



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Shopping on the installation

Joint resale committee encourages customers to save money by pushing benefits of commissaries, exchanges

*By Jessica Rouse,
DeCA public affairs specialist*

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

FORT LEE, Va.

– For the last three years, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) and its military resale counterparts, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), Coast Guard Exchange (CGX)



Commissaries and exchanges, like the ones pictured here at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, are typical of the savings realized by shopping on the installation. (DeCA photo: Kevin Robinson)

the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX), and the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), have convened a joint marketing conference to find innovative ways to attract and better serve military customers.

During this year's conference, hosted Jan. 22 by the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), the group discussed expanded gift card access and increased collaboration with the new

joint buying alliance, which was introduced last year.

“We have shown we can collaborate and work well together,” said Chris Burns, DeCA’s executive director for the Sales, Marketing and Logistics Group. “And this group, as a team, can make decisions, which will help bring the customer back.”

AAFES President/Chief Merchandising Officer Ana Middleton applauded the military resale organizations for collaborating year-round.

“The exchanges and commissary bring value to military communities,” Middleton said. “This annual meeting allows us to join forces to emphasize how our respective organizations can help our communities understand the importance of their military resale benefit. Together, we continue to develop meaningful ways to keep military families coming back to their installations.”

The group discussed military shopper trends, the state of the retail industry and marketing strategies to drive traffic to installations.

The group also addressed:

- **Military-specific issues.** Marketing with a focus on solving the challenges of military life holds special appeal and benefits for shoppers. As an example, the group discussed coupon booklets for PCS season. The booklets would contain information that service members need to know when leaving or moving to an installation, alongside money-saving coupons on cleaning supplies. The group discussed working with other agencies to promote financial wellness for service members.
- **Joint marketing campaigns.** Military shoppers will see joint promotions during the Month of the Military Child in April, Military Appreciation Month in May, National Military Families and Veterans Appreciation Month in November and the “Your Holiday Bill is On Us” MILITARY STAR card sweepstakes in December. The group is also working on a sustainability campaign to promote their environmental efforts.
- **Gift cards.** Customers will be able to purchase gift cards from each retailer no matter where they choose to shop.
- **Metrics.** The group developed metrics to evaluate the success of the joint marketing campaign. The data will help gauge customer interest on certain sales and provide other shopper insights.
- **Reaching the community.** Joint social media campaigns or direct mailings help involve patrons through events like the NFL’s annual ProCamps on military installations.
- **Military tag line.** The group also discussed launching a joint military resale tag line, for use during joint events.

- **Continued support.** The group agreed to continue communicating the benefits of the MILITARY STAR card and educating patrons on using credit responsibly and sharing best practices on data related to sales performance, marketing promotions and shopping trends as well.

The joint buying alliance has been sharing common data and the cost of goods by maximizing combined buying power since Jan. 31, 2019, when the military resale community signed a memorandum of understanding to establish the alliance with the purpose of providing even greater savings for customers. In addition, the alliance helps enable the military resale community to gain increased industry partner collaboration.

“As we continue to move forward with the military resale buying alliance, we see both the impact with what we have accomplished and the potential of what we have in front of us,” said Christine Estes, vice president, omni channel product and promotions marketing, NEXCOM. “The opportunity to collaborate with our sister exchanges and DeCA is exciting!”

“We have had much success with joint promotions,” said Hector Granado, DeCA’s marketing director. “When the marketing arms of all the military resale members get together great things happen. After all, we are all on the same team and collaborating with our exchange partners helps them, DeCA and all our customers.”

-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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