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10 Things I LOVE About the Commissary

by Heather Walsh



A big game display at the Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, Commissary. (Photo courtesy Cannon Commissary)

The commissary is a constant fixture among military families. It is the grocery store military families depend on with each move to have their staples and favorites. Beyond being the store that military families turn to for convenience and affordable products, there is a lot to love about the commissary.

Meat Power Boxes

Have you seen the meat power boxes in the meat section of your local commissary? Sometimes also available at the commissary entrances, these boxes provide a collection of meat options with additional savings. Four meat power boxes rotate availability per local commissary:

Health Alternatives, Economy, Tailgate, and Fix it and Forget It. Each one offers up to 25% in savings on top of the Commissary's lower prices. Each box includes 15-19 pounds with a variety of meat, depending on the box. This is perfect for families doing monthly or bi-monthly shopping trips to grab what they need and keep moving. It is also perfect for units or groups that are grilling or cooking together to save money.

Savings

Congress has mandated that the Defense Commissaries (DeCA) provided a consistent savings level for military families. This means that there are guaranteed savings at your local military commissary. These savings are calculated regionally so that prices better match that region's cost-of-living. Per DeCA, the regional savings are as follows:

New England: 21.8%	Pacific: 22.6%	North Central: 21.4%
South Atlantic: 18.7%	Mountain: 20%	Alaska/Hawaii: 33.2%
South Central: 18.9%		

Rewards Card

In addition to the Congress-mandated savings, the Commissary has a Rewards program. The Rewards Program is an application with coupons for additional savings, no clipping necessary. Download the app, enter the number of your Commissary Rewards card, and "clip" from the store's coupons. The card is associated with your phone number and can be used at checkout if you forget your card.

Use Your Military Star Card

Shopping for groceries and have a Military Star Card? Earn rewards on your grocery purchases! Earn 2 points for every \$1 spent at the Military Commissary. Every 2,000 points earn a \$20 rewards card. Historically, there have also been double points offerings on certain days, earning 4 points per \$1, meaning you earn the reward even faster. Check your local Military Commissary social media for any offerings of this type.

Grab-N-Go

While living the hotel-style life or just moving into a new home, the grab-n-go section is a, pardon the pun, go-to. The packaged sushi, salads, and sandwiches are perfect for families without dishes, often including silverware or chopsticks that are readily available at the pick-up area. Perfect for those deployment days when you don't want to cook, but you still have to eat and feed the kids - grab a rotisserie chicken from the Grab-N-Go and grab some deli sides for a complete meal.

Amazing International Aisle

The International aisle spans a variety of ethnic foods, especially areas that military service members and their families were stationed overseas. Looking for mustard from Germany, or a biscuit from the U.K.? Or perhaps that canned coffee you got from Dydo while living in Asia? It's in the International aisle at the commissary! It's a trip down memory lane and a chance to share those memories with other family members. Haven't been to any of these countries? Enjoy the food from the country from the comfort of your home without the requirement of your passport, all at affordable prices.

Click2Go Curbside service

Online shopping and curbside pickup service have become a staple in the last year. It is perfect for busy individuals, parents with sick children or families with a deployed spouse, or just plain don't want to go into the store. Click2Go is the curbside service of the Commissary. Orders can be placed here. Upon pickup, you will be required to show military ID, the confirmation email and bring a preferred form of electronic payment. There is no minimum order size or minimum dollar amount.

The Click2Go service is available at Charleston AFB, Fort Belvoir, Fort Eustis, Fort Lee, Fort Polk, Jacksonville NAS, Oceana NAS, Offutt AFB, Quantico, and McGuire. There are hours of operation for Click2Go which can be checked here. This service is still in the testing phase, and if it is popular, there are plans to expand to more commissaries.

Overseas Perks

Moving to a foreign country is an amazing opportunity that some military families enjoy. Living overseas means a new culture, housing, and food. There are also differing food prices in the local economy that are not always affordable. While military families living overseas do receive a COLA, the on-base commissary provides a place with familiar food with labels that are easily read, which is an amazing resource for families with food allergies. Also, some food pricing at the local commissaries is aligned with U.S. pricing and is much more affordable on base than off. Bonus -when living overseas, coupons to be accepted up to 6 months after their expiration date!

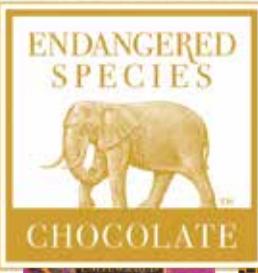
Packaged Meals Ready to Cook

Beyond the Grab-N-Go are prepackaged meals near the meat section. Want to make a stew but don't have all the ingredients? Grab the prepackaged stew packages, and everything is there - oftentimes including the seasoning packets. All you have to do is cut the container open, pour and cook per the instructions. A homecooked meal is not far away with the prepared ready to cook meals. These are useful when living in temporary living facilities with a limited kitchen as some of these can be prepared easily on the stovetop that on-base hotel facilities have.

Sense of Camaraderie

The commissary isn't just a grocery store. It's part of the community. It is where new families run into friends they knew at the previous duty station. It's where you run into the family down the street and catch up on neighborhood gatherings. The commissary is a community resource for the families that serve.

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'WE CARE AND YOU SAVE!':

Sidewalk sales to offer discounts on variety of everyday items at stateside commissaries

DeCA Marketing and Mass Media

FORT LEE, Va. – Commissary patrons stateside can stock up on their favorite items at significant savings during the Defense Commissary Agency's Military Appreciation Month Sidewalk Sale event in May.

"This is our way of saying 'thank you' to our patrons for their service and sacrifice," said Bonita Moffett, DeCA's director of sales. "These U.S. sidewalk sales give our military members and their families a chance to realize extra savings during this military recognition month. We care and you save!"

Commissaries stateside only will hold their sidewalk sale, with a few exceptions, sometime between April 29 and May 31. The sales coincide with May's Military Appreciation Month.

Weather permitting, most commissaries will have one event – a two- or three-day outdoor weekend sidewalk sale – featuring extra savings on variety of everyday items. Event dates are subject to change, so patrons are encouraged to check their store's web page for sale dates and hours or talk to their store manager for more details or updates.

Customers have a variety of options to choose from. Sale items may include products in the following categories: Snacks, Beverages, Pet Food, International Foods, Baking Goods, Canned Goods, Non-Food Items, and Health and Beauty Products.

"This is another way the commissary brings quality and savings together for our military families," Moffett added.

In accordance with DOD policy regarding COVID-19 safety protocols, commissary customers and employees are required to wear masks at sidewalk sale events.

-DeCA-

Military Spouse Workforce

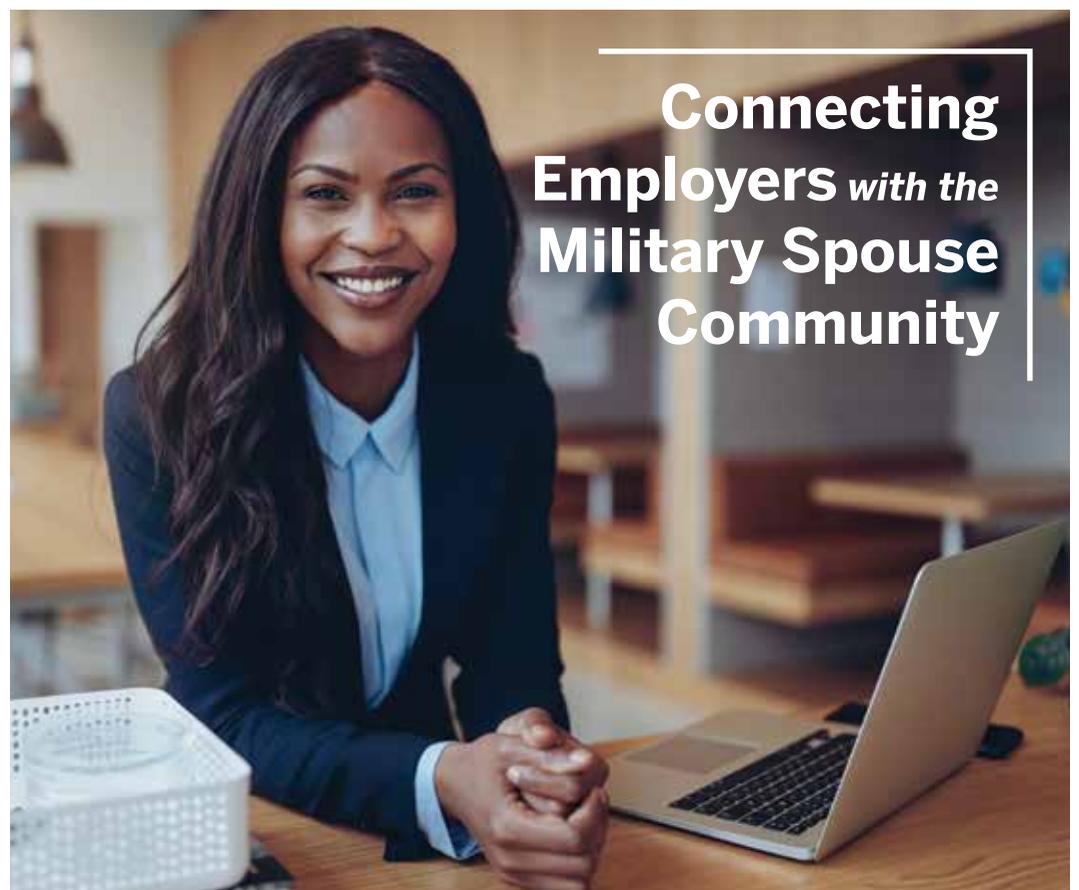
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