



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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O'Neal moves on to DLA

Senior enlisted advisor completes tour at DeCA's Fort Lee HQ

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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Note: To read this release online, go to the DeCA [website](http://www.commissaries.com).

FORT LEE, Va. – Army Command Sgt. Maj. Tomeka N. O'Neal will become the new command senior enlisted leader for the Defense Logistics Agency, completing her tenure as the Defense Commissary Agency's senior enlisted advisor.

O'Neal left DeCA effective July 24 and reports to DLA Headquarters at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, this week. Marine Sgt. Maj. Michael R. Saucedo, former sergeant major for U.S. Forces Korea, will join the commissary agency as the new senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director in September.



“We will miss Command Sgt. Maj. O'Neal's passion for commissaries,” said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, DOD special assistant for commissary operations. “As our senior

enlisted advisor, her relationships with other senior enlisted leaders helped us deliver a more relevant commissary benefit.”

Serving as the agency’s senior enlisted advisor to the director since November 2018, O’Neal was DeCA’s uniformed advocate, representing the questions and concerns of the commissary’s uniformed services’ customers and helping the agency raise awareness of the benefit and its savings.

In February and early March, the agency found itself in the eye of a shopping surge as customers responded to the eventual shutdowns prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the early part of this crisis, O’Neal said she wasn’t surprised that the commissary mission was considered mission critical.

“Our employees took that challenge in stride, and they were determined to keep the benefit going for our customers when some of the stores outside the gate were inaccessible or running out of products,” she said. “We have a dedicated workforce, and they should be recognized continuously for what they do daily to ensure this benefit is always available to our active duty, our reservists, our retirees and our disabled veterans.”

During the first year of her DeCA tour, O’Neal visited 65 of the agency’s 236 stores. She learned up-close what it took to deliver the benefit.

“I was on the road quite often and to see the DeCA team in action – you know there’s 13,000 employees in this agency – was rewarding in my capacity as senior enlisted advisor,” O’Neal said. “I also enjoyed visiting leadership at those installations, expanding relationships with Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine senior leaders who are responsible for our commissaries being tenants on their installations. I learned how much they truly cared about commissary operations and the benefit.”

Throughout her nearly three decades in the Army, O’Neal has held a variety of battalion-, brigade- and command-level assignments that include the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC), formerly known as COSCOM (1st Corps Support Command); 44th Medical Command; U.S. Army Special Operations Command; 1st and 4th Infantry Divisions; and the U.S. Army Materiel Command. O’Neal also supported operational missions and deployments in several overseas locations.

O’Neal often gets emails from her peers commenting on DeCA’s performance. One in particular from a fleet command master chief in Hawaii thanked the commissaries for taking care of their families. That message was the result of the relationships she cultivated with other senior enlisted leaders who could count on someone in uniform at DeCA being there as their advocate, she said.

“I was the touchpoint. They had no problems reaching out to me,” O’Neal said. “I could answer a question, follow up on something the admiral wanted me to look into, and I could stop something from getting out of control – senior enlisted leader to senior enlisted leader; it’s priceless to be able to reach out and touch someone.”

She joined the Army as a parachute rigger in 1990 and later changed to automated logistical specialist in 1998. Her career has taken her to places such as Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Carson, Colorado; Camp Carroll, Korea; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and in Germany, Misau and Kaiserslautern.

O’Neal holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Trident University International (Cypress, California) and a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration from Campbell University (Buies Creek, North Carolina).

As she moves on to DLA, O’Neal said she wants to remind service members and their families just how important the commissary benefit is to their quality of life.

“Since being assigned to the Defense Commissary Agency it has been extremely rewarding because I expanded my knowledge of a benefit I had used for 30 years and had no idea of the intricacies that went on behind the scenes to deliver the lowest cost possible to our customers,” O’Neal said. “The commissary is one of the greatest benefits the military can offer to the men and women who’ve raised their right hand to join; we’re saying we will take care of you and your family.”

-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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