



NEWS RELEASE

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DeCA realigns sales directorate

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FORT LEE, Va. – The Defense Commissary Agency announces provisional realignment of its sales directorate and the selection of Randall L. “Randy” Chandler as sales director and Tracie L. Russ as deputy sales director. Chandler was the former Central Area director and Russ had served as the director of Business Development.

The sales restructuring, effective July 14, is designed to put the commissary agency on course to better operate in a grocery industry that’s reacting to “growing shopper empowerment,” said Rogers E. Campbell, executive director of the Sales, Marketing and Policy Group.

“Today’s grocery industry is being shaped by consumers who, through the Internet and smartphone technology, have more information to make their shopping decisions,” Campbell said. “By realigning our category management system, we are positioning ourselves to ensure the commissary benefit and its savings remain relevant to our patrons.”

Under the new sales alignment, DeCA will improve the synergy of its product buying, promotional, marketing and product placement activities based on real-time business analytics and an annual buying plan, Campbell added. To that end, the semiperishable, perishable and promotions divisions are being replaced by a category management division for center and perimeter store products that reports to the sales director. Several smaller categories and special programs – resets, plan-o-grams and marketing – will report to the deputy sales director.

Through the new system, the sales directorate’s traditional buyer and vendor relationships will give way to a staffing structure where category managers interact with industry. Category managers will now negotiate pricing and patron savings in commissaries based on business

metrics that affect product movement – inventory turns, promotions, in-store merchandising and plan-o-grams – and that dictate placement for optimal product exposure.

Categories are being organized as management groups including a category manager, a merchandising specialist, a business analyst and a file maintenance assistant. At the start of the restructuring, three category management groups – paper/laundry, beverages and frozen – were provisionally established as a bridge to becoming permanent in fiscal 2014. In coming months, sales will eventually establish 13 to 14 food and non-food category management groups.

“Our category management model will be more aligned with what’s occurring successfully in commercial retail,” Campbell said. “I’m confident that Randy and his deputy director, Tracie, will manage our transition to a sales directorate that operates more efficiently, reduces and controls costs, and meets new operating challenges.”

For the second time since 2010, Chandler and former Sales Director Chris Burns are passing the baton to each other. Chandler had initially served as director of sales from 2007 to 2010. In December 2010, Burns replaced Chandler as sales director when Chandler was selected as one of two deputy region directors for then DeCA East. After DeCA’s above-store reorganization in 2011, the agency formed the Store Operations Group and reformed regions into five geographic areas. Chandler became the Central Area director.

Since Jan. 18, both Chandler and Burns, along with former Human Resources Director Kaye Kennedy, were temporarily assigned to the agency’s transformation advisory team as senior advisors to the agency director on the following projects: 1) improving operations and reducing costs, 2) enhancing workforce development, and 3) improving relevance to customers and stakeholders. Kennedy has since retired, and Burns was recently selected chief performance officer.

Chandler is noted as being one of the early founders of the agency’s marketing business unit. His commissary career began in 1979 with the Marine Corps Commissary System. Eventually, Chandler would become store director of the Hadnot Point Commissary at Camp Lejeune, N.C., before becoming a Marine Corps representative to the DeCA Transition Team that helped merged four military commissaries into one agency in 1991.

Chandler had left government service to work for industry, returning in 2005 after seven years to become store administrator at Charleston Air Force Base Commissary, S.C.

Russ, the new deputy director of sales, is the former director of the Business Development Directorate that focuses on e/m-Commerce and shopper insight initiatives. Gordon J. Jones, former chief of e/m-Commerce, has been named as her replacement.

Russ’ selection as director of Business Development was part of a series of revisions to

DeCA headquarters' organization in 2012 to help the agency lay the groundwork for a modern, 21st century commissary benefit. In the spring of that year, she was appointed to chair DeCA's concept development team, a collection of the agency's best and brightest who brainstormed ideas for DeCA's future. Prior to that, she had served from 2008 as executive officer to DeCA's deputy director.

Russ began her civil service career in 1985 as a part-time sales store checker. In 1991, she entered the commissary career program as a grocery department manager. She has subsequently served in various positions within the commissary system, including many projects at headquarters and region level, and tours as store director at Menwith Hill, England, from 1998 to 2000; store administrator at Mannheim, Germany, from 2000 to 2001; and store director at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., from 2001 to 2003.

-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. 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 an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to 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.*

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