



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Corporate Communication

1300 E Avenue | Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 8-6105 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 8-6105

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

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Contact: Millie Slamin, DeCA public affairs specialist
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-86111
E-mail: mildred.slamin@deca.mil

Commissary employees show customers: 'Your Family is Our Family'

*By Millie Slamin,
DeCA public affairs specialist*

FORT LEE, Va. – When commissary customers enter the Fort Lee store they are greeted by a 20-by-30-inch poster of produce worker Mary Tench, the granddaughter of a World War II veteran, daughter of a Korean War veteran, wife of a Vietnam veteran and aunt of a present-day soldier and sailor. With these military bloodlines, she can relate perfectly with her customers and their family members.

“I’ve had customers come up and tell me what a great job I was doing and how much they appreciated me,” Tench said of the poster showing her and the military members of her family – past and present. “I’ve never had them do that before. It’s really humbling. It reminds me that I need to thank them more for what they do for us.”

Tench’s poster is part of the Defense Commissary Agency’s new information campaign that projects pride and appreciation for the military men and women it serves. The campaign, “Your Family is Our Family,” pays tribute to current and former military members – patrons and employees alike.

“Through this campaign, we are telling our customers they are just a heartbeat away from a commissary employee in their local store, who may be the military spouse of a soldier serving in Afghanistan,” said DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu. “Or, that their favorite cashier is the daughter of an Army veteran of World War II. Whatever the case may be, it is highly likely that our patrons will meet one of the 63 percent of the DeCA employees who have a strong

military connection.

“Because this campaign has made such a positive impact on both employees and customers during its testing phase, we have rolled it out to all of our 249 commissaries, worldwide,” Jeu said.

In mid-July, DeCA distributed its Your Family is Our Family posters, along with a poster that explains the campaign, to all commissaries. Employees pictured in the posters also wear a picture button of one of their military family members. Additionally, each store will have the option to individualize the campaign to include photo posters of its employees.

Last year, the agency began testing the program, selecting six photo posters of employees pictured in their work environment with inlay photos of their military family members. These posters were unveiled for testing at forts Lee and Belvoir in Virginia; Vogelweh, Germany; and Naval Base San Diego, Calif.

With the unveiling of the Your Family is Our Family information campaign, commissary customers worldwide will witness, firsthand, the military ties of DeCA’s employees pictured with their relatives – the men and women who have served or are serving their country, Jeu said.

“We are extremely proud to serve the members of our armed forces who are active duty, in the Guard and Reserve or retired,” Jeu said. “The Your Family is Our Family campaign shows our respect, pride and appreciation for what they do for us.”

Army Sgt. Maj. Michael Patterson, a frequent visitor to the Fort Lee Commissary, read the introduction poster for the campaign and said it never dawned on him that commissary employees had such a close connection to the military.

“It’s comforting to know that there is a store where I have an immediate connection – a place where the employees have been where we’ve been – deployed and otherwise separated from friends and family and have suffered through the hardships of separations,” Patterson said. “They’ve been there, done that – they speak our language.”

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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 amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. 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.