



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissaries celebrate the Month of the Military Child

*By Cherie Huntington,
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FORT LEE, Va. – The news media eats it up, as does the intended audience: Military mom or dad returns from deployment; child, unaware, sits in class; child glances up and sees military parent step out from hiding. Emotions cycle quickly across the young face – surprise, disbelief, amazement and joy followed by tears of relief and happiness as the long-awaited hugs become real.

These are the nation’s “Li’l Heroes,” wee soldiers with their own burdens of war to carry, and April marks a special month to salute their sacrifices. A legacy of former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Month of the Military Child underscores the important role children of military parents play in the armed forces community.

“Your commissary wants to make this an extra-special month for these little heroes,” said Defense Commissary Agency Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. “We know it’s tough for them to handle frequent moves and long separations from loved ones serving in uniform, but we’d hope April feels like a month of homecomings.”

Commissaries worldwide are engaged in various events geared toward children in April, ranging from nutrition tours and diaper derbies, to artistic endeavors such as egg coloring and grocery bag art – all opportunities to recognize and applaud military children for the daily sacrifices they make on behalf of service members.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Web page features a special section dedicated to

military children: <http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/videos.html>.

Another site providing help for military children's stress is Military OneSource, a virtual extension of base services, available for all active-duty, Guard and Reserve families: <http://www.militaryonesource.com>, or call at 800-342-9647.

DeCA's "Li'l Heroes Benefit Bulletin" points the way to goodies and information sure to delight mom and baby. This monthly newsletter gives links to coupons, special offers and must-read information on everything from recalls to children's nutrition.

Visit <http://www.commissaries.com>, and click "Shopping" on the menu bar. Then scroll down to "Li'l Heroes Baby Program" to subscribe.

-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.*