



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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DeCA celebrates its best produce displays

*By Cherie Huntington,
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NOTE: To see photographs of some of the winners and participants from the Defense Commissary Agency's 10th Annual Produce Merchandising Contest, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157623909956854/>.

FORT LEE, Va. – Eye candy that's good for you. What better way to describe the hundreds of fresh, healthy produce displays created during the Defense Commissary Agency's 10th Annual Produce Merchandising Contest.

Ten commissaries worldwide earned honors this year, judged for their performance during the contest period from June 1 through Sept. 30, 2009. Winning produce teams by store category are:

Superstore

- First place: Naval Base San Diego, Calif.
- Second place: Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

Large U.S. store

- First place: Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.
- Second place: Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

Large overseas store

- First place: Osan Air Base, South Korea
- Second place: Chièvres, Belgium

Small U.S. store

- First place: San Onofre, Calif.
- Second place: Bangor Air National Guard Base, Maine

Small overseas store

- First place: Navy Air Facility Atsugi, Japan
- Second place: Royal Air Force Alconbury, England

“We love catering to commissary shoppers, who are probably the world’s most health-conscious produce experts,” said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and CEO. “We work extremely hard to exceed their expectations in produce quality, variety, presentation and personal service.”

The annual competition highlights DeCA’s role as nutritional leader for the Department of Defense. Winning stores excelled in quality and team performance in areas such as creative displays, customer education events and increased produce sales.

“Our theme this year was, ‘Your produce department – it’s worth the trip,’” said Chris Burns, DeCA’s sales director. “Whether customers are stocking up for family meals, school lunches or healthy snacks, or just making a quick stop for items at the peak of freshness, produce remains central to most shopping trips.”

Results of DeCA’s 2009 Commissary Customer Service Survey, completed by more than 20,000 customers, rated produce as 4.61 on a 5-point scale – its highest mark in history.

Commissary shoppers save an average of 31.7 percent on their overall grocery bills, compared to commercial prices. In addition, fresh produce frequently takes center stage at case lot sales or special “farmers market” events, which can deliver savings of 50 percent or more.

- 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.*