinn continues to work with his counterparts in the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, the Navy Exchange Command, Marine Corps Community Services, the military services' MWR programs, and various industry partners to sculpt the look and feel of the festival.

"This entire effort is about partnership," McMinn said. "I've talked with my peers in other organizations, and they are excited about the possibilities for serving the military customer with fitness-focused events and nutritious food, all while offering tremendous savings on commissary and exchange products spread across parking lots."

Customers should contact their local installation for specific festival event schedules. Because individual commissaries have a measure of flexibility in the products offered at case lot events, it's prudent for customers who live near multiple commissaries to use the DeCA Web site to frequent all sales in their area.

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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.*