



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## DeCA's Garcia goes home

Senior enlisted advisor retires after 34 years in uniform

*By DeCA's Office of Communication*

**NOTE:** To see photographs related to Command Sgt. Maj. Victor M. Garcia's retirement events, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157625829532643/>.

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Army Reserve Command Sgt. Maj. Victor M. Garcia, senior enlisted advisor to the Defense Commissary Agency director, is shopping for a new set of clothes. He retired from military service on Jan. 31. Command Sgt. Maj. John M. Gaines, former command sergeant major for the Army's Installation Management Command, became the new senior advisor to DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu effective Feb. 1.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Garcia did a tremendous job in fostering two-way communication between this agency and its enlisted customer base,” Jeu said. “As senior enlisted advisor, Garcia was a definite force multiplier in helping DeCA demonstrate the value of the commissary benefit.”

Garcia had served as DeCA's senior enlisted advisor since June 9, 2008. Under his tenure, the position was upgraded to that of command sergeant major. In 2009, he also was instrumental in establishing senior enlisted advisor positions in DeCA's regional offices.

Garcia concludes a career that began in 1977, when he joined the Army Reserve in his native Puerto Rico. As he departed DeCA, he reflected on the culture shock of leaving a military environment to work with civilians delivering the commissary benefit.

“From Day One, my biggest challenge was adapting from Fort Bragg, [N.C.] a place

where when a sergeant major walked in, people yelled ‘at ease,’ to working with the civilians of the Defense Commissary Agency,” Garcia said. “I quickly learned that there are a lot of dedicated professionals behind the scenes of this benefit, making it happen for military customers every day.”

As the senior enlisted advisor to the director, Garcia served as DeCA’s uniformed advocate, representing the questions and concerns of the commissary’s enlisted customers and helping the agency raise awareness of the benefit and its savings. It’s a benefit he took personally. Earlier in his career, when he had a chance to return to active duty from the Army Reserve, he did so in part because he would be receiving full-time commissary benefits for his family.

“There was a time, when as a Guard and Reserve member, you had to carry that little pink card and get it stamped each time you shopped,” said Garcia, referring to the Commissary Privilege Card that carried first a 12-visit limit and later, 24. In 2004, the National Defense Authorization Act granted full commissary shopping benefits to all members of the military’s reserve components. “The Guard and Reserve have provided outstanding support to this country – look what they have been called to do since 9/11. They deserved a full-time benefit.”

In his own career, Garcia has spent six years in the Army Reserve and nearly 28 years on active duty as a member of the Active Guard Reserve program.

While assigned to the only mortuary affairs battalion in the Army structure as an operations sergeant, Garcia deployed the 311<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company in less than 72 hours to support victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon. The 311<sup>th</sup> remained on active duty for one year, assigned to Fort Myer and Fort Lee, Va.

Garcia has served as a reserve liaison for the 65<sup>th</sup> Regional Readiness Command in Puerto Rico; the U.S. Army Reserve Command in Atlanta, Ga.; and the Mortuary Affairs Center at Fort Lee. He served in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps’ main collection point for graves registration, where the remains of U.S. and allied soldiers were processed and returned to their next of kin.

In 2007, he also served in Kuwait supporting operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom as the logistics sergeant major for the 1<sup>st</sup> Theater Sustainment Command from Fort Bragg.

Following his retirement, Garcia and his family will head to Texas. As a soldier, he said he will miss being in uniform, enjoying the camaraderie of troops. As a former DeCA senior enlisted advisor, he said he will always appreciate the commissary employees.

“The people of this agency work hard to get those groceries on the shelves,” he said. “For the rest of my life, I will always remember the great people who deliver this benefit.”

**-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 more than \$4,400 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.*