



NEWS RELEASE

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ProCamps kickoff

NFL player returns to his Fort Lee roots to help launch football program for military children

By DeCA Corporate Communications

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

FORT LEE, Va. – Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Clelin Ferrell pointed to the aisles of the Fort Lee, Virginia, Commissary, and smiled as he walked down memory lane, recalling his days as a small child in the store with his parents.

“I just want to say, ‘thank y’ all so much for coming,’” said Ferrell to the soldiers and family members gathered at the commissary. “This means so much to me because all of my family served in the military. A lot of my childhood was spent on this base right here.”



Las Vegas Raider defensive end Clelin Ferrell poses with two young fans, Ivan (center) and Isaac (right) Sandoval, at the ProCamps kickoff program for military children at Fort Lee, Virginia. Go to [Flickr](#) to see more photos. (DeCA Photo: Jessica Rouse)

Ferrell's homecoming on Feb. 19 was part of the official kickoff event for the eighth year of the Procter & Gamble (P&G)-sponsored NFL [ProCamps](#) program for thousands of military children worldwide.

The Fort Lee Commissary, Army and Air Force Exchange, Family & MWR, and P&G partnered in hosting the event which included face painters, food and drinks and an appearance by Ferrell, who signed plenty of autographs and took selfies.

P&G works with ProCamps to sponsor two-day football camps in partnership with the Defense Commissary Agency and the exchange services for winning military bases worldwide. The camps, led by NFL football players, are open to first through eighth-grade children of active duty military, reservists, retirees and DOD civilian employees.

Installations qualify for a camp based on sales of designated P&G products at their local commissaries and exchanges, and customers can have their say by voting online and through mobile texting from March 16 to April 12. Customers will also see mass product displays in participating stores.

Campers will learn from and practice with NFL players such as Ferrell (Raiders), Kyle Rudolph (Minnesota Vikings), Alejandro Villanueva (Pittsburgh Steelers), Andre Roberts (Buffalo Bills), Graham Gano and Christian McCaffrey (Carolina Panthers), and Tyler Eifert (Cincinnati Bengals) among many others.

This year's theme is "Start Strong/Stay Strong," which highlights the values the camps emphasize as NFL football players teach military children the fundamentals of football, teamwork and how to make new friends, said Hector Granado, DeCA's director of marketing.

"The camp is a great opportunity for the installation community to come together and for the kids to get to know one another," Granado said. "These athletes share ideas and concepts common to military children who face the challenges of their parents deploying and making new friends while moving from place to place during their parents' careers."

For Ferrell, connecting with the military is in his DNA. Both parents retired from the Army as noncommissioned officers. His father, Cleavester Ferrell, Sr., who died of cancer in 2012, served two tours of duty in Vietnam. His mom, Faye, who still shops at the commissary, served in Operation Desert Storm. Both parents had been stationed at Fort Lee at some point in their careers.

"It always means something special to me when I have anything [to do] connected to the military," said Ferrell, who recalled his favorite on-base event was watching the fireworks on the Fourth of July.

As a child who loved to accompany his mother to the commissary and exchange, Ferrell said he identifies with events such as ProCamps because they help military children beyond the obvious benefits of physical activity.

“There’s a lot of different values that come from staying active that carry over into the workforce, into life in general,” Ferrell said, “such as how to push through things, how to persevere, how to have the discipline to continue to do something every single day in order to make yourself better.”

ProCamps’ payback to the military community is part of the ancillary benefits commissary customers receive from DeCA’s connection with its industry partners, who provide millions of dollars annually in giveaways and promotional events, said Michael Dowling, DeCA deputy director and chief operating officer.

“ProCamps are living proof of how shopping on post directly improves the quality of life for our military communities,” Dowling said. “Our service members and their families always benefit more when they make the installation – their commissary and exchange – their first choice.”

P&G will announce the winners of the competition in late spring once all of the data has been collected and evaluated.

-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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