

One Vision, One Team, One DeCA!

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deca vision

Vol. 21, No. 1 2012



Student employees

ROCK IT!



deca^{vision}

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One vision:

Understand our customers and deliver a 21st century commissary benefit

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9 SUPER BOWL FEVER: Fort Leonard Wood Commissary, Mo., and commissaries around the world provided plenty of food options for Super Bowl celebrations. This commissary saw a 48 percent increase in produce sales the week prior to the big game. The pre-event Saturday rated No. 4 in DeCA's top sales days since 2000. See more, Pages 9-10. C&C Produce photo: Dennis Messner

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COVER STORY: Natasha Beckum, student storeworker at **Portsmouth Commissary**, Va., works part time at the commissary as she attends Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., pursuing her master's in mental health counseling. For more on DeCA's student employment programs, see Pages 4-8. DeCA photo: Doug Buntley





fromthetop

Everything's on table

DeCA not immune to future cost-cutting proposals

Joseph H. Jeu

DeCA director and CEO

You may have heard about various “cost-cutting” propositions to combine military commissaries and exchanges, making them all self-sustaining and ending the taxpayer subsidy. We have had similar proposals in the past and will undoubtedly face them in the future; however, the status quo remains.

The commissary system stands as a model of efficiency, effectiveness and value, both to our customers and to American taxpayers. For every dollar of federal funding received, we top \$2 in savings to our shoppers. For many of those military members, retirees and their families, the commissary isn't just a valued nonpay benefit, it's a quality-of-life essential.

At store level, employees may wonder what actions they should take to counter future threats to the benefit, and to this, I answer: “Keep doing what you do best.”

Nothing supports DeCA as well as you do when you deliver the benefit in world-class fashion to our 12 million authorized patrons. It gives me a great feeling to read the many customer kudo letters that laud the dedication and pride exhibited by our employees. I see it over and over again – their amazement at receiving over-the-top, personal service; their appreciation of having the commissary to rely on as an understanding ally and community partner; and their family-style bond shared with many commissary employees.

Come what may, our focus remains true, straight from our strategic plan: We deliver a vital benefit of the military compensation system that sells grocery items at cost while enhancing quality of life and readiness.

Keep that noble mission close to your heart every day as you serve our nation's heroes and their families. Remember how important you are to the quality of both their day and their dinner table, whether they show it or not. Know what



Store Manager Ken Boland, right, MacDill Commissary, Fla., meets DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu during his visit to the store in October 2011. DeCA photo: Norman Brown

a special service you provide to a special class of people who risk their lives to keep our nation safe and strong.

Try not to dwell on the external challenges that lie ahead, and don't let all the rhetoric and posturing deflect you from your mission.

As always, I salute you for your hard work, dedication and respect for our customers. Keep doing what you do best: Make the commissary worth the trip. ■



coverstory

'Growing' future managers

Cherie Huntington
Vision editor

A military member's son stocks baskets of apples in the produce department; a college student builds a cereal display on an end cap; a young lady enrolled in trade school totes a special order of baby formula to the register; and the high school senior rings up groceries. They represent almost 2,000 student employees in the DeCA workforce around the world.

"Our student employees have always been a success story for us," said Director and CEO **Joseph H. Jeu**. "They provide us with scheduling flexibility, bring a fresh outlook to the daily work at hand and give us the opportunity to 'grow' our own future managers. We have a lot to teach them – and they have a lot to teach us."

Two main programs

First, let's get the acronyms and terminology review out of the way:

SEEP: Student Educational Employment Program, the overarching system for student work initiatives

STEP: Student Temporary Employment Program

SCEP: Student Career Experience Program

Pathways Program: President Obama's new program, not yet finalized, that combines existing programs

Gayle Fritzinger, DeCA Human Resources specialist and outgoing student program manager, said that, for now, current high school and college students interested in full-time, part-time or seasonal work should consider the SEEP.

These programs resemble President Obama's developing proposal of a "Pathways Program" to funnel students

Students Eric White and Ciara Joyner, Portsmouth Commissary, Va., work with 19 other student employees. Both sophomores at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., White majors in international business, and Joyner, in pharmaceutical studies. DeCA

photo: Doug Buntley

Whether seeking part-time work to help with school expenses or as a pipeline to full-time employment – students provide mission flexibility

into meaningful employment, streamlining the hiring process to recruit, train and retain well-qualified candidates (*see box, Page 7*).

"The executive order establishing Pathways was issued in December 2010," said Fritzinger. "It appears that final tweaks to proposed regulations are underway. In studying the framework of the program, it's similar to the programs in place and should improve flexibility. It basically consolidates all the federal internship programs into a single system."

Student Temporary Employment Program

The STEP provides student jobs primarily in clerical support or wage-grade positions, giving valuable experience in a structured work environment that is not necessarily related to the student's field of study. The majority of these positions reside at store level.

Though this program doesn't offer potential for noncompetitive conversion to federal career service,



there is potential for conversion into the SCEP (see below). About 1,800 of DeCA's student employees are STEP hires.

Eligibility Requirements*

- U.S. citizen
- Actively enrolled in an accredited academic institution, at least half time, and working toward a degree, diploma or certificate
- At least 16 years old
- In good academic standing (usually retaining at least a 2.0 GPA)

*Additional eligibility requirements may apply

Student Career Experience Program

The SCEP is a planned, progressive educational program that provides high school, vocational-technical and college students with job-related work in their field of study. There are opportunities in many professional career fields, such as commissary management, human resource management, information systems and technology, financial management and accounting, procurement and purchasing, and marketing, with the potential for noncompetitive conversion to federal career service.

Fewer than 10 students at store level and about 20 at headquarters participate in this program.

Eligibility Requirements*

Same as STEP, plus the academic institution must have a working agreement with DeCA

*Additional eligibility requirements may apply

In both programs, supervisors work with students to schedule around their classes and also ensure students remain enrolled and maintain their academic standing. Individuals with an associate



Chris Carter, student employee at Portsmouth Commissary, Va., attends Tidewater Community College, Norfolk, Va. He is a sophomore majoring in liberal arts and education.

DeCA photo: Doug Buntley

degree or equivalent will generally be considered at the GS-4 level, with a bachelor's degree as GS-5 or GS-7 with superior academic achievement. A master's degree generally qualifies a person at the GS-9 level and a doctorate at the GS-11.

Outside DeCA, there are additional opportunities that would be announced through www.usajobs.gov: the Presidential Management Fellows Program for graduate students.

Interested students should contact their local store director to submit a resume, as well as the new student program manager, **Tiffany Rogers**, 804-734-8000, ext. 4-8407, DeCA Human Resources, for students who live close to headquarters at Fort Lee, Va. ▷

Student success:

Robert Orange

Ord Community Commissary, Calif.

Position: Grocery lead

Commissary start: 2009, student hire

Years as DeCA student hire: Two and a half, one at Ord and the rest at Moffett Field Commissary, Calif.

Education: Monterey Peninsula College, associate degree; San Jose State University, bachelor's with concentration in management and organization

How did you decide to go for a career in DeCA? I had a handful of mentors and friends through the agency who explained how a determined, driven individual could grow in DeCA. (Orange was recruited into the intern program by senior leadership.)



Robert Orange, grocery lead at Ord Community Commissary, Calif. DeCA photo: Robert Landon



Student success:

Daniel Schroeder

Bangor Commissary, Wash.



Position: Produce manager

Commissary start: 2008, store associate, produce

Years as DeCA student hire: Three, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas

Education: Park University School for Online Learning, bachelor's in business management, magna cum laude; on dean's list throughout enrollment

How did you decide to go for a career in DeCA?

While working for Mr. **Bo Westbrook** at Goodfellow, he encouraged me to pursue a career because he saw the passion I have for the commissary. As my mentor, he taught me about commissary management, produce department management and, most of all, how to work with people. I love my job as produce manager and enjoy every day at the store. My father served in the Air Force for 30 years, and my brother is serving in the Air Force presently; so it means a lot to me to be able to serve the military and their families each day. I feel proud knowing that I serve those who serve our country.

Daniel Schroeder, produce manager at Bangor Commissary, Wash. DeCA photo: Eric Gidion

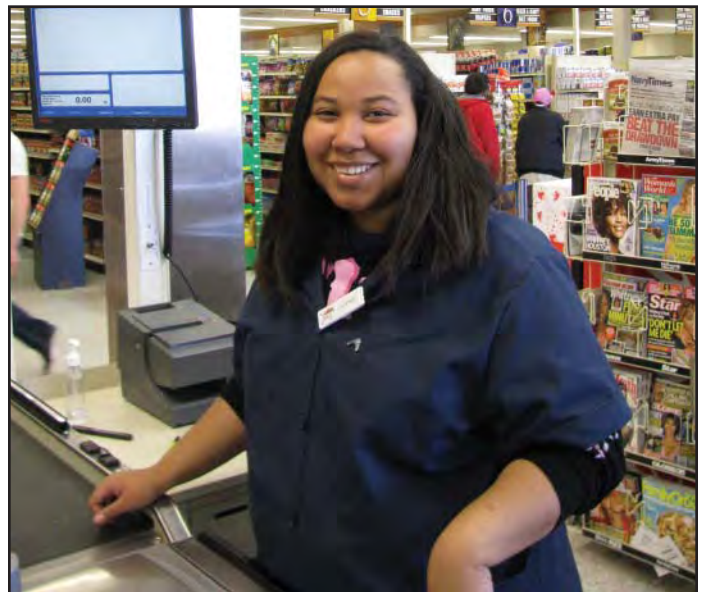
College courses

Though not technically student employees, agency workers have the opportunity to hone their career skills via college and university courses with the help of a tuition assistance program (see Business Enterprise Guidance 12-01 – Guidance on Tuition Assistance, Feb. 1, 2012, at https://www.commissaries.com/employees/resource_center/publications/memorandums/index.cfm).

In filling out the tuition assistance request form, SF-182, list college courses in which you plan to enroll, and explain how each course will benefit DeCA by enhancing your efficiency within your current position.

Some facts about DeCA's tuition assistance program:

- Only two courses per semester will be paid for by the agency, if approved.
- You must have two supervisors approve the request.
- Course must be pertinent to your current position.
- Request must be sent in 30 days prior to class start date.
- Before enrolling, you must be a DeCA full-time or part-time permanent employee for a minimum of six months. ■



Courtney Franklin, student employee at Portsmouth Commissary, Va., holds an associate degree in social science and attends Tidewater Community College, Portsmouth, pursuing a psychology degree. In 2014, she will transfer to Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., to earn her bachelor's in psychology. DeCA photo: Doug Buntley

Pathways programs: the way forward

While STEP and SCEP are currently the primary inroads for student entry into federal careers, these programs will be evolving in the near future.

On Dec. 27, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13562, entitled "Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates." For more information on this initiative, visit: www.opm.gov/hiringreform/pathways.

This program will not be operational until new regulations are implemented sometime this year. Until then, agencies may continue using the STEP and SCEP programs.

The Pathways Program establishes or refines three ways for students to enter federal employment:

Internship Program. This will combine the current STEP and SCEP programs, retaining the attributes of both. Successful participants would be eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a federal position – like SCEP – but the work does not have to be related to the degree, like STEP.

Recent Graduates Program. Targeting recent graduates of trade and vocational schools, community colleges and universities, selectees would be placed into a two-year career developmental program. Graduates must apply within two years of completing their degree.

Presidential Management Fellows Program. This developmental program has existed for about 30 years for advanced-degree candidates. Changes include becoming more "student friendly" and setting new qualification standards. ■



Student success:

Brandon Montgomery

Moffett Field Commissary, Calif.

Position: Grocery manager

Commissary start: 2002, student sales checker

Years as DeCA student hire: Eight, all at Moffett

Education: Foothill Community College, associate in social sciences and accounting. Three certificates: payroll preparation, cultural anthropology, tax and business accounting. Currently attending San Jose State and University of Phoenix; expected graduation dates, 2012-2013 in health science administration and business management.

How did you decide to go for a career in DeCA?

The former secretary referred me to the student program. I used the student program as means to pay school expenses. I decided to stay with DeCA because of the opportunities to grow and move within



Brandon Montbomery, grocery manager at Moffett Field Commissary, Calif. DeCA photo: Angel Dela Cruz

the agency. Throughout my term, I have been able to cross-train in different departments, take classes that allowed me to progress, and learn every aspect of commissary operations. ▷



Student success:

Robert Culbreth

DeCA Headquarters, Fort Lee, Va.

Position: Business analyst

Commissary start: 2004, bagger at Langley Commissary, Va.

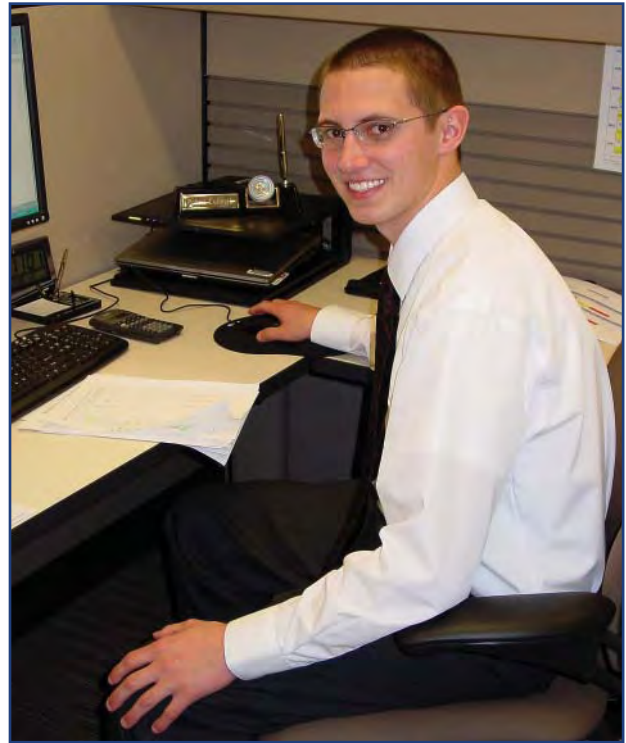
Years as DeCA student hire: Five

Where: Langley Commissary

Education: Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va. Bachelor of Science in business administration, with double major in finance and business analytics

How did you decide to go for a career in DeCA?

Originally I intended to work at store level, because I enjoy the customer interaction and service side of the business. During my last two semesters of college, however, I enjoyed the academic side of business analytics. I determined if the opportunity presented itself for a job in that field, I was willing to accept. ■



Robert Culbreth serves as a business analyst at DeCA headquarters at Fort Lee, Va. DeCA photo: Cherie Huntington



Da'Necia Joyner, Portsmouth Commissary, Va., attends Norfolk State University as a junior majoring in social work. DeCA photo: Doug Buntley

Commissary Management Trainee Program

Successful participants achieve a GS-9 management position at a commissary after completion of the program: GS-5 first year, GS-7 second year, GS-9 first assignment as a commissary department manager.

Length: 2 years

Size: 33 slots

Applications:

- Vacancies announced various times on no set schedule through USA Jobs: <http://www.usajobs.gov>
- Applicants build a resume and will receive notification of vacancies
- Applicants must be eligible for the grade of GS-5 and sign a mobility agreement

Selection:

- Applicants for consideration are scheduled for an interview with senior operations experts
- Selectees may be DeCA employees or external selectees

Military Spouse Intern Program

Same as above, with slots awarded to applicants who are spouses of active-duty military members. The intern trains near their spouse but not always at the same location. For example, the spouse is stationed at Fort Eustis, Va., but the intern works at Langley Commissary, Va. The agency tries to accommodate the intern, but there is no guarantee. ■



hotsales

Record holds tight

Super Bowl XLVI scores fourth highest sales since 2000

1	Super Bowl	Sat, Jan 31, 2009	\$29.5M
2	Super Bowl	Sat, Feb 2, 2008	\$28.6M
3	Thanksgiving	Sat, Nov 17, 2007	\$26.9M
4	Super Bowl	Sat, Feb 4, 2012	\$26.5M
5	Thanksgiving	Sat, Nov 22, 2008	\$26.5M
6	Payday/July 4	Fri, Jul 1, 2011	\$26.5M
7	Payday/New Year's	Fri, Dec 30, 2011	\$26.3M
8	Super Bowl	Sat, Jan 31, 2004	\$26M
9	Super Bowl	Sat, Feb 3, 2007	\$26M
10	Thanksgiving	Sat, Nov 19, 2011	\$25.8M
11	Payday	Sat, Nov 1, 2008	\$25.7M
12	Payday/Labor Day	Fri, Sep 2, 2011	\$25.7M
13	Thanksgiving	Sat, Nov 15, 2008	\$25.3M
14	Christmas	Tue, Dec 23, 2008	\$25.3M
15	Thanksgiving	Sat, Nov 18, 2006	\$25.3M

The 2009 sales record remained unchallenged as this year's Super Bowl sales ranked 4th place overall. Super Bowl and Thanksgiving sales records dominate this century's records, reported by DeCA research analysts. Four records came just last year, with the inaugural July 4 farmers market scoring a respectable 6th place. ▶



Fort Bragg South Commissary, N.C., promotes healthy choices for Super Bowl munching. Military Produce Group photo: Tom Hannan

Sheppard Commissary, Texas, features a larger-than-life linebacker who demands attention at a case of meat manager's specials. DeCA photo: Randell Pricer



More Super Bowl XLVI ...



Wiesbaden Commissary, Germany, “fills the stadium” with Super Bowl game-day snack selections. DeCA photo: Rosemarie Lewis



Fort Polk Commissary, La., features a beverage special no one can miss. DeCA photo: Breane Ross



McGuire Commissary, N.J., salutes Super Bowl 46 with top-selling produce selections for game day. DeCA photo: John Zoubra ■



Stores put innovation, inspiration to work to please patrons

TRENDSETTERS

Dover Commissary, Del.

Store Director **Lisa Serrano** found out the food items families typically want during their brief stay at the Dover Fisher House for the sad return of a fallen warrior. She made a display of the items at the commissary and packaged them in bags with their total price, such as a \$5 bag, \$10 bag and \$20 bag. Patrons wanting to help these families purchase a prepacked bag when they check out, and the commissary has the bags delivered to the Fisher House when they know families will be in the house.

For this outstanding support, Dover Commissary and six other organizations supporting families of the fallen received certificates of recognition from Fisher House Foundation.

Hohenfels Commissary, Germany

Store Director **Ric Potteiger** taught a segment of a new class sponsored by Army Community Service called "Coupon SenSe." The class is designed to support military families with their shopping. Feedback was good, and the class will be a regular monthly feature at Hohenfels.

Wiesbaden, Germany

Store Director **Kevin Kegler** started a volunteer program for newcomers, with a focus on single soldiers, family members who are new to the area and anyone waiting on their vehicles to arrive. For that first major purchase with cleaning solutions, mops and first-time refrigerator fill, a volunteer takes home

the person and their purchases, and helps them carry their groceries to the residence (usually on the fourth floor). Normally the customer lives within a three-mile radius of the commissary.

Kegler said this service seems to win over the customer for their entire tour, plus it's a great opportunity to "talk up" the commissary.

Zone 13, Hawaii Zone

Then-Zone 13 manager **Ben Wainwright** presented certificates of appreciation and zone coins to employees serving in the Guard and Reserve who return safely from their deployments. (**Brad McMinn** is now manager of Zone 13; Wainwright is manager of Zone 15.)

A recent group recognized included **Kevin Blecha**, grocery manager, and **Iona Meleisea**, store associate, **Pearl Harbor Commissary**; and **Nuku Palu**, store associate, and **Yanina Wisnewski**, supply technician, **Hickam Commissary** (see picture, Page 37). ▶



The produce department at Camp Foster Commissary, Okinawa, created a health-oriented "Kid Zone," featuring a table and chairs where children can sit and color, plus try some fruit samples and learn about benefits of healthy eating. DeCA photo: Craig DeBrosky



Trendsetter spotlight:

Eating well on ‘\$10 a Day’

Class tackles planning, shopping, cooking with minimal bucks

LaVida Nethercutt

Store director

Columbus Commissary, Miss.

On Feb. 6, we held our first “\$10 a Day” initiative, which was a lot of fun and education for first-term airmen.

Here at **Columbus Commissary**, we enjoy great rapport with the installation. We know that the lack of a dining facility concerns our senior leadership, as does the ability for first-term airmen to budget their food allowance to cover the entire month, instead of using it for a car payment or other nonfood expenses.

Laura Clegg, director of the Airmen & Family Readiness Center, initiated the \$10 a

Day program and got senior leadership’s buy in. So the commissary is working closely with the center to teach young airmen how to cook, eat healthy, budget and plan meals – on just \$10 a day.

To start the day off, we taught the airmen to actually cook a meal. The A&FR Center has a kitchen in the building, so all of the cooking was done there. The airmen were hands-on

mixing, frying, stirring and even cleaning up. I talked about the commissary benefit and how they could save more than 30 percent as I directed the airmen how to cook the meal and also during lunch.

After lunch, they attended a class by a family readiness

counselor, who taught them how to budget, read their leave-and-earnings statement and address any financial concerns. Then the base dietitian gave a briefing on healthy eating, creating a shopping list and how to read labels.

The airmen were bused to the commissary and received a tour of the store and saw examples of what was learned from the briefings. When the tour was completed, each airman was challenged to shop for five days of meals, with three meals a day, for a total of 15 meals. They were given 20 minutes.

When the 20 minutes were up, the airmen were checked out in training mode by Produce Manager **Larry Dean**. Since we’re closed on Mondays, this did not pose a problem. After each shopper checked out, they were judged in four categories:

- Budget: \$50
- Quantity of meals: 15
- Healthy meals
- Variety

A scale of 1 to 5 was used for each category. Bonus points were given for each snack and coupon.

Each person in attendance watched every airman check out and explain their meal plans to share ideas. They also put the groceries back on the shelves, which allowed them to become more familiar with the store. We handed out floor plans, the February issue of Express Line, store points of contact, coupon info and patron communication forms.

We now have vendors willing to support this effort. At the end of our event, a vendor presented a \$25 gift check for first place and a fruit basket for second place. Everyone left more informed than when they arrived. ■



Nethercutt



Spooktacular win

Camp Kinser Commissary, Okinawa, won honors with this display in the Monster Energy Drink Halloween Display Contest. Highplains Marketing Services: Meriam Ann Brubaker



With vendor support, Cherry Point dumps sales slump by catering to event-loving customers

Daylight Madness Sale

Cherie Huntington
Vision editor

Store Director **Phyllis Black** and her staff at **Cherry Point Commissary**, N.C., know just the trick for bolstering lackluster sales.

Their innovative event drummed up sales of nearly \$118,000 on a day that would usually show sales of \$90,000 around a payday. Their concept catered to their customers' "crazy" love of Midnight Madness Sales, but avoided the difficulties of operating nearly around the clock. How so?

Try wrapping your brain around a Daylight Madness Sale.

"We had a blast!" said Black. "We had outstanding support from the folks at MDV, our distributor. It was fun to work and watch — and fun to shop!"

The nature of the event kept some customers stationed in the store with their lawn chairs and running shoes. One had to be ready to spring into action, because the sales came hot and heavy, every 15 minutes, all day long.

Black explained how the operation flowed: Store staff had a master list of scheduled sales and positioned product to be issued out of one door at a time, announced over the intercom in the style of K-Mart's "Blue-Light Specials."

For example, paper towels might be on sale for 15 minutes, available at the produce doors. Then ketchup might go on sale for the next 15 minutes, issued from the meat department doors. Customers scrambled to score some of the limited product until it all disappeared; staff would tidy up the area and prepare for the next sale.

"Vendors liked the concept because the amount of product was limited," Black said. "It wasn't like they needed a truckload of an item — it might be just one pallet." Vendors passed out loads of coupons to save even more. In one case, coupons made the product free, plus customers were paid 4 cents per item!

The excitement and anticipation in waiting to hear what the next sale item would be kept some



Cashier Irolene Whitehead, Cherry Point Commissary, N.C., rejoices as her customer sports a gift voucher donated by vendors. DeCA photo: Lowrina-Ramona Bueno

customers shopping all day long, filling many baskets and checking out multiple times. As if the constantly-changing sales didn't provide enough action, customers also participated in lucrative contests and games, winning industry-donated merchandise, gift cards and products.

Three shoppers won big-screen TVs in the following challenges based on single transactions:

- Highest-dollar sale before coupons: \$1,787
- Highest-dollar amount of coupons used: \$421
- Highest number of coupons used: 237

Other prizes were awarded willy-nilly, such as whoever happened to be checking out at Register 4, shopper with the biggest smile or dirtiest shoes, or even the dirtiest child. That child, by the way, turned out to be a cheerful toddler who had gotten sick on herself, and she seemed tickled to win a bottle of laundry detergent for her accomplishment.





Clockwise from top: Customers at Cherry Point Commissary, N.C., load up on premium pet food at unbeatable prices at the Daylight Madness Sale. Right, Bill Nethercutt, meat department manager, makes sure shoppers secure great bargains. Last, pallets of paper goods disappear quickly. DeCA photos: Lowrina-Ramona Bueno

Still, there was not enough action for Black and her crew. Volunteer cooks from Zone 29 grilled hot dogs that raised nearly \$500 for the local Wounded Warrior program.

“Phyllis ran the show from start to finish,” said Zone Manager **Dave Shaw**. “It was like a play, with everyone right on queue, throughout the entire day. A whole lot of work and effort went into making that sale a huge success.”

“MDV was the driving force behind this particular sale,” Black said. “They contacted companies and were very proactive in getting the support from the manufacturers for both great prices as well as prizes. I look forward to partnering with MDV again in the future.” ■

Facebook fanfare

THANK YOU FOR THE MADNESS SALE — I was able to stay under budget and get everything I needed for the month! Thanks to all the workers for being SO patient and helpful.
Chantel Franks

I wanted to thank Cherry Point Commissary for a big day! I spent ALL day shopping! It was stressful and long, but fun and totally worth the trip. My little one had fun winning prizes and enjoying hot dogs. A lady by the name of June came to my rescue around 4 pm. Her husband works for the commissary and was visiting from out of town. They both helped me in the checkout process and we had a great time! Thanks to Rhonda who checked me out ... she worked with me for around an hour! Next time, don't take more than a year to do another Madness sale! Loved it!
Elizabeth Ramos

I just got home from the sale at Cherry Point Commissary. I spent the entire day stocking up on the great deals they were having, and it was totally worth it! Thanks so much!
Sallie Anderson

Ramstein shatters overseas sales record

Leslie Brown

Europe Area public affairs officer

He's known throughout DeCA's Europe Area as the "Six Million Dollar Man."

No, he doesn't have bionic legs or the strength of a bulldozer in his right arm, but like the Six Million Dollar Man of the old television series, he has great vision. At **Ramstein Commissary**, Germany, Store Director **Harry Nichols** sees all of

the different ways to meet the challenges of selling groceries at Europe's highest sales volume commissary.

Located in Kaiserslautern, Ramstein Air Base is the busiest and largest U.S. Air Force installation in Europe. More than 50,000 Americans living in and around the base use Ramstein Commissary as their local grocery store.

That keeps Nichols and crew busy. So busy, they achieved a milestone \$6 million in sales in December 2011, the most ever ▶





in any one month for an overseas store. The commissary also leads overseas stores in transactions, the only one to routinely surpass 1 million annually.

How does he do it?

Built for small crowd

“My team keeps the shelves stocked,” Nichols said. “We make sure we have the products available that our customers want to buy.”

It’s tough keeping shelves stocked in a store this size. Originally built in 1983 to accommodate monthly sales averaging just shy of \$2 million, Ramstein Commissary averages \$5.5 million every month.

It’s not easy moving nearly three times the capacity of people and product through his facility, but he does it.

“We knew the month of December would have some very busy days,” he said. “So we



Nichols



Mullins-Mings

did our planning and ensured we had the needed product on hand.”

Employees who worked front-end operations had a huge hand in the success as well, he said.

“The front-end employees set a goal to keep the lines short,” Nichols said. “They did a wonderful job of keeping the customers moving through the checkout area. They were phenomenal.”

Records tumble

It was just mid-2009 when the store scored the overseas

sales record of \$5 million. Nichols said he knew he would hit \$6 million in the future, but he didn’t think it would be until after the ongoing renovation was completed in late 2013.

Besides stocked shelves and a top-notch front-end staff, Nichols also credits the increase of more than 100 parking spaces in November.

Ramstein Zone Manager **Monique Mullins-Mings** wasn’t surprised by the achievement.

“Everything Harry and his team touch turns to gold,” Mings said. “He knows the right formula for running a successful commissary.”

Nichols expects to hit another milestone after business resumes in a fully renovated facility.

“I’m already prepping the team for our \$7 million month,” he said with a chuckle. “Tell everyone December 2013 will be our next big one!” ■

SALES RECORDS

Anchorage Area, Alaska	Sep	3-day case lot record sales	\$901,666
Fort Belvoir, Va.	Dec	Agency record sales, meat record sales, 18-day streak over \$300,000	\$9,430,192; \$686,414; \$314,358 daily average
Fort Jackson, S.C.	Dec	Record sales day	\$152,940
Camp Lejeune, N.C.	Dec	Record sales day	\$198,749
Cannon AFB, N.M.	Nov	Record sales day	\$42,923
MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.	Feb	Record sales day	\$111,202; \$117,918
Fort Drum, N.Y.	Dec	Record sales day	\$154,848
Hanscom AFB, Mass.	Dec	Record sales day	\$100,422
JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawai	Dec	Record sales	\$4,555,819
Menwith Hill, England	Dec	Gift card record sale	\$5,000
MCAS Miramar, Calif.	Nov	Record sales day	\$209,111
NSY Portsmouth, N.H.	Dec	Record sales day	\$20,592
NB San Diego	Nov	Record sales day	\$272,551
NSU Saratoga Springs, N.Y.	Dec	Record sales day	\$29,762
Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.	Dec	Record sales day	\$95,026
Shaw AFB, S.C.	Dec	Record sales day	\$91,623
Spangdahlem, Germany	Dec	Record sales day	\$53,254
Travis AFB, Calif.	Sep	1 st day case lot record sales; total store sales	\$117,489; \$292,308
Vogelweh, Germany	Dec	Gift card record sale	\$25,000 ■



‘The DeCA years’

Commissary benefit transitions to one lean, efficient agency

Dr. Pete Skirbunt
DeCA historian

Part III: In the previous issue, four military commissary systems combined to form one Department of Defense agency.

Oct. 1, 1991, marked the first day of a new era in commissary history. That was the day on which the new Defense Commissary Agency officially took control of the commissaries belonging to all the armed services run by the Pentagon.

Ahead lay years of new challenges, many successes, numerous problems that needed solving, a few disappointments and many adjustments and readjustments to deal with changing times, changing budgets and a changing mission.

There is one thing it has never been, for the last 20 years: It has never been dull!

Initial structure

DeCA started with 411 commissaries. That was the actual number of sales facilities, including annexes to larger stores. The agency also supported two Air Force troop support locations in Greenland, as well as 17 Navy Exchange grocery sections. That’s why some early records show DeCA had as many as 430 stores.

The stores were distributed among seven regions – one in Europe and the Middle East, five in the United States and one – the Northwest-Pacific Region – covering stores in eastern Asia, the Pacific and the

Northwest United States. There were two service centers that attended to payroll and bill paying, one at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio – the former Air Force Commissary Service headquarters building – and one at an off-post rental facility at Fort Lee, Va., not far from the present DeCA headquarters building. There were 20 central distribution centers and 22,000 employees, worldwide. Average customer savings were 23 percent.

The first director, Army Maj. Gen. **John P. Dreska**, had led the transition team that put the agency together and would ultimately see it through its first year of operation. He challenged everyone to do their best: “I don’t care if the old system was broken or not,” he often said. “If it’s not broken, fix it anyway.” His gruff exterior concealed a heart of gold, and his enthusiastic support for all DeCA employees endeared him to many. ▷



Payment problems

Unfortunately, during the agency's first year of existence, a bill-paying problem that generated a big backlog of unpaid bills was created, primarily by the rapid changeover to a new business system, with which most employees were unfamiliar. The quick changeover did not allow adequate time for thorough training. As a result, some vendors weren't getting timely payments, while others were accidentally receiving double payments.

Understandably, there was an uproar among smaller businesses that couldn't afford to wait for two or three months before getting paid. The problem was so severe that some people privately wondered whether or not DeCA would survive.

Within the year, the problem was brought under control, as many of DeCA's employees manually intervened in the bill-paying process, and leadership devised business rules to enable the agency's systems to complete payments. At the time, it was feared that the bill-paying problem had caused the agency irreparable damage; but now it's apparent that DeCA's employees at all levels had responded and met the challenge.

As we all were to discover, DeCA's strength was its people, who would respond to multiple challenges over the next 10 years. Fortunately, few of those challenges were quite as daunting as the bill-paying problem.

During a visit to the headquarters in 1992, Dreska's boss, Colin McMillan, assistant secretary of defense for production and logistics, reassured the DeCA headquarters employees that they had accomplished some amazing things during the short time they had been given to complete, and adjust to, a large and complicated multi-agency merger. Considering that people from four services had been quickly thrown together and were learning a completely different way of doing business, such problems should have been expected.

Dreska's successors

Dreska retired in late 1992 and was succeeded

Grafenwoehr Commissary, Germany, pictured in 1996, would serve its customers until a new, \$15.9 million facility was completed in 2007, pictured, next page. DeCA historical photo file

by Army Maj. Gen. **Richard E. Beale Jr.**, who would give the agency the stability of the same leadership for seven years: three in uniform and four as a civilian. Beale served in uniform as director until October 1995 and then was asked to continue as a civilian director. Beale successfully guided the agency through several crises that had the potential to derail the benefit.

Under his direction, the agency earned a Presidential Quality Award for its efforts in streamlining operations and saving \$625 million since its inception in 1991, as well as several "Hammer Awards" for its efforts in "reinventing government" and finding new ways to fulfill its mission.

Late in 1999, Beale was followed by a civilian acting director, the late **John F. McGowan**, who had been associated with military commissaries and service squadrons since 1963, when he had become the commissary officer at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

Then came, in succession, two Air Force major generals whose leadership styles could not have been more different: **Robert J. Courter** (December 1999 to August 2002) and **Michael P. Wiedemer** (August 2002 to September 2004).

Courter felt the agency had gone through what he called "forming and storming" and was now in the position to begin "norming" – carrying on business as usual without the constant threats to its continued existence. He stabilized the agency's finances, ensuring a logical methodology for dividing surcharge and defense working capital fund expenditures, while at the same time increasing capitalization of the infrastructure and decreasing operating costs

It was during this time that the mantra of





A new Grafenwoehr Commissary, Germany, opened September 2007, more than tripling the size of the previous store. The commissary shares a shopping center with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.
DeCA photo: Gerri Young

Jr., who proved to be enthusiastic and very people-oriented. Personable and energetic, Sakowitz was very popular with the workforce, a quick study who proved to be a good fit for the agency. But after two years, he moved on also; and **Tom Milks**, Sakowitz' deputy and a longtime commissary employee and upper-level manager, served as the interim for several months before **Joseph H. Jeu** was appointed the agency director and CEO in 2011.

maintaining the value of the benefit without increasing its cost was born. With most major funding challenges resolved for the time being, Wiedemer was able to concentrate on improving customer service during a period in which the U.S. military would be called into action in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the benefit itself would become more important to military families left behind during deployments.

He was also able to start serving reservists far more than ever before; the Reserves were becoming increasingly important in the nation's defense, with a growing role in combat operations. As a result, they received full-time commissary shopping privileges in 2003.

Replacing Wiedemer was **Patrick B. Nixon**, who is currently president of the American Logistics Association, who served as acting director for nearly two years before being confirmed as the first DeCA director and CEO. He was the first director of any commissary agency to attain that position entirely by promotion through the ranks of the U.S. civil service, as well as the first with full-time, store-level commissary and civilian grocery store experience.

When Nixon left, he was temporarily succeeded by **Rick Page**, another longtime commissary professional who enjoyed great popularity with the workforce. Page was followed by a hire from outside the commissary system, **Philip E. Sakowitz**

Jeu had years of commissary experience and had headed Marine Corps commissaries before DeCA was formed. He was a veteran of the commissary mission and able to hit the ground running as soon as he arrived.

Other major issues

There were a number of other issues besides bill-paying that DeCA was able to successfully overcome. Many of them were minor, but one worth mentioning here was DCIS, the new DeCA Commissary Information System, that was to be the successor to the DeCA Interim Business System. Multiple technical problems and the complexity of DeCA's business system needs made DCIS untenable, but the agency was able to revamp DIBS, the existing DeCA Interim Business System, in its place. An improved DIBS ultimately became the new computer information retrieval system.

DeCA explored the possibility of becoming a PBO — Performance-Based Organization — a designation that would enable DeCA to streamline operations and hiring processes. In an era when “reinventing government” was in style, DeCA made an effort to do its part. But in the end, though DeCA did indeed become the first DoD agency to be designated a PBO, the designation did little to actually help the agency cut red tape and streamline its processes. In the long run, it didn't matter. DeCA was filled with resourceful people and continued to modernize and improve its business processes.





Guitar goldfish

This display at Scott Commissary, Ill., excited customers interested in winning the iconic guitar shaped like a goldfish cracker. The drawing for the lucky winner was Feb. 19. *Pepperidge Farm photo: Keith Mattingly*



DeCA years ... (continued from previous page)

More vexing, really, was the fact that long after the bill-paying issue had stabilized, the agency found itself under continued scrutiny. The scrutiny was often adversarial. From 1991 to 1999, DeCA was involved in what seemed to be a near-constant state of having to justify its existence. After going through consolidation, employees found they and their agency were constantly being subjected to second-guessing from opponents and budget-cutters. Part of the problem was simply that after its formation, DeCA came onto the radar screens of government's budget-cutters.

When the commissaries had been divided up among the armed services, none of the commissary organizations had a very large budget. All such costs came out of the services' separate funding affiliations and were, literally, "hidden costs" within the services' budgets.

But when the new organization absorbed all four service-run commissary agencies, their combined subsidy made it noticeable to anyone with an eye on trimming the federal budget.

Early on, DeCA employees often heard about how much money could be saved by closing the stores and giving every military family a monthly stipend. Of course, such a move would necessitate giving every eligible customer stipends, or

vouchers, whether or not they actually shopped at a commissary. Retirees, who made up 49 percent of U.S. customers, would not be eligible for the stipend and would be entirely denied their benefit, despite promises that the armed forces had made to them many years previously. Upset over the possibility that they would be stripped of this benefit, retirees time and again came to the commissaries' defense through campaigns that included everything from letter-writing to actual on-the-spot protests.

For years, even before the founding of DeCA, a frequently asked question among people unfamiliar with commissaries, their history and their role as a military benefit was: "Why should the Department of Defense operate grocery stores?"

While that question still occasionally arises, today the commissary is routinely considered a benefit system. Service members and their families have the many dedicated DeCA employees — who over the years have demonstrated "the value of the benefit" — to thank for the department's decision to maintain this integral element of the military compensation package.

Next issue: *DeCA makes its way through more challenges, maturing into a successful, model government agency.* ■



getsmart

Turning garbage into green

Fort Lewis Commissary leads way in agency recycling efforts

Call it the final insult of garbage. Not only does it stink, fill up space and have a look only a garbageman could love – it also costs money to get rid of it.

But the team at Fort Lewis Commissary, Wash., found a way to save money and put garbage where it belongs: into a recycling program.

For the past eight years, Store Manager **Janet Landon** led her team in pursuit of “garbage nirvana,” recycling more than 80 percent of their waste, earning six-figure savings in fiscal 2011 and winning DeCA’s Best Overall Store Award in solid waste management.

“You can’t talk about recycle without talking about Janet when it comes to Fort Lewis,” said Store Director **Eugene Lantz**. “She designed a program so comprehensive that the Army adopted her setup.”

In other words: Hasta la vista, garbage.

How did you get involved in the commissary’s recycle program?

I became involved in the cardboard recycling program with the installation recycle program in 2004. When DeCA started recycling cardboard, plastic and mixed paper, it increased opportunities to reduce our waste stream even further. I saw the refuse cost decrease as a result of recycling and was amazed at the savings. When you can save money just by putting waste

in a different container, it just makes sense to recycle. In 2008, the base opened a composting facility and started the food recycling program with produce waste, fat and bone. It has just grown from there.

Describe the store’s major focus areas in recycling.

The commissary is one of the largest generators of waste on most installations. Our main focus is on cardboard, plastic, mixed paper and food waste. The majority of the waste materials we generate are in these areas.

In fiscal 2011, the Lewis Commissary generated 2.4 million pounds of waste. Of this waste, we recycled 1.6 million pounds of cardboard, plastic and paper, and 275,480 pounds of food waste. The accomplishment our team is proudest of is that we recycled 81.6 percent of the waste we generated in 2011, up 7 percent from fiscal 2010. By recycling, we saved \$154,694 in refuse cost. We’ve been able to



Store Manager Janet Landon and her team at Fort Lewis Commissary, Wash., set the standard in DeCA’s recycling program. DeCA photo: Jim Docherty

accomplish this level of recycling in just five years.

What role does store and zone leadership play in a successful program? What role do store employees play?

Leadership plays a major role in a successful program. Ms. **Victoria Best-Rush**, Zone 12 manager, has set a goal for all ▶



Use caution with suspicious email

Nothing makes you feel more like an idiot than being the person at work who opens the email file containing a virus, phishing scheme or worse.

Recently, a message sent to the entire headquarters was flagged as suspicious and placed in quarantine – those lists that require the user to click “Release” or “Delete.” Maybe since the message was titled, “Gain more energy,” someone took the bait and clicked “Release.” In turn, that released it to the entire headquarters distribution list.

Lo and behold, more people started opening the message and clicking on the website therein, falling victim to the scam and putting the agency’s network at risk.

Consider these cautions when reviewing email messages:

- Don’t open or release a message from quarantine if it’s from someone you don’t know.
- Never open an attachment or follow links in a suspicious email.



- If you think you’ve opened a suspicious message, contact your help desk immediately, at phone numbers listed on your computer desktop. ■

Garbage ...

Zone 12 stores to be at 55 percent recycle this year. Currently, most of the stores are at 33 to 45 percent recycle. She encourages all stores to participate in all of DeCA’s recycle programs as well as any recycle opportunities that the local base offers.

Our store director, Mr. Lantz, fully supports all recycle efforts at our store. New employees are trained in recycling as part of their orientation; all employees are reminded of the importance of recycling during their annual training. Our employees are the backbone of the program. That’s why we are so successful – they understand the importance of putting recycle in the proper containers.

What recycling activities are you hoping to start in the future?

We are always looking for new opportunities to recycle.

- News note -

At January’s zero waste conference in Chicago, DeCA was recognized as one of the Army’s top three success stories.

I’m working with the base Environmental Office on recycling plastic containers and waxed cardboard that produce comes in. Approximately 100-150 of the plastic containers end up in the garbage each week. Currently, there are no recycle opportunities for this type of plastic. We’re hopeful that we’ll be recycling waxed cardboard again sometime this spring.

For any store that hasn’t addressed recycling program growth beyond cardboard recycling, what advice do you have for them?

Recycling doesn’t have to be difficult. Take advantage of DeCA’s recycle opportunities. Contact your installation

Environmental Office and see what recycling programs it offers. We’re fortunate at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, because we’re not charged for any recycled waste.

You can reduce waste just by training employees to put waste in the proper container for recycle. Make the location of the containers as convenient as possible for the items being recycled – recycle bins by the office desk and in the break rooms, and produce waste bins close to the produce processing area. Look at your refuse billing and track your progress by measuring the weight of the refuse against the weight before you started your recycling program. Share your success with the employees. After all, without the employees you cannot have a successful program. ■



Dumpster diving

Waste sort study aims to reduce landfill trash

Tammy Reed

Business Enterprise Communication

DeCA took dumpster diving to an extreme in 2011, as contractors sorted through dumpsters at 10 U.S. commissaries as part of a waste sort study.

Working under the Department of Defense's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan, DeCA spent several days collecting, sorting and weighing its garbage to learn its contents and determine how to keep more of it from the nation's landfills.

"I'd like to see a zero footprint, if you would," said **Joseph H. Jeu**, DeCA director and CEO, "where everything that comes into the stores would get recycled, composted or used somehow, instead of going into the waste stream. It's a very ambitious goal, but other stores and industries have the same goal. I think it's achievable, if not today, then sometime in the future."

Through waste sorts, commissaries can focus on a targeted goal to increase recycling and compostable rates. The waste sort goals match DeCA's Effective Waste Management Plan objectives, which are to reduce solid-waste volumes and costs while increasing recycling rates.

DeCA chose stores from across sales bands and geographical areas to sort their dumpsters. What they found was that the current waste stream consisted of outdated produce, dairy, bakery and meat products. It also includes a limited amount of waxed cardboard, which cannot be recycled now, along with minor amounts of plastic and metal.

Mark Leeper, environmental engineer, said results from the study concluded about 70-75 percent of the solid waste generated by commissaries is convertible.

A contractor prepares to begin a waste sort study in a dumpster at Fort Lee Commissary, Va. This study will help DeCA determine what its waste stream contains, and how to divert most, if not all of it, from landfills. DeCA photo: Ed Lamica

"This means it can be diverted from the landfill and converted from waste to energy or used for compost," Leeper said. "Furthermore, the results will be used to determine if the number of refuse containers at commissaries can be reduced. If so, this will decrease the amount of defense working capital funds being used for solid waste expenses."

DeCA is not in this alone. Installations worldwide pursue the same goals, as they also have to reduce the waste stream under the DoD Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan.

"One of the things we are looking at is a gasification process where we can take compostables, put them through this process and end up with soil that can be used instead of fertilizer," Jeu said. "If we could join forces with the base and the dining facilities, I think we could make this process mutually cost effective."

"Through actions related to the waste sorts, DeCA hopes to reduce the agency's carbon footprint and save operating funds," said **Mike Dowling**, acting deputy director and chief operating officer. "The cost of taking waste to landfills comes out of appropriated funds, so anything we do to save money is good for the taxpayer."

"It is good for our customers, and it makes us a good steward of our taxpayers' money," Dowling added. "Plus, we can use appropriated dollars for things that add value for our customers." ■





peoplealways

DeCA honored for hiring disabled

‘We see their strengths and contributions every day’

Kevin L. Robinson

Business Enterprise Communication

Hiring people with disabilities is more than an admin box that gets checked at DeCA, according to its director.

“We actively recruit qualified people with disabilities, not only because it’s the right thing to do,” said **Joseph H. Jeu**, DeCA director and CEO, “but also because we see their strengths and contributions every day as we deliver the commissary benefit.”

DeCA’s track record in hiring people with disabilities was recently recognized at Department of Defense level when it received the Best Mid-Sized Component Award. Other winners included the Department of the Navy, Best Military Department Award; the Joint Staff, Best Small-Sized Component Award; and the Defense Intelligence Agency, Best Intelligence Component Award.

DeCA achieved honors on the strength of increasing the number of employees with targeted disabilities from 1.1 percent in fiscal 2010 to 1.51 percent in fiscal 2011. The DoD goal for hiring people with targeted disabilities is 2 percent – the DoD-wide average percentage is 0.77 and the federal-wide average is 0.88.

Targeted disabilities, as defined by the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, include: deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness and genetic and physical conditions affecting limbs or spine.



DeCA won Best Mid-Sized Component Award for the Department of Defense, recognizing its achievements in hiring people with disabilities.

DeCA photo: Norman Brown

“Considering the physical requirements of many DeCA jobs, this is a significant accomplishment,” said **Marcus Lashley**, director of equal employment. “Leadership sets the tone for an organization’s strides in equal employment opportunities, and Mr. Jeu did that by asking senior DeCA leaders to focus on ‘moving the needle’ in this metric.”

Lashley also credited DeCA’s Human Resources Directorate for creating relationships with federal, state and private organizations to help recruit qualified people with disabilities and Wounded Warriors.

Human resources Deputy Director **Cynthia Craft**, who supervised now-retired Diversity Program Manager **Claudie Grant**, credited him as “being pivotal in focusing and shaping the agency’s recruitment of people with disabilities.” That recruitment mission puts DeCA on the road to colleges, job fairs and any events that focus on people with targeted disabilities and Wounded Warriors to inform them of commissary job opportunities.

“We also participate in DoD’s Workforce Recruitment Program, which sponsors disabled college students working in various DoD components,” said **Beverly White**, diversity manager for human resources, responsible for the agency’s recruiting matters for people with disabilities. “The WRP gives us a wonderful opportunity to hire a graduating student into a permanent position.”

Hiring people with disabilities fits with DeCA’s emphasis to foster a culture where employees are valued for their qualifications to do the job and not for their race, creed, religious background or physical abilities, said **Tonja Ancrum**, the agency’s affirmative employment manager.

“We will continue to do more to follow Mr. Jeu’s lead and support DoD’s goal to offer more job opportunities to qualified people with targeted disabilities,” Ancrum said. ■



'Get off the couch'

Alabama teller gets her health on track via hard work, dedication

Beth Skarupa

Redstone Arsenal Public Affairs, Ala.

Marilyn Truesdale, a teller at **Redstone Arsenal Commissary**, Ala., is telling everyone about her weight loss success. She went from a size 22 to a size 8, and she is happy to let everyone know how she did it. Why? Because she wants to inspire others to lose weight, too.

"I hope by telling this story and telling them what I did, others get motivated, too," she said. "Start doing something. If you don't do anything but walk, do something. Get off the couch ... because I did."

Her quest began about a year ago after she realized that she was unhappy about her appearance. She said she had just let herself go; because like many parents, she tended to forget about herself. She concentrated on her kids, family and job but forgot about her own health.

"So one day I looked in the mirror and I was like, 'I've got to make a change. It's time for me to get started, get motivated and be happy with myself inside and out,'" she said. So she decided to call a friend and ask her to recommend a personal trainer.

One fateful day

On Sept. 17, 2010, Truesdale called Victor Terrell, a personal trainer and owner of a local fitness facility. She said she will never forget that day – the day she decided to change her life and make exercise a priority.

The first time she met with Terrell, she told him all her problems, talked about what was going on and how she was feeling, and she ended up crying. She was surprised that happened but

felt like a weight was lifted off her shoulders. After that, she was ready to get started with a new lifestyle.

She said even though Terrell warned her that she would be sore after working out with him the first day – and she was sore – she kept going back and slowly started losing inches.

Positive reinforcement

Terrell encouraged her to start working muscles she had never worked before, and he was always a good motivator.

"He was always positive," Truesdale said. "He never said anything negative, nothing. He's a good person; he's a good trainer and a good, positive motivator,"

she said. Terrell told her they would take it one day at a time, and she continued working out with him.

"As I lost the weight, he kept me toned so I wouldn't look so flabby," she said. "I started going to him twice a week on my days off, and I said, 'I'm going to start doing for me.' I spent money on nails; I spent money on hair; but I was going to start doing for me. So money wasn't an issue; it was just that I wanted to take care of myself, so I started doing it."

Ready for boot camp

After six months, she started attending Terrell's boot camp workout in the evenings, too. That's when she really started seeing results. She said the boot camp made her work every part of her body.

It involved activities such as running, lifting weights and doing push-ups. As a retired master sergeant, Terrell ran a challenging boot camp. Truesdale was motivated to go to the gym on post three times a week after that. ▶



Marilyn Truesdale, teller at Redstone Arsenal Commissary, Ala., enjoys her weight loss success after a year and a half of working out regularly and adopting healthy eating habits. U.S. Army photo: Beth Skarupa



“Everybody would say, ‘You look like you’re losing weight,’ but I couldn’t tell right away because I was losing inches,” she said. “I couldn’t tell because I could wear the same clothes.”

Good eating habits

Although Terrell never put her on a diet, he always encouraged her to eat fruit and vegetables and practice portion control. Truesdale adopted that regime and cut out soda and going out to eat lunch every day. She started drinking more water, and her weight started coming off.

“I’ll never forget when I went in my closet and tried on a size 16 – I had a size 16 in my closet for 10 years that I couldn’t wear. When I got in the 16, I was motivated to do more. I wanted to lose the weight,” she said. “Commissary shoppers were coming in, asking me if I lost weight and telling me I was looking good, to keep it up. Everybody, men and women, were noticing, so that motivated me even more to do more.”

An added benefit to losing weight was that exercising helped relieve her stress. She noticed that exercising was making her feel better. When she realized she was getting results, she was happier with herself. Now she makes it a point to go to the gym regularly. She said she basically eats what she wants but is smarter about what she chooses to eat. She also emphasized that she did not have surgery to lose the weight.

“I did it all the right way, and you know what? It’s staying off, because I’m losing more and I don’t even know why. Now I’m a size 8 from a 22, so you can guess how much weight that was, because I never monitored it,” she said. She explained that Terrell weighed her each week, but she never wanted him to tell her what her weight was – she preferred to see the results in the mirror.

Secrets to success

“I think one of the reasons Marilyn has been successful in her weight loss is that I just helped her



Marilyn Truesdale, teller at Redstone Arsenal Commissary, Ala., lost seven dress sizes during her weight loss campaign. *DeCA photo: Robin Daniel*

realize that she had the power all along,” Terrell said. “I gave her the power to do the things through motivation and education to achieve her goals.”

He noted that once his clients have the education to do it on their own and start working out, their body fat will decrease over time. He tells them that they did not gain all their weight overnight, so they can’t expect to lose it overnight. They need to make exercise a priority and work to change their lives.

“A lot of people think there’s a quick fix to weight loss. There is no quick fix,” he said. “I would say change your attitude and quit looking for

a quick fix. Get up and get busy; just enjoy your life and start having fun. Walk, hike, swim, cycle. Whatever you do, your body just needs to be in motion. Give up cake, cookies and ice cream for a while. Moderation is the key.”

Proud family

Truesdale and her husband, Ronald, have two sons: Travon, 10, and RJ, 13. Ronald is proud of her for losing weight, and her sons tell her she looks good. They also tell her they are happy that they can put their hands around her waist now. She said her sons are part of her motivation to stay in shape, because she wants to keep her life healthy and be able to keep up with them.

Before losing the weight, Truesdale said she used to just eat and go to bed after work. She did not have energy to do much more than that. Exercising and losing weight has energized her, and she’s happier, too. Now she wants to spread the word.

“I feel like this since I lost the weight: Excuses, everybody’s got some. Before I go anywhere, I go to the gym. I put it in my routine and make sure I go. I can’t tell you anything other than what I did,” she said. “So let’s get motivated. Start exercising; find you a program. My thing is, what my mother always said is this: ‘If you know better, you do better.’” ■



Accommodating disabilities in DeCA

Diligence, pride enables blind employee to excel

Leslie Brown

Europe Area public affairs officer

When you first meet Alex, you might think he's a shy gentleman. He walks with his head down, concentrating on where he is going and what he's got to get done. But as soon as he knows you're there, his face lights up and he greets you with a cheery "hello!"

Military family member **Alex Culbreth**, storeworker at **Vogelweh Commissary**, Germany, is legally blind, but you wouldn't know it.

You see him working diligently to keep the store shelves stocked. He scans the area where he's working and goes back to the warehouse and loads a cart with the products he needs to keep his sections fully stocked.

Mainly he works stocking the grab-n-go beverages and Aisle 6 where the bottled waters and teas are merchandised. While he can't read the writing on the products, the shapes and colors of the caps and labels help him ensure they are in their correct locations.

He's proud of what he does, and the full shelves and organized areas he's in charge of prove it.

"I like working for DeCA," Alex said with a smile. "I love the people."

When Alex started at Vogelweh Commissary in late June 2011, he worked in produce. He learned how to gingerly stock fruits and vegetables and how to cull them to ensure peak freshness.

When he received his first paycheck from his new job, he took his entire family out for a special dinner. His dad serves on active duty at Vogelweh.

"I wanted to take my mom to dinner. She was so proud of me," he said. "Now I help pay my own way for things. I really like being able to do that."

After learning those duties, he transferred to grocery where he is constantly busy.

"Working in grocery is my favorite," he said. "It keeps me busy all day, and I get to interact with so many people."

He has a big smile when he talks about his joy of helping customers and his fellow employees. "I like doing my job a lot!"

The store's management team loves the work Alex does as well.

"Alex remembers everything you tell him," said Store Manager **Gissell Horde**. "He's always happy to

help the customers. If he doesn't know the answer, he finds someone who does."

Few accommodations are needed to help Alex on the job. Other than assistance with computer-based training and having to fasten his steel-toed shoes, since small strings are difficult to tie, he doesn't require any other adjustments to work.

"It's a pleasure having Alex on my team," Store Director **John Blythe Jr.** said. "He knows what needs to be done and does it with a smile. He is very meticulous and has a strong work ethic."

But like most U.S. family members working overseas, Alex won't be staying at Vogelweh Commissary for more than a few years, since the family returns to the states upon military reassignment in 2014.

"When I go back to America, I hope to work for DeCA there, too," he said with a big grin. ■



Alex Culbreth, legally blind storeworker at Vogelweh Commissary, Germany, enjoys the financial independence he gains by way of his employment with DeCA. DeCA photo: Leslie Brown



The world's best customers salute the world's best employees



Bramell



Cassel



Pineda

Buckley

I am a loyal customer of **Buckley Commissary**, Colo., and it is well worth the more than 40-mile drive I make each trip. It is the most customer-service-friendly facility I have been in, and I have been in many. **Arthur Pineda*** always says hello when I walk past him in the store and works to get the items I and others seek. **Patricia Cassel** is the most helpful person I have met, as she constantly seeks to help me and others in getting what we need. These folks truly reflect well on DeCA. Store Director **Jerry Bramell** runs a first-rate outfit there and all are to be commended. Please make sure this is passed on to all team members as they reflect the highest standards of customer service to me and others. God bless!

Maj. Jac Gold, U.S. Air Force

* now retired

Patrick

Din Bell, sales store checker at **Patrick Commissary**, Fla., is in perpetual motion helping those who need help. She rivals the very best in that she remains calm, helpful and very competent in what she does. Perhaps her best trait is her desire to please everyone she helps. Whoever hires this

talent should be commended as well. Thanks again for putting those in places that need a calm and competent hand.

Maj. Robert Nicholas, U.S. Air Force

West Point

My compliments to **Nadia Woloszyn**, store associate at **West Point Commissary**, N.Y., on her professionalism and courtesy. I had been unwell and was rather rude to Nadia one day. She handled my rudeness with great professionalism. After apologizing to her a few days later, we became better acquainted and knew each other on a first-name basis. She is always polite, friendly and a pleasure to meet in the commissary. We will soon have a permanent change of station to California, and I made it a priority to seek her out, thank her and say goodbye. Nadia is a credit to the commissary.

Maggie Hemphill

Camp Humphreys

Each time I go to **Camp Humphreys Commissary**, South Korea, and see Mr. **Marcus Brice**, work leader, he is always welcoming and helpful. He can answer any of my questions and is always willing to help me find the products that I need. I look forward to seeing his smiling face when I go shopping!

Caylen Dakin

Croughton

Grocery Manager **Robert Coulter** at **Croughton Commissary**, England, noticed I seemed to be looking for a product he did not have in his store. He went out of his way to find it, order it, wrap it and then send it to me in time for my party! He deserves a star; he is absolutely the best grocery manager. I live more than an hour away; it takes me a long time to get to the store, so I don't go often. I had two huge

(Letters are edited for length and clarity.)



Service superstar: Kunsan

Store Manager **Michael Durrence** at **Kunsan Commissary**, South Korea, is to be commended.

I contacted him via email to see if the commissary could do something special for our son, who is serving at Kunsan Air Base. They delivered a fabulous sub sandwich – enough to feed the troops – and cheesecake, too, my son’s favorite. Not only did it make my son’s night, but it boosted the morale of all the airmen. They called me in Iowa in the wee hours of the morning to tell me thank you and how much they enjoyed it. This would not have been possible if it wasn’t for Mr. Durrence. You folks are so lucky to have him on your team! It brought tears of joy to my face when I heard the enjoyment in those men’s voices. Thank you, Mr. Durrence, for making a special birthday for our son. We will never forget this.

Liz Carlson

I want to thank Store Manager Michael Durrence for his help in surprising my boyfriend with a birthday cake. Michael was more than accommodating during the entire process. He was very helpful in answering all my questions. He also arranged a surprise birthday party for my boyfriend. Michael went the extra



Durrence

mile, contacting my boyfriend and ensuring he received his cake. Thank you for your help, Michael, in helping make his birthday memorable.

Olivia Pina

I am beyond grateful for the service that I received from Kunsan Commissary. My husband is currently stationed at Kunsan, and I had been searching for a way to send him a birthday cake for weeks. My searches were unsuccessful, and I had almost given up on the idea. I happened upon the Kunsan Commissary website and decided to send an email to Store Manager Michael Durrence. I knew that my request to both make and deliver a cake to my husband, whose job there I know very little about, might be unconventional and impossible. He not only accepted my plea but exceeded my expectations by finding where my husband was and making sure that this would be a surprise. When he delivered the cake, he took pictures and immediately emailed them to me. It made me feel like I shared this special occasion with him, even though we are so many miles apart. It is a rare occurrence to come across someone so helpful and generous, which is why I want to make sure that he and everyone involved get a proper “Thank-you” for making my husband’s birthday so incredibly special!

Mrs. Michael Long ■



Michael Long, a service member stationed at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, enjoys a surprise birthday cake from his wife back in the states, thanks to help from the commissary and Store Manager Michael Durrence.

DeCA photo: Michael Durrence





The world's best customers salute the world's best employees

Thanksgiving events and needed pumpkin. I had a houseful of guests and a party for 50. How could I have Thanksgiving without pumpkin pie? I only wish Mr. Coulter had been there so my guests could have thanked him personally. I hope you realize what it is for Americans to have pumpkin pie on this day. What a gift! Please give Mr. Coulter my heartfelt thanks.

Lorna Hubbell Rahanian



Coulter

Incirlik

Mr. **Mehmet Ozyaka**, cashier at **Incirlik Commissary**, Turkey, is the epitome of customer service. He always has a smile on his face and greets me every time he sees me. He could be in a parking lot or elsewhere and his temperament is still the same. He is the most pleasant commissary cashier I have had the honor of speaking to. I become saddened when I enter the commissary and he is not at the cashier's station; he truly makes my day. I truly hope there is an award he can receive for his outstanding, magnetic personality. Kudos on a job well done for hiring him!

Capt. Valerie Jones, U.S. Air Force

Grafenwoehr

I am writing this letter in reference to an experience I had at **Grafenwoehr Commissary**, Germany. At the checkout, I had a coupon for "buy three, get one free" on an item and three coupons to go along with each of the individual items required to get the free item. When I was told I was not allowed to use those three coupons, I grew increasingly frustrated and asked to speak to the manager. When Grocery Manager **Edward Swanson** came over, I was already irritated. Despite my negative attitude, he maintained an extremely polite demeanor and took the time to explain to me how coupon-vendor



Swanson

relations are different within a commissary than they are in a nonmilitary facility. I admit that I was not being very receptive in the beginning of this ordeal, yet rather than saying, "Take it up with the manager," and walking away, Mr. Swanson was very patient and kind and made sure that I understood the commissary's policy. Even though I could not use my coupons the way I wanted to, I still left satisfied and happy thanks to Edward! He made my shopping experience a positive one with his exceptional customer service skills.

I know from personal experience that it is not at all easy to deal with unsatisfied customers, but Edward did this with ease and a good attitude.

Jerica Repass

Fort Bragg North

I'm writing about **Karen McKoy**, computer-assisted-ordering specialist at **Fort Bragg North Commissary**, N.C. I asked her if she knew where they had relocated the cold, grated Parmesan. She checked where it used to be, then the whole shelf unit and couldn't find it. She asked if I meant the regular one and went to the aisle to show me. She has walked a mile with me already so I said, "We probably don't have it; and I'll just go elsewhere to get it." She said nicely, "But I don't want you to go to elsewhere if we have it." She has that customer service personality that you just love; and all throughout the time she was helping me, she looked happy to do it. So, I went to the checkout line. Then she surprised me with four bottles of grated Parmesan cheese. How would you feel if you were experiencing this wonderful woman very lovingly handing me the bottles? I took two of them, gave her a bear hug and told her that this was the best customer service experience I have ever had in the commissary. Please let Karen know that I am so pleased with her and very glad that she works with us. Thank you and your staff for all that you do for us!

Marcela Case

Fort Irwin

I have never had a better experience in a grocery facility as I have at **Fort Irwin Commissary**, Calif.! **Shanna Bennett**, customer service department supervisor, consistently reflects a positive attitude toward customers, and she is obviously a very capable manager. Many of the employees at the commissary also have a strong work ethic and the desire to ensure their customers are satisfied. I have frequent contact with **Norma Bermea** and **Africa Bersamin**, store associates, during my visits there, and they have the highest standards of customer service. They are always smiling and helpful, so I leave satisfied



every time. I feel they go above and beyond what is expected and therefore guarantee that we are happy with the services at the commissary. Thank you, and keep up the great work!
Jennifer Cate

Daegu Camp Walker

I visited **Daegu Camp Walker Commissary**, South Korea, to purchase dry ice. After talking to Assistant Grocery Manager **To Ki-Chang** and finding out that the commissary did not carry dry ice, the manager made several calls to other vendors, both on and off base. After finding a location on the local economy that sold dry ice, he made a map to make sure I could find the store. Thanks for going above and beyond what is expected to take care of customers. Daegu Commissary continues to provide outstanding service.

Maj. Mikel Hugo



To

Kaneohe Bay

I just wanted to take the time to say how helpful contract employee **Sharon Takushi** in the seafood department always is to my husband and me at **Kaneohe Bay Commissary**, Hawaii. Every time we go in to shop, she is always really friendly and treats us like we've known each other for years. She also will take the time to tell us good recipes to use when cooking the seafood that we buy. She is the best at customer service, and we buy things from her department every time we go to the commissary.

Alison Gant



Takushi

Luke

Rachel Haskins, customer service clerk at **Luke Commissary**, Ariz., is an outstanding employee. She is always so pleasant, hard-working, polite, respectful and an excellent "go to" manager for any questions that commissary patrons may have. She used her expertise and extreme customer care talents by helping answer numerous questions on a product that we always purchase. She took her valuable time to assist us and locate a product that we believed had become nonexistent at our commissary. Thanks to Rachel, we are – and will remain – loyal commissary shoppers always.

Master Sgt. Vincent Konesky, U.S. Air Force (retired)



Reed

I received excellent service today from Mr. **Curtis Reed** at **Yongsan Commissary**, South Korea. He was the cashier who attended me at about 10:30 this morning. I very much appreciate his kind "Good morning! How are you today?" and his patience when scanning my items as well as my coupons – all 40 of them! Service and kindness like his is very much appreciated by this hectic mother of four. That was all it took to brighten my gloomy day. I thought you needed to know Mr. Reed is a great asset to Yongsan Commissary. Thanks!

Peachy Macauley

Yongsan

I received excellent service today from Mr. **Curtis Reed** at **Yongsan Commissary**, South Korea. He was the cashier who attended me at about 10:30 this morning. I very much appreciate his kind "Good morning! How are you today?" and his patience when scanning my items as well as my coupons – all 40 of them! Service and kindness like his is very much appreciated by this hectic mother of four. That was all it took to brighten my gloomy day. I thought you needed to know Mr. Reed is a great asset to Yongsan Commissary. Thanks!

Patch Barracks

I was looking for canned pumpkin puree at **Patch Barracks Commissary**, Germany, and every commissary had been out for a couple of weeks. Store Director **Jeff Rose** helped me and two or three other customers by showing us a pumpkin bread mix that has canned pumpkin inside. He saved Thanksgiving Day! Last month, he also went to the back of the store to look through all the pumpkins to try to find the biggest pumpkins in stock for us, since the ones on the floor were all very small. He really goes out of his way to help the customer. This effort and kindness ensures I will continue to shop at Patch!



Rose

Gwendalyne Stone

Fort Belvoir

Kathy Archbold, cashier on Checkout 28 at **Fort Belvoir Commissary**, Va., was the most efficient cashier I have seen in more than 35 years. I know this, as I was a bagger for six years "back in the day" before electronics. I have never gone out of my way to make a positive comment about the commissary, but I was so impressed with



Archbold

Kathy that I told her so. I called Assistant Store Director **Raymond Lane**; and I am now writing you, as she needs to be recognized.

Stephen Bryant





The world's best customers salute the world's best employees

Riyadh

Store Director **James Harkins** is a welcome improvement to the commissary here in **Riyadh**, Saudi Arabia. Don't get me wrong – the people here do a good job. But the new drive and desire he has established with the staff is a welcome sight. Although he has only been here a couple of months, the overall improvements – even though they may be small – and the way he communicates to the customer is very much welcome. We look forward to more good things happening here.

Janet Wright



Harkins

Vicenza

I want to take this time to compliment **Al Brooks**, store manager, and also the looks of the newly revised **Vicenza Commissary**, Italy. The commissary was functional and served the community well even before the grand opening, but the changes I've witnessed in the last few months are astonishing. Just to mention a few: the wider, fuller shelves; more variety of available products; new freezers; and the overall look and feel of the store. I know a lot of planning and work has been put into the store, and they are not going unnoticed – we appreciate it. Also, every time I've witnessed Al in action, I can see that he sets the tone for all workers and has the pulse and rhythm of the store. I know because that is what I do at my workplace, which is very important in getting the mission accomplished, day in and day out. Keep up the good work, and THANK YOU.

Jim Walker

Little Rock

The electricity had gone out at **Little Rock Commissary**, Ark., so the bathrooms were closed. We were close to checking out in the self-service line, when my daughter, who has health issues, needed a bathroom. I told **Darlene Stone**, who was checking IDs at self-checkout, about the health issue; and she immediately got someone to cover her position,

got a flashlight and took my daughter to the employee bathroom. She was already one of my favorite employees, always being friendly, but this really showed she cares about her customers. Kudos!

Lari Sasser



Dixon

Heidelberg

Teller **Chaundra Dixon** was very helpful and attentive to my needs at **Heidelberg Commissary**, Germany. She took the time to show me where a product was rather than just telling me where to go. She ensured I was well taken care of!

We need more workers like

Chaundra in the military community.

Crystal Thompson

McChord

I had a particularly pleasant checkout today at **McChord Commissary**, Wash., and wish to compliment your cashier, Ms. **Kristen Hernandez**. She was friendly and went to the trouble of peeling off the coupons on three products so I could use them today. It was a small amount of money, but the thought and effort were appreciated. Ms. Hernandez represents the commissary well. Please pass on my thanks.

Charles Plunkett



Sweet

White Sands

I applaud Ms. **Theresa Sweet** in the deli at **White Sands Commissary**, N.M. She loves her job and has always displayed professionalism, even if the customer is being difficult. She is patient, kind and will go out of her way to help the customers meet their needs. She deserves a pat on the back.

Richard Daut

Ord

I would like to tell you about Mr. **Ben Dockery** in the bakery at **Ord Community Commissary**, Calif. I went to the commissary to pick up a pre-ordered, full sheet cake and water for an official Army command ceremony. I was so far behind



schedule, I did not know which way to turn. Upon entering the commissary, a store associate escorted me to the bakery. Mr. Dockery must have recognized how stressed I was, because without asking him, he began to help me. He went above and beyond his duties. Mr. Dockery went to the entrance and got a shopping cart and helped me get several cases of water. After completing the purchase, Mr. Dockery helped me out to my car and loaded the large cake and water. I know this may sound like no big deal, but it meant so much to me. Mr. Dockery helped make my business dealing with the commissary very pleasant. His help truly meant a lot to me. Again, thank you, Mr. Dockery and also Store Director **Bob Landon**.

Wanda Deener

Lakenheath

Our family ordered 12 large sub sandwiches from the deli at **Lakenheath Commissary**, England. **Lou Cohn**, food service worker, took our order. His customer service was awesome as well as his attitude. The sandwiches he made were perfect and on time – we needed them by 9 a.m.; and when we arrived, they were ready. Thanks for the support and the help. Also, we ordered a veggie tray and a fruit tray; both were also awesome and ready when needed. Thank you, Lakenheath Commissary, and especially Lou!

Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Westermeyer

Tinker

I was shopping at **Tinker Commissary**, Okla., and couldn't find several items. I asked **Mary Spradling**, store associate, for some help. Even though she was very busy, she stopped what she was doing and took me around the store to make sure I got everything I needed. She represents the true meaning of customer service – something that is lacking nowadays in others. Thank you!

Mike

Scott

We would like to recognize one of your cashiers, **Patrick Cortez**, at **Scott Commissary**, Ill., for outstanding service on multiple occasions. Patrick has always been very courteous and helpful when we check out. He is careful and accurate and completes checkout quickly and efficiently. He is working his way through college, and we appreciate his effort to help us complete our shopping.

Maj. John Paschkewitz



Cortez

Schweinfurt

I wanted to thank **Andy Stinson** from the office at **Schweinfurt Commissary**, Germany, for always being friendly and taking time to say hello. He went out of his way to get me a smaller ham that I had asked for. He's always nice and tries to have a good conversation with my 4-year-old son. I like the fact that he gives 100 percent every time I see him working.

S. Ellison

Los Angeles

I was stationed here at Los Angeles Air Force Base a few months ago. I live in San Pedro in military housing, which is directly across the street from a grocery store. I'd been shopping there since August, and although the prices were high, I thought that was the price of living in California. Since I take the bus, **Los Angeles Commissary** wasn't very convenient. I decided to drive my car last week and do some shopping and price comparisons. I was shocked by how much cheaper the commissary's prices were, and the atmosphere was very friendly. I wanted to say thanks for such a great team.

Capt. Tammara Alexander



Kegler

impression!
Heather Reilly

Wiesbaden

Store Director **Kevin Kegler** at **Wiesbaden Commissary**, Germany, provided the best customer service! He took time to explain the benefits of saving while shopping at the commissary, as well as started a program providing rides to soldiers and families staying at Army Lodging (*see Trendsetters, Page 11*). Way to make a first

Bangor

Once again I feel I have to compliment the staff at **Bangor Commissary**, Wash. During our recent base closure due to excessive snow, I was able to visit the commissary and avail myself of everything I needed. How your manager and staff were able to report to work and keep the store open was a marvel to me. What dedication to their work. Must be a product of excellent leadership.

Matthew Gardner-Brown ■



♥ ofthebenefit

'Heart of the Benefit' celebrates three outstanding team members
with DeCA PASSION for customer service

Rawia Zaki

Cairo Commissary, Egypt

What do you like best about being a supervisory sales cashier?

I enjoy meeting people of different cultures and nationalities. As the front-end supervisor, I have many opportunities to interact with our customers and, as an Egyptian, I am able to share the great things about our culture as well. It is really great to share and learn from everyone I meet.

How do you help make the commissary worth the trip?

In the Cairo Commissary, our patrons deserve and receive one-on-one treatment. I have a staff of customer-service oriented and conscientious employees who are here to provide service and assistance to all of our patrons. We assist them with locating products, inform and educate them of our specialty items, and communicate special savings with coupons and special orders. We also promote the value of the benefit to them.

What is your professional history?

I began working in the commissary in August 1982. As a graduate from the University in Cairo, I began my career as a cashier; and within three years, I was promoted to front-end supervisor. For 30 years, I



Rawia Zaki DeCA photo: Mohamed Enein

have worked for the commissary system and have watched it change and grow.

What are your professional goals?

My No. 1 goal is to be a professional in what I do every day — serving our patrons. There is something satisfying when I go home every day knowing I have performed my responsibilities well.

Who influenced your career most and how?

First of all, I would like to thank the one person who is responsible for me working with this agency. He was a young captain at the time, Mr. **Michael Dowling** (now DeCA acting director and chief operating officer). Throughout the years, I would have to say the American leadership has attributed the most influence by providing me encouragement, appreciating my performance and recognizing my value to the agency.

Rawia is such a joy to watch as she interacts with the patrons. She is a person who meets no strangers; they are all like family to her, and she calls them by name. Her demeanor is always friendly, no matter what the situation. She is committed to serving the patrons, continuously providing the service they deserve and always expect. It's having employees like Rawia that make my job easier and very rewarding. She always handles any issue that arises with a friendly and professional attitude.

Danny Danielson
Store director



Pak So-un

Kunsan Commissary, South Korea

What do you like best about your job as a commissary support clerk?

I like that what I do helps the airmen here at Kunsan Air Base and, in some cases, helps their families back in the United States. Knowing that I make a difference in their lives gives me a great feeling of satisfaction.

How do you help make the commissary worth the trip?

Kunsan is a small commissary, and I have come to know many of our customers by name, which helps me to establish a relationship with them. Some of our customers have never been to South Korea before and seem to be overwhelmed with the cultural differences. When they come to the commissary, I'm friendly and try to give them an experience that will make them look forward to coming back. I treat each customer with courtesy and respect.

What is your professional history?

I began working for DeCA in November 2007 as a part-time sales store checker here at Kunsan Commissary. I was converted to full-time one year later then promoted to my current position as management support clerk in September 2009. This is a job I really enjoy doing every day.

What are your professional goals?

My professional goal is to be the very best I can be — at whatever I am doing — at all times. I have attended courses offered by DeCA and would like to further enhance my knowledge of the different store departments and commissary operations. I believe this would give me more information to better serve our customers. I work daily to improve my



Pak So-un DeCA photo: Yi Ok-kun

knowledge of the English language and my job, because I would like to continue my career with DeCA and move up within the agency.

Who influenced your career most and how?

My parents and my family have encouraged me to continue my education, work hard and develop a strong work ethic. Also, Korea Zone 36 manager, Mr. **Wayne Walk**; store director, Mr. **Kalani Patsel**; and my store manager, Mr. **Michael Durrence**, have given me support and encouragement along with the opportunity to advance in my career.

Ms. Pak So-un is an extremely dedicated employee. She has an outstanding work ethic and always strives for perfection. Ms. Pak has developed a unique relationship with the individuals on base who place large orders for the units and with our customers who place special orders. She provides excellent customer service to all our customers and truly understands the importance of providing this valuable benefit to our service members.

Michael Durrence
Store director



Gary Larkin

West Point Commissary, N.Y.

What do you like best about your job as contract monitor and quality assurance evaluator?

As I go through the final walk-through of the night and see the neatly stocked and clean shelves, clean floors and windows, I feel a sense of pride knowing that this will make for an enjoyable shopping experience for our West Point Commissary customers.

How do you help make the commissary worth the trip?

Although my job is mainly behind the scenes, with little patron interaction, it still has to do with making the commissary worth the trip. It's my job to make sure that the shelves are completely stocked so that product is readily available for our patrons to realize the 30-plus percent savings. It's my job to ensure that the store is cleaned to the standards as set forth in the contract. All this makes for a pleasant shopping experience.

What's your career history?

During my 20 years at the West Point Commissary, I have performed various jobs, including warehouse receiving and night stocking.

What are your career goals?

I want to continue in my QAE position, supporting the commissary benefit while keeping an eye out for any type of advancement.



Gary Larkin DeCA photo: Jess Jachens

Who has had the most influence on your career?

My father and my grandfathers instilled my work ethics early on in my life. I continue to use these, and I will for the rest of my life. These ethics include honesty and integrity. I use these not only at work but in all aspects of life. ■

Most often what goes on behind the scenes is what makes a great commissary. Gary's passion to do the job of a quality assurance evaluator with his strong work ethic provides that great shopping experience for our patrons, day in and day out. Gary strives to provide our patrons a near grand-opening environment – a well-stocked and clean store – whenever the doors open at the West Point Commissary. Hats off to Gary Larkin for his passion.

James Gallagher
Store director



frontandcenter

obits

LESLIE H. BOSWELL (retired), HQ DeCA, Va. (Dec. 24)
C.E. BOWMAN (retired), HQ DeCA, Va. (Nov. 4)
ANGELA BREWTON, NAS Whiting Field, Fla. (Aug. 13)
DENNIS CLAXTON, NAS Jacksonville, Fla. (Oct. 4)
KENNETH HASH (retired), HQ DeCA, Va. (Oct. 7)
AUSTIN ROMESBURG III (retired), Kaiserslautern CDC, Germany (Jan. 19)
DENNIS SYRACUSE (retired), DeCA East, Va. (Oct. 31)
LEROY TAYLOR (retired) HQ DeCA, Va. (Oct. 15)
LEONANDRA "LEON" WOODS, NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas (Nov. 17)

retirements



Andrade (40) Eschenbach (46)

JULIE ACOSTA, JB PEARL HARBOR-Hickam, Hawaii
 * **RAY ANDRADE**, HQ DeCA, Va. (40)
MARK ARLAND, HQ DeCA, Va.
ERNESTO BARCEGA, DeCA West, Calif.
JOAQUIN BORJA, HQ DeCA, Va.
MICHAEL BOSCH, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.
CARRIE BUTLER, MCB Quantico, Va.
PACITA CARTER, DeCA West, Calif.
MARLENE CERTAIN, HQ DeCA, Va.
CLAYTON CHILDERS, HQ DeCA, Va.
CRAIG CLEVELAND, HQ DeCA, Va.
DAVE CORBIN, Edwards AFB, Calif.
HISAKO CROCKER, MCAS Yuma, Ariz.
LLOYDETTE DANIELS, HQ DeCA, Va.
LISA DRESEL, Camp Humphreys, South Korea
ELAINE ECCEL, DeCA West, Calif.
DAVE ENGLAND, HQ DeCA, Va.
 * **ARTHUR ESCHENBACH**, Germersheim CDC, Germany
KRISTIE FLORES, DeCA West, Calif.
JANELLE FOLLETT, USAF Academy, Colo.
JOE GATTO, Sigonella, Italy
LARRY HOOVER, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.
DONALD JOHNSON, HQ DeCA, Va.
RAYMOND "ALAN" JONES, Zone 29, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.
FREDERICK KAUHAI, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii (40)
SUN KIM, Moffett Field, Calif.
JON KITAGAWA, McClellan, Calif.
GAIL MEFFORD, DeCA West, Calif.
JAMES PADGETT, Rota, Spain
ARTHUR PINEDA, Buckley AFB, Colo. (see Page 28)
GLORIA PORTER, DeCA West, Calif.



Raynal (49)



Tanahara (41)



Thompson (44)



White (42)

* **NORMAN RAYNAL**, DeCA Europe, Germany (49)
CAROL RENSHAW, Fort Riley, Kan.
JUAN LUIS MORENO ROMAN, Rota, Spain
JUAN ANTONIO ROMAN SANCHEZ, Rota, Spain (40)
THERESA SORRELL, HQ DeCA, Va.
CHRISTINA STEIN, Minot AFB, N.D.
 * **ISAMU TANAHARA**, Kadena AB, Okinawa (41)
WILLIE TAYLOR, HQ DeCA, Va.
 * **JOHN THOMPSON**, DeCA West, Calif. (44)
ROBERT VARELA, Zone 18, March ARB, Calif.
DONNA WILLIS, HQ DeCA, Va.
 * **ANDREA WHITE**, Tinker AFB, Okla. (42)

anniversaries

45 years
AKIRA KINJO, Okinawa CDC

40 years
FREDERICK KAUHAI, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
 * **MARC PETIT**, HQ DeCA, Va.

30 years
PAUL BANACH, FE Warren AFB, Wyo.



Petit (40)

SALLIE BURREL, Edwards AFB, Calif.
DIANE COLDREN, White Sands MR, N.M.
TRINIDAD ESPULGAR, Andersen AFB, JR Marianas, Guam
JANET GIBSON, McClellan, Calif.
JOY KNIGHT, Tinker AFB, Okla.
PAUL SCHNEIDER JR., White Sands MR, N.M.

20 years

KATHY BLANCHETTE, NB San Diego
REGINALD CAPERS, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
KATSUHIRO FUKU, FA Sasebo, Japan
JOSEPHINE HERNANDEZ, NAS North Island, Calif.
BRIAN HOOLEHAM, Camp Pendleton, Calif.
NAOKO KUBOTA, Hario Village, Japan
ANNE LAMPE, Beale AFB, Calif.
JEANNETTE LEHOULLIER, Moffett Field, Calif.
DARYL LUCAN, Camp Pendleton, Calif.
PORTFIRIO MARQUES, Camp Pendleton, Calif.
MASAKO MATSUMOTO, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
LORENA RUIZ, NB San Diego
MIYAKO TASHIRO, Yokota AB, Japan
SEIKO TOGUCHI, Camp Foster, Okinawa

15 years

LYDIA TUIALUULUU, Fort Irwin, Calif.

10 years

NANCY BACA, Cannon AFB, N.M.
AMELIA CAMACHO, NB San Diego
TOMOE CARUTH, Yokota AB, Japan
TERESITA CHAPPLE, NB San Diego
RONALDO CUNNINGHAM, Camp Pendleton, Calif.
BRIAN DAVIS, Los Angeles AFB
ZENAIDA EMBREE, Hill AFB, Utah
SU FLOWERS, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
MINAKO IGARASHI, Yokota AB, Japan
KAYOKO KUBA, Kadena AB, Okinawa
KOUICHI MATSUMOTO, NAF Atsugi, Japan
RINKO MIMORO, Yokota AB, Japan
ARCHER MISON, Yongsan AB, South Korea
MASAYUKI OGUSU, Yokota AB, Japan
TAKASHI ONODERA, Yokota AB, Japan
MARY PAGE, Offutt AFB, Neb.
EDUARDO RODRIGUEZ, NB San Diego
SONG CHANG-HO, Yongsan CDC, South Korea
JEFF TAYLOR, Vance AFB, Okla.
HITOSHI TOGUCHI, Camp Foster, Okinawa
MICHELLE WHITE, Hill AFB, Utah

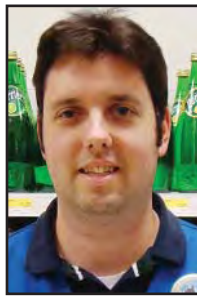
deca warriors



YANINA WISNIEWSKI, supply technician, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii; chief petty officer, logistics specialist, U.S. Navy Reserve, deployed to Afghanistan, August 2010 to August 2011.

Wisniewski





Belowich



Cadavos



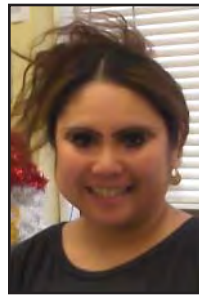
Cho



Durkee



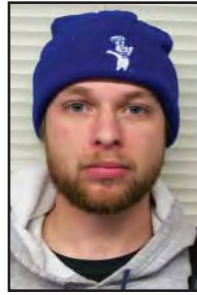
Han



Kusaka



McCainey



McGunnigle



Medeiros



Mesa



Pflüger



Stagers

top employees

Employee of the Year 2011

- GILBERT ANCHONDO**, Los Angeles AFB
- * **STEVEN BELOWICH**, CFA Chinhae, South Korea
- * **LYN CADAVOS**, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
- * **CHO SANG-HUN**, Camp Carroll, South Korea
- JAN DOMINGUEZ**, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

- * **LOVELINE DURKEE**, FA Sasebo, Japan
- PAM FOSTER**, Edwards AFB, Calif.
- * **HAN SUNG-HYOK**, Taegu Camp Walker, South Korea
- CHARLES KULASXA**, MCB Barstow, Calif.
- * **MIA KUSAKA**, Camp Kure, Japan
- * **CHARZETTA McCAINEY**, Redstone Arsenal, N.J.
- * **JONATHAN MCGUNNIGLE**, Iwakuni CDC, Japan

- * **AKIKO MEDEIROS**, ARDEC Picatinny Arsenal, N.J.
- * **JOHN MESA**, NB Guam Orote, JR Marianas
- * **PETER PFLÜGER**, Bitburg, Germany
- * **STEPHANIE STAGGERS**, Hario Village, Japan

Student Cashier of the Year 2011

- * **EMIL BUBALA**, Bamberg, Germany
- * **DINA HOLLAND**, Bamberg, Germany
- * **KATIE KING**, Bamberg, Germany



▲ **TURKEY 'N' TATERS:** Produce Manager Theresa O'Rourke, lead store associate Maria Perez and store associate Alberto Irizarry-Rivera, MacDill Commissary, Fla., created a terrific turkey made of more than 1,300 pounds of sweet potatoes. *Military Produce Group photo: Arin Noyes*



▲ **LOVE THOSE BRONCOS:** Mountain Home Commissary, Idaho, takes a first-place win in the Coke Fall Football Display Contest with this floor-to-ceiling salute to the Boise State University Broncos. Store Director Mike Howell said his store prides itself on its large, thematic displays. *Coca-Cola photo: Kyle Pruett*



Bubala



Holland



King



Miller



Nixon



Rivera-Versala

- * **BRIANNA MILLER**, Bamberg, Germany
- * **DAMONE NIXON**, Los Angeles AFB
- JULIO RIVERA**, Bamberg Germany
- * **LUIS RIVERA-VESRALA**, Bamberg, Germany

Safety Employee of the Year 2011
JANNETTE WOOD, Offutt AFB, Neb.

Employee of the Quarter
4th Quarter 2011
SARAH BASOC, JB PEARL HARBOR-Hickam, Hawaii
BRIAN BELAND, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
NICHOLE BOYD, Fairchild AFB, Wash.

LEE BURHANS, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
ANDREA CARR, McConnell AFB, Kan.
MINAKO CHINEN, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
JENNA CLEVENGER, Camp Red Cloud, South Korea
LATESSA COBBS, March ARB, Calif.
BEN CORBIN, Edwards AFB, Calif.





RICHARD DUNCANSON, Hario Village, Japan
AMY FLERCHINGER, NAWWS China Lake, Calif.
AKIHISA HIGA, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
JOJI HIGA, Okinawa CDC
NAEKO HIGA, Okinawa CDC
TADASHI HIRAIIDE, Misawa AB, Japan
DONATHAN HUGHES, NAF Atsugi, Japan
AMY HULETT, NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.
GEORGE JEWETT II, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
MASATO KATSUKI, Sagamihara, Japan
MARQUIS KEE, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
HYUN KIM, Los Angeles AFB
KIM SAM-SONG, Camp Casey, South Korea
KIM YONG-KUK, USAF Yongsan, South Korea
MASARU KURATA, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
CHRISTINA LEATHERMAN, McConnell AFB, Kan.
PAMELA LINDSEY, Twentynine Palms, Calif.
JANELLE MANSAPIT, MCB Barstow, Calif.
TADASHI MATSUMOTO, Iwakuni CDC, Japan
PATRICIA MONTGOMERY, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.
TAKUYA MUTO, Okinawa CDC
AMBER OLAND, Beale AFB, Calif.
PAK CHONG-TAEK, Osan AB, South Korea
MARTIN PENDLETON, Ord Community, Calif.
RONNIE PERRYMAN, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
CHONG RAIRDEN, Vance AFB, Okla.
SUSAN RICKER, Hannam Village, South Korea
KEISHA ROBINSON, FA Sasebo, Japan
SON SUNG-HYON, Camp Stanley, South Korea
TERRY THOMAS, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
RIKA TOKUZATO, Okinawa CDC
MIKA YAMAMOTO, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
YIM YONG-SU, Osan AB, South Korea

4th Quarter Manager
SHIRLEY DRISCOLL, Beale AFB, Calif.

4th Quarter Safety Employee
ANTHONY LUTZ, Beale AFB, Calif.
STEVE OLSON, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
DWIGHT THOMAS, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM,
 Hawaii
RODNEY UNRUH, Vance AFB, Okla.

3rd Quarter 2011
JULIE BARCINAS, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
KATHY BISHOP, Hill AFB, Utah
DEBORAH HOLCOMBE, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
CHARLES MONEY, US Air Force Academy,
 Colo.
RUBY RAMOS, NB San Diego
GIFFORD TOJO, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM,
 Hawaii
JOY YACAPIN, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho

3rd Quarter Safety Employee
ROBERT GRUPEN, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM,
 Hawaii

2nd Quarter Safety Employee
LENUS MICHAEL, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM,
 Hawaii

Employees of the Month
December 2011
DAVID FLORES, Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.
MASAKO MATSUMOTO, MCAS Iwakuni,
 Japan

November 2011
LANYGRACE JONES, NFA Yokosuka, Japan

October 2011
KIYOHICO ARAKAKI, Camp Foster, Okinawa
SHUJI ASHIMINE, Okinawa CDC
KIYOTAKA EBIHARA, Camp Zama, Japan
RODNEY FOXE, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
CHOYU GANEKO, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
DEBORAH GONZALES, NFA Yokosuka, Japan
JOHN GUEVARRA, NAF Atsugi, Japan
JOJI HIGA, Okinawa CDC
NAEKO HIGA, Okinawa CDC
MORITOMO HOKAMA, Kadena AB, Okinawa
KENNETH JACOBS, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
MARGUERITE JOHNSON, FA Sasebo, Japan
TADASHI KINA, Camp Foster, Okinawa
SHINSUKE KITA, Camp Kinser, Okinawa
TAITO MIYAZATO, Okinawa CDC
YOSHIKI NAGAMINE, Camp Foster, Okinawa
KOTARO NAKAMURA, Iwakuni CDC, Japan
YU NAKASONE, Camp Foster, Okinawa
KAZUE NISHINO, Misawa AB, Japan
GLORIA SEKITA, Sagamihara, Japan
CARL SMITH, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
LEONARD SMITH, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
YOSHIKO TERUYA, Yokota AB, Japan
KINJI URAKAWA, Hario Village, Japan

October Cashier of the Month
ALEJANDRA BOWERS, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan

September 2011
MELANIE BUSH, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM,
 Hawaii
TAKASHI CHINEN, Okinawa CDC
ROBERT CIANCIARULO, Vandenberg AFB,
 Calif.
JENNA CLEVINGER, Camp Red Cloud, South
 Korea



▲**TEAM PINK:** Employees at Picatinny Arsenal Commissary, N.J., enjoy “going pink” for a worthy cause, Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October 2011. DeCA photo: Todd Mozes



RICHARD DUNCANSON, Hario Village, Japan
KIYOTAKA EBIHARA, Camp Zama, Japan
EVELYN EGGERT, Yokota AB, Japan
MAKOTO FUKUCHI, Camp Kinser, Okinawa
LEILA GARCIA, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
ANDREW GARRIDO, Orote Point, Guam
ERIC HENDERSON, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
HIROMI HIGA, Okinawa CDC
NAEKO HIGA, Okinawa CDC
TADASHI HIRAIDE, Misawa AB, Japan
SCOTT HOLT, Okinawa CDC
SEN IHA, Camp Foster, Okinawa
LANYGRACE JONES, NFA Yokosuka, Japan
KIM CHUNG-HWAN, Hannam Village, South Korea
KIM SAMSONG, Camp Casey, South Korea
YOSHIFUMI KIYUNA, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
MASAKO MATSUMOTO, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
JOHN MESA, NB Guam Orote, JR Marianas
KANAKO NAGADO, Camp Foster, Okinawa
PAK CHONG-TAEK, Osan AB, South Korea
PANG TONG-SOK, USAG Yongsan, South Korea
JONATHAN PETERSON, JB PEARL HARBOR-Hickam, Hawaii
EDWIN QUINATA, NB Guam Orote, JR Marianas
DAMON RAUH, Iwakuni CDC, Japan
SONGMI RIGGLE, Camp Stanley, South Korea
KEISHA ROBINSON, FA Sasebo, Japan
BERTHA RODRIGUEZ, Edwards AFB, Calif.
NAOKAZU SAKAKUIBARA, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
SATORU SHIMABUKURO, Camp Foster, Okinawa
TETSUYA TAKIGUCHI, Sagami, Japan
RODNEY TURNER, Kanto Plain CDC, Japan
TSUKASA UECHI, Kadena AB, Okinawa
KAZUYOSHI UEMOTO, Camp Foster, Okinawa
HIDEMITSU UEZU, Camp Foster, Okinawa
MICHELLE WASHINGTON, NAF Atsugi, Japan

September Cashier of the Month

IM CHUN, Kunsan AB, South Korea
RION COY, NFA Yokosuka, Japan
KANG MIN-CHONG, Osan AB, South Korea

August 2011

CHO SANG-HUN, Camp Carroll, South Korea
CHONG MYONG-HWA, Osan AB, South Korea
CHONG UI-KUN, Yongsan CDC, South Korea
JENNA CLEVINGER, Camp Red Cloud, South Korea
SUSANA DELA CRUZ, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
FILIPOWSKI IN-O, Yongsan CDC, South Korea
HONG POM-SUN, Osan CDC, South Korea
HONG SONG-OK, Camp Humphreys, South Korea
DOUG IVES, Edwards AFB, Calif.
ELIJAH JACKSON, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
KIM HYE-I, Osan CDC, South Korea
KIM YONG-KUK, USAG Yongsan, South Korea
KYLE LEON-GUERRERO, JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
PAK SIN-KYU, Hannam Village, South Korea
SONGMI RIGGLE, Camp Stanley, South Korea
KYONG SMITH, Camp Casey, South Korea
CAITLIN SPIDLE, JB PEARL HARBOR-Hickam, Hawaii



▲ **REMEMBERING THOSE WHO PERISHED:** Charleston Commissary, S.C., hosted this artistic memorial provided by the Air Force base. The scene realistically depicts the twin towers and Pentagon, along with a plaque in the shape of Pennsylvania, engraved with the words, "In remembrance of our fellow Americans who lost their lives on 9-11." DeCA photo: LB Rice

August Cashier of the Month

AARON ABRAHAM, NBK Bremerton, Wash.
RION COY, NFA Yokosuka, Japan

Europe: WEISBADEN, Germany

West: EDWARDS AFB, NB SAN DIEGO, McCLELLAN, Calif.; NELLIS AFB, Nev.

pro honors

Coleson Big Catch Contest

Europe: ROTA, Spain
Pacific: ANDERSEN AFB, JR Marianas, Guam

Colgate Display

Europe: ALCONBURY, CROUGHTON, LAKENHEATH, England

Fisher House Display

Central: FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.
Pacific: JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii;
USAG YONGSAN, South Korea

General Mills Cinco de Mayo Display

West: NAS FALLON, Nev.; VANDENBERG AFB, Calif.

General Mills Just Add Milk

Central: RICHARDS-GEBAUR, Mo.
East: ABERDEEN PG, Md.; JB McGUIRE-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

Heinz and Fisher House Display

Pacific: USAG YONGSAN, South Korea

Heinz Golden Ketchup Display

Central: FORT KNOX, Ky.
East: JB McGUIRE-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
Pacific: TAEGU CAMP WALKER, South Korea (2nd consecutive)

Kellogg's Fit for Life Display

Pacific: YOKOTA AB, Japan
West: FORT HOOD II, Texas; MARCH ARB, NAS NORTH ISLAND, Calif.; MOUNTAIN HOME AFB, Idaho

Kraft Excellence in Education

West: McCONNELL AFB, Kan.

Kraft Excellence in Execution

Central: KEESLER AFB, NAS MERIDIAN, Miss.; NSB KINGS BAY, Ga.
East: ABERDEEN PG, NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Md.; BANGOR ANGB, Maine; JB CHARLESTON (Navy), S.C.; HANSCOM





AFB, Mass.; JB McGUIRE-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.; NS PORTSMOUTH, N.H.; NSU SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.; SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB, N.C.; TOBYHANNA AD, Pa.
Europe: GRAFENWOEHR, Germany
Pacific: DAEGU CAMP WALKER, South Korea; JB Pearl Harbor-HICKAM, Hawaii
West: CAMP PENDLETON, EDWARDS AFB, NAF EL CENTRO, FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, MCAS MIRAMAR, PORT HUENEME, Calif.; FORT BLISS, FORT HOOD II, Texas; TINKER AFB, VANCE AFB, Okla.; WHITE SANDS MR, N.M.; MCAS YUMA, Ariz.

Milk-Bone Canine Assistant
DeCA West: DUGWAY PG, Utah

Monster Energy Drink Halloween Display
Europe: PATCH BARRACKS, Germany
Pacific: CAMP KINSER, Okinawa (see photo, Page 12); YOKOTA AB, Japan

National Watermelon Contest
East: FORT JACKSON, S.C.; GUNTER AFB, Ala.; JB McGUIRE-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.; MCAS NEW RIVER, N.C.
West: MARCH ARB, MCB SAN ONOFRE, Calif.

Old El Paso Display
Europe: PATCH BARRACKS, Germany

P&G Special Olympics Display
West: FAIRCHILD AFB, Wash.

Smucker's National Apple Display
Central: FORT STEWART, Ga.

Snapple Display, Overseas Service Corp.
Pacific: USAG YONGSAN, South Korea

Snapple-Dr Pepper Display
West: VANCE AFB, Okla.

Unilever Italian American Festival
East: JEB LITTLE CREEK-FORT STORY, Va.
West: YUMA PG, Ariz.

Organizational honors
ARNOLD AFB, Tenn., Store Director **Eric Jenkins** and Assistant Store Director **Jeffery Lillard**, letters of appreciation from HQ AFMC for assisting with Feds Feed Families.
BAMBERG, Germany, certificate of appreciation from 173rd Battalion, for exceptional service
DeCA HQ, Va., **Randy Eller** and **Linda Lewis**, DeCA Logistics and Engineering Group, Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service, for leadership and dedication in support of Feds Feed Families.

DOVER AFB, Del., certificate of recognition from Fisher House Foundation, for support of families of the fallen.

EUROPE AREA, Germany, Best DeCA Region Fiscal 2011 plaque from National Industries of the Blind

F.E. WARREN AFB, Wyo., certificate of appreciation from Salvation Army, for partnership in service to local community
FORT BENNING, Ga., Combined Federal Campaign, Most Improved Donation Small Unit

FORT HOOD II, Texas, certificate of appreciation from Lighthouse Family Network's Bright Light Tree Project, for assisting with customers' gift donations for children in foster homes

KELLEY BARRACKS, Germany, DeCA Europe Best Small Store award for fiscal 2011 by National Industries for the Blind-Skillcraft.

LIVORNO-CAMP DARBY, Italy, employees **Gabriella Petelini** and **Simone Mazzoni** participated in base 21st Annual Run to the Tower with record 453 runners. Petelini placed second in her category.

NS NEWPORT, R.I., Partner in Excellence Award from National Institute for the Blind.

PATCH BARRACKS, Germany, employees **James Knight, Beth Tonn, Francisco Castro** and **Nadja Haug,** coins from president of



▲ **TOUGH TRIBUTE:** Store Administrator Margaret Joyner (third from right in turquoise shirt), Whiteman Commissary, Mo., and six other store employees ran in the base's 24-hour Remembrance Run. Staff and vendors participated in POW/MIA Remembrance Day activities, Sept. 15-16. The more than 400 people participating in the run had one goal: Ensure the POW/MIA flag and torch continued moving for 24 hours. Other DeCA employees got involved by staffing water stations. *DeCA photo*



Retiree Association, for outstanding customer service and support of community events.
SEMBACH, Germany, certificate of appreciation from 18th Military Police Brigade commander for outstanding support.
USAG WIESBADEN, Germany, certificate of appreciation from garrison commander, for support of community and annual "Make a Difference Day"

Individual honors

TIMOTHY BEACH, store associate, Kirtland AFB, N.M., Bachelor of Arts, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.

JESSICA CROWL, store manager, Camp Casey, South Korea, Award of Distinction from Pacific regional manager, for outstanding contributions to Warrior Training Alliance Program and annual support to Asia Combat Service Support functions

FRANK HART, store director, Kelley Barracks, Germany (now store director, Chievres, Belgium), coin from U.S. Africa Command deputy vice admiral, for outstanding service.

YUN-SUK "MARIA" JONES, meat manager, Kadena AB, Okinawa, School Season Outstanding Educational Support Award 2010-2011.

LISA LUNA, grocery manager, Port Hueneme, Calif., letter of appreciation from Air Force Sergeants' Association Chapter 1311, for her assistance with food drive to provide six Air Force families with complete holiday meal, all items donated by industry partners.

The Northern California Chapter of the American Logistics Association recognized seven **Zone 15** employees Dec. 9, at McClellan, Calif. The award recognized employees who worked with industry to provide a great shopping experience to commissary customers in 2011.

* **DIANNA AGARENZO**, management support center clerk, Beale AFB, Calif.

* **SONIA CADIENTE**, store support clerk, NAS Lemoore, Calif.

* **SO JUNG GARCIA**, grocery manager, Ord Community, Calif.

* **CONNIE JACINTO**, management support center lead, Travis AFB, Calif.

* **BRANDON MONTGOMERY**, grocery manager, Moffett Field, Calif. (see also Page 7)

* **LEEANN ROBINSON**, store worker, NAS Fallon, Calif.

* **BRUCE WINTER**, meat manager, McClellan, Calif. ■



◀ **DON'T FORGET YOUR COUPONS:**
Mylissa Dodson, sales store associate, Cherry Point Commissary, N.C., gets caught up in the excitement — and silliness — at the Daylight Madness Sale (story, Pages 13-14). DeCA photo: Lowrina-Ramona Bueno



Agarenzo



Cadiente



Garcia



Jacinto



Montgomery



Robinson



Winter

Six-figure on-site sales

Eight commissaries host major events in first quarter

JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam , Hawaii, Army Reserve at Amrican Samoa	Nov 11	\$335,254
Fort Benning , Ga., Army National Guard at Chatanooga, Tenn.	Dec 11	\$271,058
Maxwell AFB , Ala., Guard-Reserve Tng Ctr at Anniston, Ala.	Oct 11	\$217,786
JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam , Air National Guard at Hilo, Hawaii	Oct 11	\$181,756
Malmstrom AFB , Mont., Army National Guard at Fort Harrison, Mont.	Nov 11	\$122,308
Fort Bragg South , N.C., Air National Guard at Charlotte, S.C,	Nov 11	\$190,398
Fort Campbell , Ky., Air National Guard at Smyrna, Tenn.	Nov 11	\$117,278
Little Rock AFB , Ark., Army National Guard at Camp Robinson, Ark.	Oct 11	\$109,624
Fort Drum , N.Y., Army National Guard at Camp Johnson, Vt.	Nov 11	\$109,586 ■

Top 10 commissaries in sales

1 – Fort Belvoir Commissary, Va.	\$98.8 million ▲
2 – San Diego Commissary	\$90.5 million ▲
3 – Pearl Harbor Commissary, Hawaii	\$90.1 million ▲
4 – Oceana Commissary, Va.	\$77.9 million ▲
5 – Fort Meade Commissary, N.J.	\$73.2 million ▲
6 – Fort Bragg South Commissary, N.C.	\$72.2 million ▲
7 – Fort Campbell Commissary, Ky.	\$70.9 million ▲
8 – Schofield Barracks Commissary, Hawaii	\$69.8 million ▲
9 – Fort Lewis Commissary, Wash.	\$69.1 million ▲
10 – Langley Commissary, Va.	\$65.9 million ▲

Top 5 overseas sales

1 – Ramstein Commissary, Germany	\$60.8 million ▲
2 – Kadena Commissary, Okinawa	\$50.9 million ▲
3 – Fort Buchanan Commissary, Puerto Rico	\$46.6 million ▲
4 – Lakenheath Commissary, England	\$36.1 million ▲
5 – Andersen Commissary, Guam	\$32.5 million ▲

'Million transactions club'

1 – Pearl Harbor Commissary, Hawaii	1,381,696 ▲
2 – San Diego Commissary	1,269,786 ▲
3 – Ramstein Commissary, Germany	1,185,222 ▲
4 – Fort Lewis Commissary, Wash.	1,110,031 ▲
5 – Fort Bragg South Commissary, N.C.	1,095,621 ▲
6 – Fort Belvoir Commissary, Va.	1,076,586 ▼
7 – Schofield Barracks Commissary, Hawaii	1,061,778 ▲
8 – Fort Campbell Commissary, Ky.	1,026,335 ▼
9 – Fort Meade Commissary, N.J.	1,014,391 ▲