



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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### Commissary customers reap benefits of savings, more value

*By Kevin L. Robinson,  
DeCA public affairs specialist*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – With the fiscal clock marking the end of 2010, commissary customers can celebrate continued savings and a benefit that has even more value, said the acting director and CEO of the Defense Commissary Agency.

“When we look at our results for the past fiscal year, the two numbers that matter the most are the authorized customers who are using their commissary benefit and the savings we provide,” said Thomas E. Milks, the military’s top grocer. “Together, these results add up to a vital benefit that our service members and their families depend on, especially now during a tough economy.”

DeCA’s report card for fiscal 2010 includes the following:

- At 31.5 percent savings when compared to commercial stores, military commissaries saved their customers more than \$2.69 billion.
- Authorized customers made 94,791,878 shopping trips, an increase of more than 39,000 from fiscal 2009.
- DeCA’s sales of \$5.84 billion helped generate about \$306.3 million in surcharge funds. The commissary’s 5 percent surcharge is applied to the total value of customer purchases. The surcharge is used to fund new stores, new equipment and renovate existing facilities.
- Patron satisfaction with the commissary benefit continued to soar. The 2010 Commissary Customer Satisfaction Survey recorded an overall score of 4.68 (on a scale

of 1 to 5) – DeCA’s highest score ever. The agency also hit 80 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index. The industry average is 76. The ACSI is an independent evaluation of customer satisfaction, developed by the National Quality Research Center, which surveys civilian supermarket and commissary-eligible shoppers about the quality of goods and services in both DeCA stores and commercial supermarkets.

- Patrons continue to shop their commissaries despite a challenging economy. While many consumers are making smaller purchases, the increased shopping visits are a testimony to the agency’s ability to customize the commissary benefit to give military customers what they need in savings and quality products, Milks said.

“We continue to set historic sales marks in our worldwide case lot sales that offer bulk purchases on quality products at savings that approach 50 percent,” Milks said of the DeCA events held each May and September. “And, we are reaching out to our customers who are located away from military installations. This year alone, we conducted 156 Guard and Reserve on-site sales that served more than 70,000 customers, and brought them about \$4 million in savings.”

Milks said DeCA’s fiscal 2010 performance indicates that the value of the commissary benefit is stronger than ever, especially in its service to the military and its connection to military readiness. The evidence, he added, is in the following:

- **Military-related employment.** About 62.5 percent of the DeCA workforce has a direct connection to the military as military spouses, children of service members, veterans, retirees and Guard and Reserve members.
- **Military Scholarships for Children.** Since 2000, nearly 5,500 students of military families have received about \$8.3 million in grants for their college education.
- **Fiscal responsibility.** For every dollar of taxpayer funds invested in the commissary benefit, authorized shoppers received \$2.04 in savings. DeCA’s excellent performance as a responsible government steward of taxpayer funds is apparent with the agency having received a clean audit opinion on its financial statements for the past eight years – a feat matched by only three other DoD agencies.
- **Savings.** A family of four can save more than \$4,400 a year consistently shopping the commissary as opposed to commercial stores.

“We can analyze numbers all day long,” Milks said. “However, when I talk to service members who say that one of the reasons they decide to stay in the military is because of their commissary benefit, I know we make a difference. As we head into fiscal 2011, that’s what

motivates DeCA to continue to deliver with excellence this vital benefit for its millions of authorized customers!”

**-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.*