



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissary Commando goes ‘viral’ Service groups urged to go to DeCA web to register for September contest, chance to win \$1,500

*By Courtney Rogers,
DeCA customer relations specialist*

FORT LEE, Va. – The Defense Commissary Agency is turning to social media and video to help promote the 2011 Commissary Commando competition to military organizations representing single soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.

In September, commissaries worldwide will open their doors to single service members for Commando events, offering groups opportunities to learn more about their commissary benefit while competing for cash prizes from DeCA’s industry partners worth up to \$1,500.

“This year, Commissary Commando is going online in a way it never has before,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John M. Gaines Jr., senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director. “So many of our younger junior-enlisted customers use social media like Facebook and YouTube every day, that we felt it was crucial to move the conversation about the commissary benefit to the venues they use to communicate and allow them to express in their own words what the commissary benefit means to them.”

Although the modern commissary benefit dates back to 1867, there still remains a common misconception today among young, first-term service members that commissaries are strictly for troops with families, Gaines said.

“The commissary is an important part of every service member’s benefits package, and it’s important that we communicate its tremendous value to our customers,” he said. “Through this competition, single service members will not only learn about the more than \$1,500 they can save, on average, by regularly shopping the commissary each year, but also how the commissary works each day to meet their needs.”

The theme of this year’s competition is “Recruiting Lifetime Customers,” and single service members groups around the world will be asked to do exactly that. First, the groups must register on DeCA’s website at <http://www.commissaries.com/commando> and watch DeCA’s “Commissary 101: Commissary Commando Edition” video. Next, they must contact their commissary’s store director to arrange for a store tour to bring as many service members as possible through the commissary. During the tour, groups will earn points for answering commissary trivia questions based on information from the video and the DeCA website.

The first group at each commissary to complete the tour and trivia questions and submit its roster will win a \$100 incentive check from DeCA’s industry partners, the American Logistics Association’s Consumer Awareness Team. Groups will then compete for larger cash prizes by finding creative ways to get the word out about the commissary and the Commissary 101 video through social media and making their own video to teach their peers what they’re missing by not shopping the commissary.

Single service members who visit <http://www.commissaries.com/subscribe.cfm> and sign up to receive Commissary Connection, DeCA’s monthly customer e-newsletter, will receive tips that could help them win big in the newsletter’s September edition.

Groups can register for the competition through Aug. 31, and final submissions must arrive at DeCA Headquarters no later than Oct. 10. Questions about the 2011 Commissary Commando Competition should be directed to CommissaryCommando@deca.mil.

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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.*