



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Kennedy to become next director of human resources

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Kaye Kennedy has been selected as the new director of human resources for the Defense Commissary Agency. Kennedy, currently the human resources operating officer at DeCA headquarters, replaces Jerry Oestreich who is retiring effective April 2.

“Kaye is a wonderful example of a 21st century leader, having excelled in different functional areas during her DeCA career – consumer advocate, director of corporate communications and chief of our human resources element in Europe,” said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. “We are confident that she has the skills and experience needed to continue performing at a high level as the leader of our HR directorate.”

In her new position Kennedy will oversee DeCA’s human resource management programs and operations. DeCA operates 254 commissaries worldwide and has approximately 18,000 employees.

Her civil service career began at Fort Lee, Va., in 1981 as a Department of Army personnel management intern with the civilian personnel office, and she eventually advanced to classification specialist. In 1989, she joined the Fort Lee-based U.S. Army Troop Support Agency as a staffing specialist.

In the ramp up to DeCA’s activation, Kennedy was a member of the transition team that helped merge the military’s separate commissary systems into one agency. Later, she was assigned to the directorate of personnel and training as a personnel staffing and employee

development specialist until August 1998 when she became DeCA's first consumer advocate.

During her time as consumer advocate, Kennedy planted the seeds for what would become DeCA's patron council, a venue that allows the agency to receive valuable feedback on the state of the commissary benefit from key military leaders and representatives of military quality-of-life organizations. Council members represent almost 12 million authorized commissary shoppers, including active duty, Guard and Reserve, and retired military members and their families.

In 2001, Kennedy was appointed acting chief, then chief, of DeCA's newly formed corporate communications office. There, she integrated related functions such as media relations, Web content, marketing, visual graphics, employee communications and command information into a cohesive and successful communications program.

Kennedy returned to the HR community in 2005, eventually going overseas to DeCA Europe where, as human resources officer, she advised the region director on personnel issues for more than 3,200 employees throughout the European theater.

She returned to DeCA headquarters in 2007 as the human resources officer responsible for the daily oversight of more than 145 staff members engaged in various HR functions such as employee and labor relations, workers compensation, staffing and classification, employee benefits and personnel servicing, and personnel data systems management.

Kennedy is a native of Petersburg, Va., where she graduated magna cum laude from Richard Bland College [Va.] in June 1977 with an associate's degree in business administration.

She has received both the DeCA Superior and Meritorious Civilian Service awards. Kennedy also was recognized as part of an eight-member team instrumental in DeCA receiving former Vice President Gore's Hammer Award for support of the Clinton administration's Welfare-to-Work initiative. And, Kennedy received the Women in Military Resale Industry Award for 2004. The annual award recognizes the contributions of women to the military resale industry.

Regarding her job at DeCA, Kennedy said, "I've always considered it an honor to support our employees as they undertake the tremendous mission of providing the commissary benefit to America's military, both active and retired, and their families."

-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 \$3,300 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.