



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Corporate Communications

1300 E Avenue, Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 8-6105 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 8-6105

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

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Media Contact: Kevin L. Robinson, public affairs specialist
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773
E-mail: kevin.robinson@deca.mil

One million and counting

Commissary gift card sales eclipse seven figures

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
DeCA public affairs specialist*

Go to the DeCA [website](http://www.commissaries.com) to read this release online.

FORT LEE, Va. – The Defense Commissary Agency’s (DeCA’s) “gift of groceries” officially became a member of the seven-figure club Nov. 4 when the 1 millionth commissary gift card was sold at the Misawa Air Base, Japan, Commissary.

Commissary gift cards are available [online](http://www.commissaries.com), in commissaries and Navy Exchanges (NEXs) for anyone to purchase and give to authorized shoppers. The sales

milestone highlights the military community’s tradition of taking care of its own, said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Tomeka N. O’Neal, senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director.



On June 29, 2011, then Command Sgt. Maj. John M. Gaines Jr., senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director, presents a commissary gift card to Pfc. Monica Arriaga. Arriaga was among the first recipients of cards from the new program. Accompanying Arriaga is her husband, Abran, and their 8-month-old daughter, Angel. (DeCA photo: Kevin Robinson)

“Our gift cards allow the families and friends of our patrons to extend the gift of groceries to them,” O’Neal said. “Reaching 1 million confirms just how important our commissaries are to our communities.”

The current program began June, 29, 2011. Through Nov. 4, DeCA has sold 1,000,128 cards, which have been redeemed in commissaries for \$32,061,050.84 worth of groceries, said Bob Bunch, the agency’s gift card manager.

“This program enjoys a 93.32 percent redemption rate, which is well above the industry average,” Bunch said. “Reaching 1 million cards sold not only validates the need for the program, but more importantly showcases the wonderfully generous nature of people.”

That generosity was on full display earlier in the year when a large number of commissary gift card purchases at commissaries and Navy Exchanges (NEXs) helped support Coast Guardsmen and their families during a government shutdown.

Thousands of dollars of commissary gift cards went to Coast Guard patrons during the 35-day shutdown which ended Jan. 25.

“Through programs like commissary gift cards we continue to demonstrate the value of the benefit and the heart of the military community as it takes care of its own,” Bunch said.

-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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