



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Corporate Communications  
1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

or DSN: 687-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

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**Contact:** Rick Brink, DeCA East public affairs specialist  
**Tel.:** (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8409  
**E-mail:** [richard.brink@deca.mil](mailto:richard.brink@deca.mil)

## Dowling named acting chief operating officer

*By Rick Brink,  
DeCA East public affairs officer*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Mike Dowling, director of DeCA East, has been named acting chief operating officer of the Defense Commissary Agency to fill the post vacated by the retirement of Rick Page from federal service.

The selection marks the second time Dowling has served as acting chief operating officer. He served as acting COO from November 2007 through April 2008 while Page served as the agency’s acting director until the appointment of Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. as director and chief executive officer. Page retired effective the end of February making the position open again.

“Once again we’re calling on Mike to fill this important position, which because of its critical nature, demands someone with the wealth of leadership and experience that Mike possesses,” said Sakowitz. “I appreciate his willingness to serve in this capacity as we seek to fill the position.”

During this time Bob Vitikacs, a deputy director of DeCA East, will serve as the acting region director. As the acting COO, Dowling’s duties include oversight of the agency’s retail operations, safety and security, program management, plans, and systems engineering in support of the day-to-day operations of DeCA’s worldwide chain of 255 commissaries.

Dowling was selected director of DeCA East in August 2007 after serving three years as director of DeCA Europe. Being in headquarters at Fort Lee, Va., is familiar ground for

Dowling, who served as the agency's director of performance and policy and deputy to the chief operating officer before becoming DeCA Europe director. He had previously served nine and a half years in Europe in a variety of leadership positions including director of the region's logistics division, interim deputy region director and chief of its operations business area.

Before joining the Army Troop Support Agency as a civilian in 1989, Dowling served on active duty with the Army where his assignments included a tour as commissary officer and company commander in Cairo, Egypt.

While working at the Troop Support Agency, Dowling was appointed to the transition team that helped consolidate the military services' commissary organizations into the Defense Commissary Agency in 1991. His involvement in developing the agency's distribution planning established the concept used in Europe today.

**- 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.*