



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

www.commissaries.com

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Contact: Dr. Peter Skirbunt, DeCA historian
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8510
E-mail: peter.skirbunt@deca.mil

DeCA hosts first military resale executive leadership forum

*By Pete Skirbunt,
DeCA historian*

FORT LEE, Va. – The lines of military resale are blurred for most customers. But behind the scenes, the organizations that serve the military all have separate and specific missions. On March 20, the leadership of the nation’s military commissaries, exchange services, the morale welfare and recreation commands, and installation management met to discuss how they can improve their service through increased cooperation.

This first meeting of the Installation, Resale, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Executive Leadership Forum sought to enhance the working relationship between agencies that have largely gone their own way in the past. It was hosted by the Defense Commissary Agency at its Fort Lee, Va., headquarters.

“We recognize that we face similar challenges, have the same clientele, and are really on ‘the same team’ while providing different services to the nation’s military community,” said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and CEO. “During this meeting, we discussed the possibilities of more cooperative efforts.”

There are already existing areas where elements of military resale partner to better serve the customer, be it for case lot sales, Guard and Reserve on-site sales, distribution of certain products overseas, customer mailers and other joint activities. The leadership forum sought to amplify that partnership, especially in marketing programs, and seek ways to improve all services across the board.

Sakowitz believed the forum was “a great opportunity for us to get better acquainted and develop closer relationships, enabling us to work together to enhance quality of life programs.” Stressing in his opening remarks that they were all “one team,” Sakowitz hoped all would be encouraged to talk about their common issues and learn from each other.

As the day progressed, the group discussed community marketing, cooperative sales initiatives, customer service initiatives, joint purchasing, joint distribution, employment, enterprise financial opportunities, environmental and energy success, base access and leadership development.

Attending the meeting were John Bradford Baker, commander, Navy Installations Command, and director, Fleet and Family Readiness Programs; Dr. Craig E. College, deputy assistant chief of staff for installation management from Headquarters, Department of the Army; Capt. Edward N. Eng, U.S. Coast Guard, commanding officer and CEO of the Coast Guard Community Services Command; Michael P. Good, chief operating officer, Navy Exchange Service Command; Rich Gorman, executive director and Chief Operating Officer, Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command; Michael P. Howard, Chief Operating Officer, Army and Air Force Exchange Service; Paul C. Hubbell, deputy assistant deputy commandant for installations and logistics (facilities), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps; Michael J. Kelly, chief of the requirements division, Directorate of Services, Headquarters, U. S. Air Force; Timothy R. Larson, director, personal and family readiness division, Manpower Reserve Affairs Department, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps; Paul A. Parker, deputy Air Force civil engineer, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force; Michael F. Tharrington, deputy director for business operations, personal and family readiness division, Manpower and Reserves Affairs Department, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps; and Capt. George G. Womack, chief of staff, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, Norfolk, Va.

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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 \$3,400 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.