



# 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](http://www.commissaries.com)

---

**Release Number:** 42-16  
**Date:** July 28, 2016  
**Contact:** Kevin L. Robinson, public affairs specialist  
**Tel.:** (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773  
**E-mail:** [kevin.robinson@deca.mil](mailto:kevin.robinson@deca.mil)

### Commissaries celebrate 226 years of Coast Guard service

*By Dr. Peter Skirbunt,  
DeCA historian*

**Note:** To see a video on the agency's YouTube page related to the Coast Guard, press the "Ctrl" key and click on the photo or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inwF7yywOF4>.



For photos on DeCA's Flickr page, go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/albums/72157670897147861>.

**FORT LEE, Va.** – While the Defense Commissary Agency's 25th birthday on Oct. 1 is fast approaching, the agency salutes the people it has had the privilege to serve for the last 25 years: the men, women, and families of the military community – active duty, reserves, and retirees.

In August, DeCA observes the 226<sup>th</sup> birthday of the U.S. Coast Guard. Congress established the Coast Guard – at the time it was called the "Revenue Cutter Service" – on Aug. 4, 1790.

The Coast Guard is a multi-mission service unique among the U.S. military branches. It has a maritime law enforcement mission as well as duties as a federal regulatory agency. It is not controlled by the Department of Defense. Until 1967, it had been a branch of the Treasury

Department, but then control was transferred to the Department of Transportation.

In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it transitioned to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2003. It can be transferred to the Navy Department by the president at any time or by Congress during wartime. This transfer has only occurred twice: during World Wars I and II.

The Coast Guard began selling groceries to its community after the Navy began its commissaries in 1909-1910. After the World Wars, all services, including the Coast Guard, discovered that commissaries were a valuable inducement to enlistment and retention. In 1949, although the new Armed Services Commissary Regulation (ASCR) did not control the actions of the Coast Guard stores, they used the ASCR as a guide to their own operations.

The Coast Guard never had many commissaries in the modern sense of the word. Instead, most USCG grocery stores were located inside their exchanges. By the 1980s, there were 15 such stores; 11 of them were located on bases on or near the Atlantic Ocean, two were near the Pacific, and two more were located near the Great Lakes.

When DeCA started up in 1991, it assumed control of one of the few true commissaries the Coast Guard owned: the store on Governors Island, located south of Manhattan, squarely on the approach to New York City's harbor. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions shut down the Governors Island installation in 1996, but DeCA took control of the Coast Guard's commissary at Kodiak Coast Guard Station, Alaska, located on Kodiak Island in the Aleutians, at virtually the same time.

Today, DeCA continues to manage the Kodiak store. It's the only Coast Guard store on DeCA's books. Located in a large building that also houses the station's exchange, credit union, post office, and several concessionaires, it is one of DeCA's most unique stores. Its exterior is unglamorous, but it was designed specifically to stand up to harsh weather and heavy snow. No exterior signage advises what functions are housed inside, but it's safe to say the station's population knows exactly where their commissary is; after all, it supplies vital goods for people stationed at a location that truly is 'at the far end of the pipeline.'

**-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 and make no profit on the sale of merchandise. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. By shopping regularly in the commissary, patrons save thousands of dollars annually. 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.*

## **Stay Connected to Your Commissary Benefit**

COMMISSARIES.COM: Visit [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com) to learn more about the Defense Commissary Agency: check out the latest news, find a store near you, see what's on sale, create a shopping list, learn of food and product recalls, scan employment opportunities, read frequently asked questions, submit a customer comment form online through DeCA's Your Action Line and more.

COMMISSARY CONNECTION: Stay connected with the latest news about your most valued benefit, Hot Links to additional savings, shopping sprees, contests, commissary promotions, events and more, go to [www.commissaries.com/subscribe.cfm](http://www.commissaries.com/subscribe.cfm) and subscribe to the Commissary Connection newsletter.

FACEBOOK: Visit [www.facebook.com/YourCommissary](http://www.facebook.com/YourCommissary), DeCA's Facebook page, where you can post comments and share news, photos and videos.

YOUTUBE: To see DeCA's latest videos, visit [www.youtube.com/DefenseCommissary](http://www.youtube.com/DefenseCommissary).

TWITTER: To see DeCA's latest "tweets," visit [www.twitter.com/YourCommissary](http://www.twitter.com/YourCommissary).

PINTEREST: To see DeCA's theme-based image collections, visit <http://www.pinterest.com/YourCommissary>.

FLICKR: To see DeCA's latest photographs, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/>.