



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Better to give than throw away

Commissaries pass 21M-pound mark in donations to local food banks

By DeCA Corporate Communications

Note: Go to the DeCA website to view this [news release](#) online.

FORT LEE, Va. – Military commissaries would rather fill a food bank than a landfill. That’s the mindset of the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) as it announces a new milestone in donations – 21 million pounds plus – to local food banks.

DeCA reached this mark in donations over a five-year period; 5 million pounds of it coming in 2019 alone. The donated items are certified by food inspectors as being edible but unsellable, said Randy Eller, director of the agency’s logistics directorate.

“Instead of edible food being discarded in trash bins, we’re using it to help feed the hungry,” Eller said. “I’m proud that we can connect with food banks to make that happen.”

Although DeCA always had limited authority to request food bank approval to donate edible but unsaleable products, the agency’s formal food donation program emerged after the



2013 government shutdown. As the agency prepared to close its stateside commissaries on Oct. 2 of that year, they requested temporary approval from the Department of Defense (DOD) to donate edible food, especially perishables, to local food banks to avoid dumping it in the trash.

Six months and a lot of bureaucratic wrangling later, DOD gave DeCA a clear process for food bank approvals which provided a formal donation program. Perhaps the hardest part for commissaries involved nudging nonprofit food banks to register with DOD to be designated to receive donations, Eller said.

That first year, 2014, DeCA donated 636,000 pounds to 72 food banks. By 2019, the annual donation total eclipsed 5 million pounds going to 193 food banks.

“Once the word went out, the network of DOD-designated food banks went from a trickle to a downpour,” Eller said. “The donated amount represents less than 1 percent of our sales, but every bit helps for those who need it.”

To be designated eligible for commissary donations, nonprofit food banks must formally send a request to the assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs. Interested parties should contact Kim Short at kim.short@deca.mil or 804-734-8000, x48042.

To qualify, a food bank must be a public or private nonprofit organization that routinely provides edible food to food pantries, soup kitchens, hunger relief centers, or other food or feeding centers that provide meals or food to needy persons.

DeCA’s food bank donations should not be confused with the annual USDA-sponsored Feds Feed Families campaign that runs June through October. Through Feds Feed Families, commissaries serve as collection points for their installations with all donations coming from DeCA customers and DOD civilians.

Commissaries with food bank partnerships, by state:

- **Alabama:** Gunter Annex, Fort Rucker, Maxwell Air Force Base, Redstone Arsenal
- **Alaska:** Anchorage Area, Eielson Air Force Base, Fort Wainwright, Kodiak, Fort Greely
- **Arizona:** Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Fort Huachuca, Luke Air Force Base, Yuma Proving Ground, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
- **Arkansas:** Little Rock Air Force Base
- **California:** Edwards Air Force Base, Fort Irwin, March Air Reserve Base, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Naval Air Station North Island, Ord Community, Naval Base San Diego, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Camp Pendleton, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Naval Air Station Lemoore, San Onofre, Travis Air Force Base, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Fort Hunter-Liggett, McClellan Air Force Base, Moffett Field, Port Hueneme, Beale Air Force Base, Naval Air Facility El Centro
- **Colorado:** Buckley Air Force Base, Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base, U.S. Air Force Academy

- **Connecticut:** Naval Submarine Base New London
- **Delaware:** Dover Air Force Base
- **District of Columbia:** Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling
- **Florida:** Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, MacDill Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Naval Air Station Key West, Naval Air Station Pensacola, Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Patrick Air Force Base, Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Station Mayport
- **Georgia:** Fort Benning, Fort Gordon, Hunter Army Air Field, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Robins Air Force Base, Fort Stewart, Moody Air Force Base, Camp Merrill Army Base
- **Hawaii:** Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (both commissaries), Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Schofield Barracks
- **Idaho:** Mountain Home Air Force Base
- **Illinois:** Naval Station Great Lakes, Rock Island, Scott Air Force Base
- **Indiana:** Harrison Village, Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane
- **Kansas:** Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, McConnell Air Force Base
- **Kentucky:** Fort Campbell, Fort Knox
- **Louisiana:** Barksdale Air Force Base, Fort Polk, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans
- **Maine:** Bangor Army National Guard Base
- **Maryland:** Aberdeen Proving Ground, Andrews Air Force Base, Fort Detrick, Fort Meade, Naval Support Activity Annapolis, Forest Glenn, Naval Air Station Patuxent River
- **Massachusetts:** Hanscom Air Force Base
- **Michigan:** Selfridge Army National Guard Base
- **Mississippi:** Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, Keesler Air Force Base, Columbus Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Meridian
- **Missouri:** Fort Leonard Wood, Richards-Gebaur, Whiteman Air Force Base
- **Montana:** Malmstrom Air Force Base
- **Nebraska:** Offutt Air Force Base
- **Nevada:** Nellis Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Fallon
- **New Hampshire:** Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
- **New Jersey:** Lakehurst commissary at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Picatinny Arsenal
- **New Mexico:** Cannon Air Force Base, Holloman Air Force Base, Kirtland Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range
- **New York:** Fort Drum, U.S. Military Academy (West Point), Fort Hamilton, Mitchel Field, Saratoga Springs
- **North Carolina:** Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, Fort Bragg (both commissaries), Marine Corps Air Station New River, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base
- **North Dakota:** Grand Forks Air Force Base, Minot Air Force Base
- **Ohio:** Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
- **Oklahoma:** Altus Air Force Base, Fort Sill, Tinker Air Force Base, Vance Air Force Base
- **Pennsylvania:** Carlisle Barracks, Pittsburgh Area, Tobyhanna Army Depot
- **Rhode Island:** Naval Base Newport
- **South Carolina:** Charleston Air Force Base, Naval Weapons Station Charleston, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, Fort Jackson, Shaw Air Force Base
- **South Dakota:** Ellsworth Air Force Base
- **Tennessee:** Arnold Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Memphis

- **Texas:** Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Dyess Air Force Base, Fort Hood (both commissaries), Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Lackland Air Force Base, Laughlin Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Fort Sam Houston, Sheppard Air Force Base, Dyess Air Force Base, Fort Bliss, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Kingsville
- **Utah:** Dugway Proving Ground, Hill Air Force Base
- **Virginia:** Fort Belvoir, Fort Lee, Fort Myer commissary at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Joint Base Langley-Eustis (both commissaries), Naval Air Station Oceana, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Langley Air Force Base, Naval Sea Systems Command Dahlgren, Norfolk Naval Shipyard Portsmouth, Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Naval Station Norfolk
- **Washington:** Naval Base Bangor, Fairchild Air Force Base, Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Joint Base Lewis-McChord (both commissaries), Smokey Point Naval Supply Complex, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
- **Wisconsin:** Fort McCoy
- **Wyoming:** F.E. Warren Air Force Base

-DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Commissaries provide a military benefit, saving authorized patrons thousands of dollars annually on their purchases compared to similar products at commercial retailers. The discounted prices include a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*

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