



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Release Number: 12-11
Date: February 3, 2011
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DeCA gets new senior enlisted advisor

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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NOTE: To see photographs related to DeCA's senior enlisted advisor change of responsibility ceremony, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157625842987649>.

FORT LEE, Va. – Army Command Sgt. Maj. John M. Gaines Jr. is the Defense Commissary Agency's new senior enlisted advisor to the director. He reported to the agency Feb. 1. Gaines follows Army Reserve Command Sgt. Maj. Victor M. Garcia, who retired Jan. 31.

In Gaines' previous assignment in the Pentagon, he wore two "hats" – senior enlisted advisor to the assistant chief of staff for installation management and command sergeant major for the Army's Installation Management Command.

With DeCA, he will serve as the agency's military advocate for enlisted service members – active duty, retired and reserve components – on all issues related to the commissary benefit. It's his responsibility to address their questions and needs to the DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu. The senior enlisted advisor also functions as the agency's chief liaison with the military's senior enlisted leaders.

"As his job title suggests, I will depend on Command Sgt. Maj. Gaines to be my chief advisor on matters concerning our enlisted customers and their families," Jeu said. "His experience with quality-of-life issues will be invaluable as we enlist him to help DeCA continue reaching out to current and potential customers, raising awareness of the commissary benefit."

Gaines had been selected IMCOM's second command sergeant major on July 14, 2008. Prior to that, he had served for nearly two years as the command sergeant major at IMCOM's

European Region. IMCOM's basic mission is similar to that of a city manager for Army installations, overseeing services, resources and facilities.

"I appreciate this tremendous opportunity to be the voice in DeCA for service members and their families," Gaines said. "At the same time, it will be my job to help our enlisted customers know more about their commissary benefit and encourage them to use it."

He joined the Army in 1981. A career logistician, his assignments have taken him to Fort Dix, N.J.; Fort Campbell, Ky.; Egypt; Germany; Fort Polk, La.; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Bliss, Texas; and Schinnen, the Netherlands. In one particular assignment, Gaines served as the Benelux Garrison sergeant major in Belgium, supporting the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. He has been deployed to Haiti for Operation Uphold Democracy in 1994, to Bosnia for Operation Joint Endeavor as a member of the implementation force in 1996, and to Kuwait as a task force sergeant major supporting operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in 2010.

Gaines, who has an associate's degree in general studies from Harold Washington College in Chicago, is working toward a bachelor's degree in multidisciplinary studies through an online program from Grantham University. His military education includes the First Sergeant Course, the Garrison Command Sergeant Major Course and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit (two awards), the Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), the Army Commendation Medal (seven awards), the Army Achievement Medal (five awards), the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, NATO Medal, Multinational Forces and Observers Medal, Headquarters Department of the Army General Staff Badge, Driver's Badge and the Army Superior Unit Award (two awards).

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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 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.