NDAA Conference Report Eyes Far-Reaching Reforms for Resale Benefits

BY PHIL GRAY
MANAGING EDITOR

WASHINGTON

Swept along, perhaps, by a powerful impulse to redress what Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) Chairman John McCain called a “military technological advantage” that is “eroding,” and what the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) recognized as a need for the Department of Defense (DoD) “to do a better job balancing its tooth-to-tail,” Congress reached agreement on Oct. 7 to push forward with multiple reforms to acquisition, retirement, healthcare, compensation and workforce shaping. This included requiring DoD to submit specific proposals to make the commissary and exchange systems “budget neutral,” and it gave DoD leeway to conduct various commissary pilot programs that might include “changes to pricing structure;” exploration of privatization options; and the pursuit of discounts for eligible patrons at major grocers, among other potentially fundamental changes to non-pay resale benefit compensation.

In their 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, H.R. 1735) Conference Report (114-270), HASC and SASC conferees put into play several far-reaching authorizations — among other provisions — that permit DoD to test ways of eliminating the need for appropriated funding for commissaries and other resale requirements, within the next three years. At press time, the conference report had been agreed to by both houses of Congress, and the legislation was on its way to the White House. It was unclear whether or not the President would veto the bill.

DECISION-MAKERS

A Washington-area source told E and C News that while significant rosters of conferees were appointed by both HASC and SASC, when it came to issues pertaining to commissarries and exchanges, final deliberations were negotiated by the “big four”: SASC Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.), Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-R.I.), HASC Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) and Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-Wash.).

Thornberry described the HASC’s approach to military resale in the conference agreement as “recognizing the important benefit and value that commissaries offer military personnel and their families,” while also maintaining “the current structure of the commissary system,” and allowing DoD “the flexibility to explore innovations.”

Although the HASC prevailed in protecting some second destination transportation (SDT) funding — except for produce shipped to Asia — and although it succeeded in restoring $281.2 million in funding for commissaries in 2016 — a level that had also met with broader consensus in the Senate and House Appropriations Committees — it “receded,” deferring to Senate negotiators, on a series of groundbreaking proposals that give DoD a wide berth in attempting to achieve “budget neutrality”.

BUDGET-NEUTRAL

Among these was a provision that called on the Secretary of Defense to submit by March 1, 2016, a report detailing a comprehensive plan “to achieve budget-neutrality in the delivery of commissary and exchange benefits,” including “any modifications he considers appropriate” to obtain this, while meeting specific benchmarks. This would essentially require commissaries to become self-sustaining in conjunction with help from exchanges, which are already almost entirely self-sustaining aside from SDT funding and theater of combat operations considerations. The plan would include the “establishment of common business practices, processes, and systems,” among other things, to “exploit synergies between the operations of defense commissaries and exchanges, and to optimize the operations of the resale system and the benefits provided,” by Oct. 1, 2018.

PRIVATEZATION MODIFICATION

Specific modifications mentioned that could be considered included “privatization of the defense commissary system and the military exchange system, in whole or in part,” and the engagement of “major commercial grocery retailers or other private sector entities to determine their willingness to provide eligible beneficiaries with discount savings on grocery products and certain household goods.” While this effectively replaces the Senate bill’s proposal for a two-year privatization pilot program at no fewer than five commissaries in DeCA’s largest markets, it seemingly opens the door to privatization projects of even greater magnitude.

Further, the report requires investigation into the feasibility of the closure of commissaries in locations “in close proximity to other commissaries or in locations where commercial alternatives, through major grocery retailers, may be available.”

PILOT PROGRAMS

The House also acceded to authorizing the Secretary of Defense to conduct “one or more pilot programs” —Continued

Vigilance for Unintended Consequences

In summing up its efforts toward sending a National Defense Authorization Act for 2016 to the White House for the President’s signature, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) recognized that “An agile military depends on recruiting and retaining the best. More and more that means competing with the private sector, to bring in or to hold onto top talent. To compete effectively, the Department of Defense must offer benefits on par with or better than the private marketplace.”

In this regard, the HASC said it “is grateful to the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission for its work in recommending needed reforms.” It also commended the work of Rep. Joe Heck (R-Nev.) and the Military Personnel Subcommittee “in implementing many of these reforms.”

The committee said that as it begins to reform the compensation and benefits system, it remains “mindful of the potential for unintended consequences, and the need to give the Department time to finish its own assessment of these important recommendations.”

Required Savings to Patrons

‘The Secretary shall ensure that the level of savings to commissary and exchange patrons under any pilot program under this subsection is not less than the level of savings to such patrons before the implementation of such pilot program, as follows:

(A) Before commencing a pilot program the Secretary shall establish a baseline of savings to patrons achieved for each commissary or exchange to participate in such pilot program by comparing prices charged by such commissary or exchange for a representative market basket of goods to prices charged by local competitors for the same market basket of goods.

(B) After commencement of such pilot program, the Secretary shall ensure that each commissary or exchange, or private sector entity, participating in such pilot program conducts market-basket price comparisons not less than once a month and adjusts pricing as necessary to ensure that pricing achieves savings to patrons under such pilot program that are reasonably consistent with the baseline savings for the commissary or exchange established pursuant to subparagraph (A).’

— ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES’ CONFERENCE REPORT 114-270 TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 1735
to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of processes and methods for achieving budget-neutrality in the delivery of commissary and exchange benefits and other applicable benchmarks.

As far as at-cost pricing versus marked-up pricing is concerned, "variable pricing" concepts have been consistently rejected by Congress in the past. The proposed pilot programs could allow "any participating commissary, exchange or private sector entity to establish appropriate prices in response to market conditions and customer demand." (See "Required Savings to Patrons" panel, this page)

As a condition for this, however, the report said the DoD plan must ensure the "maintenance of high levels of satisfaction in the delivery of commissary and exchange benefits," together with "the provision of high quality products; and the sustainment of discount savings."

Also requested with this was an "analysis of different pricing constructs to improve or enhance the commissary and exchange benefits," and a description of the impact any modifications might have on Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR). The DoD report would also have to be assessed by the comptroller general within 120 days of submittal.

The makeup of the "market basket" intended to be representative of true commissary baseline savings levels and number of products included — and their prices on various promotions and at strategic points in time — could exert a strong influence over the outcome of the report and pilot projects (see chart).

Commissary rates of savings can vary significantly from one category to another and from one item to another, with some of the highest percentage values often found in meat, produce and chill products, along with numerous promoted items that DeCA selects to help patrons optimize savings. A recent study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) used a market basket of only 50 items (see E and C News 8/15). According to the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) the average number of items that was carried in a supermarket in 2014, was around 42,200, while an average commissary might carry around 12,000 SKUs, with larger stores bringing much larger selections to the patron.

Congress also allowed for these pilot projects to extend for five years from the date of the NDAA’s enactment, with the option for a further five-year extension.

LEGISLATIVE LEEWAY

In an unexpected about-face from Congress’s careful curation of benefit-related legislation over the six or seven decades, the conference report offered the Secretary of Defense the leeway to recommend legislative and administrative actions that he considers necessary to achieve budget neutrality. DoD would have to submit its description and assessment of the program to Congress, along with any request for legislative relief, no later than 30 days before the program’s commencement.

SDT

The HASC, however, did succeed, at least for now, in protecting patrons from having to bear the burden of the cost of second destination transportation (SDT) for commissary goods and supplies overseas (sec. 651). The Senate receded on this issue. On the matter of the inclusion of transportation cost prices in produce contracts for the Asia-Pacific region, however, (sec. 641), the House receded to the Senate. The HASC’s Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) had vigorously supported continuation of funding for SDT to protect Asian-based patrons from higher prices on produce than their Stateside counterparts.

SURCHARGE SCRUTINY

Also under the microscope are possible alternative uses for the commissary surcharge. In its conference report, Congress called on the comptroller general to submit a report to Congress on the commissary surcharge, nonappropriated fund and DoD’s privately financed major construction programs. This report also reviews past compliance with policies, procedures, and records of timely notification of construction.

HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS

Although exchanges have developed expertise in the bundling of telecommunications services for sale in its stores, the House also receded on a provision — for which the Senate had no similar provision of its own — that would have required DoD to enter into contracts with third-party vendors to provide wireless high-speed Internet and network connections for certain members of the armed forces deployed overseas.

TRANSITIONAL COMPENSATION

The Senate receded to its own provision, authorizing the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a program that would authorize "monthly transitional compensation, including commissary and exchange store access, to dependents or former dependents of a member of the Armed Forces who is ineligible to receive retired pay as a result of a court-martial sentence. The provision would allow the secretary concerned to determine that a dependent or former dependent would not be eligible for transitional compensation if that person was an active participant in the conduct constituting the offense...."

The House also receded on a provision that had become moot, but which otherwise would have prohibited the Secretary of Defense “from taking any action to replace or consolidate the commissary and exchange systems,” before a report on the military resale systems was submitted, since the requested report had already been submitted by Sept. 1.
DRBOB Prescribes Cooperation, Compromise for Resale Systems

BY PHIL GRAY
MANAGING EDITOR
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WASHINGTON

“Can cooler heads prevail, and severe damage to the military resale system be averted?” is the question on some minds in the military resale community, as they look ahead to March 2016, and the proposed initiation of variable pricing tests and other measures that have been put into the field of play by the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act Congressional agreement (see story this page).

Among potential cool heads, it is hoped by many in military resale that Department of Defense (DoD) Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO) Peter Levine, informed by his growing familiarity with the interdependent mechanisms that drive successful military resale programs, will lead members of a group known as the Defense Resale Business Optimization Board — DRBOB, a.k.a. “Dr. Bob,” yet to be chartered at press time — to viable compromises that permit patrons to receive the savings, brands, quality and services they expect, but still help blunt the pressures of DoD requirements for budgetary constraints on the military resale systems.

NEW COOPERATIVE OVERSIGHT

According to then-Pentagon Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Cdr. William Urban, USN, the Cooperative Efforts Board (CEB) that has played a lead role in formulating mutual efficiencies among exchanges, and also among commissaries and exchanges, is expected to be stood down and replaced by the DRBOB.

“The plan is for this body to be chartered by the deputy secretary of defense and have the authority to recommend process improvements across the resale enterprise,” he explained.

Urban said that DRBOB first convened between April and August — in a pre-charter preliminary mode — with several formative workshops attended by senior members of the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), the exchange systems, the military services, and members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) staff.

The board is expected to be formally chartered in the near future, Urban noted, adding that upon being chartered, it is expected to meet monthly.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Through mid-September, Urban told E and C News that the formative workshops “have served to identify areas where opportunities exist to further optimize the Defense resale system. The senior leaders from each of the resale systems have offered ideas and approaches on how best to adjust the Defense resale landscape, to foster further innovation and collaboration, promote greater efficiency and effectiveness, and achieve cost savings while preserving existing benefit levels.”

As for what the new board hopes to accomplish, Urban said that it will “pursue operational efficiencies, optimize and promote common business practices based on sound business cases, and garner savings wherever practicable, all while delivering patron benefits at levels equal to or better than currently provided.”

Membership will be established by the charter and is expected to include “representatives of the commissaries, the exchanges, and other appropriate DoD officials,” he added.
Marine Corps Appoints Rowen
MCX Branch Head, Supply Chain

The Marine Corps NAF Business and Support Services Division (NAFBSSD), the entity that oversees the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX), announced the appointment of Laura Rowen as its branch head, Supply Chain, in its Business Operations Directorate.

This position effectively replaces the branch head, Logistics and Corporate Communications position — last held by Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Deputy Director of Business Operations Jennifer Ide — and comes with updated responsibilities related to the MCX becoming a more supply chain-focused organization.

Rowen most recently served as vice president (VP), Global Inventory Management and VP International Operations for Brooks Brothers, where she was also involved with organizational transformation efforts. Rowen also served as the director of manufacturing for the company, overseeing Brooks Brothers’ domestic factories. While in that position, she also helped build the company’s new military resale business, the corporate apparel business, and the collegiate business.

The executive also worked her way up from assistant buyer to buyer to department manager in Federated’s now-defunct Abraham & Straus (A&S) department store chain. Rowen also worked on the financial side of buying as the planning manager for the intimate apparel department.

The new MCX branch head recently earned the designation of Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP), and according to MCX, has already immersed herself in the organization’s Logistics transformation initiative in her first weeks on the team.

MCX Buyers Shift in Tactical, Military Clothing, Electronics, Home Office Stationery and Softlines

The Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Business Operations Directorate has set in motion a series of personnel moves affecting numerous buyers and categories in its merchandising area.

Eydie Quisumbing was named the buyer responsible for tactical, sporting goods, toys and bicycles in Hardlines. Quisumbing succeeds Robin Pruett, who became the buyer for pre-recorded, home office, communications and video games. Pruett succeeded Heinrich Hofmann, who moved to consumables.

In consumables, Hofmann became the buyer for stationery, books and magazines, hardware, automotive and pets, succeeding Karen Macdonald, who now handles the buying duties for commercial military clothing, a position that had been vacant since Wanda Fox left the M CX in 2014 after many years in the position.

Other Business Operations personnel changes included Craig Ukman succeeding Tom Hanson as buyer, electronics, audio/video, photo; and Amanda Willison replacing Danielle Cannata as buyer, juniors, activewear, intimate apparel, hosiery, outerwear, and swimwear.

‘Nutrition and Wellness’ Thrust Emerges in MCX Test

As this issue went to press, details began to emerge of a new initiative, named the Project on Nutrition and Wellness (PNW), which appears set to pick up at least a small portion of the momentum surrounding “healthy lifestyles” and nutrition in military food and fitness facilities that was generated by the Department of Defense’s (DoD) now-concluded test phase of its Healthy Base Initiative (HBI).

According to Marine Corps NAF Business and Services Support Division (NAFBSSD) Director Cindy Whitman Lacy, who also oversees the Marine Corps Exchanges (MCX) as part of her responsibilities, the “MCX has been selected to participate in planogram, endcap and point-of-purchase (POP) testing for a sister initiative to HBI that is currently underway called Project on Nutrition and Wellness.”

This, Whitman Lacy said, “was based on the performance of the MCX stores in the Healthy Base Initiative (HBI) efforts.”

The MCX director told E and C News that PNW, coupled with initiatives associated with the Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailing (NACS), “is part of a movement to create a major shift in demand for healthier foods across not only the convenience store sector but also in the grocery, restaurant and school environments.”

The initiative, supported by NACS, involves a cross-section of convenience stores in testing concepts developed by the Cornell University Food and Brand Labs. A according to Whitman Lacy, this is designed “to test sales and behavior impacts with specific merchandising changes to planograms, endcaps, and signing, etc.”

MCX test stores involved in the project are slated to include MCB Quantico, Va., and MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Whitman Lacy said. “There will be specific merchandising changes that we will be testing during a four-to-six week timeframe, which kicked off in late September,” she noted.

HBI ASSESSMENT

The Healthy Base Initiative (HBI), meanwhile, concluded its exploration and demonstration this summer, and is poised to release its findings.

“Preliminary observations have identified training and tools to empower service and installations; opportunities to use technology to further health; potential expansion of internal and external partnerships; and the need to communicate strategically. Complete lessons learned will be documented in the HBI Report in the fall of 2015,” said DoD Spokesperson Maj. Benjamin E. Sakrisson, USAF. Following this, it is expected that Operation Live Well, the umbrella program for HBI, will release a “toolkit of resources and best practices” for “installation commands in the spring of 2016, so they may implement in areas of interest or need,” he noted.

According to the the MCX, the organization’s “Better4U” concept, which makes healthy and fresh foods more readily available in its Marine Mart stores, has gained traction and sales growth.
AAFES’s French and McCartin Switch VP Roles, Ward Named Senior Public Relations Manager

Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) Alan French and Jay McCartin executed a trade of vice president (VP) roles within the Logistics (LG) Directorate. French became the VP of Fulfillment Operations, while McCartin, who previously served in that position, took up French’s former role of vice president (VP) of Logistics Operations.

In other headquarters-based personnel shifts, Christopher J. Ward, long-time AAFES public relations specialist, was recently appointed senior public relations manager in the Exchange’s Strategic Planning and Partnership (PL) Directorate, succeeding Judd Anstey who was named executive assistant to the chief executive officer (CEO) (see E and C News 8/15).

At store level, Carrie Cammel, Steven Pena and Stanley Young all received new general manager (GM) assignments, at Wiesbaden, Germany; Yongsan/Camp Humphreys, Korea and Osan, Korea, respectively (see chart).

### AAFES PERSONNEL MOVES

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<th>FORMER POSITION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LOGISTICS (LG) DIRECTORATE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan French</td>
<td>Vice President, Fulfillment Operations</td>
<td>Vice President, Logistics Operations</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay McCartin</td>
<td>Vice President, Logistics Operations</td>
<td>Vice President, Fulfillment Operations</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David J. Young</td>
<td>Senior Logistics Analyst</td>
<td>Senior Transportation Analyst</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
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<td><strong>STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS (PL) DIRECTORATE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher J. Ward</td>
<td>Senior Public Relations Manager</td>
<td>Public Relations Specialist</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
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<td><strong>DISTRIBUTION CENTER (DC)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>James Alton</td>
<td>Distribution Center Manager II, (LG) West Coast DC</td>
<td>Distribution Center Manager (LG) Giessen, Germany DC</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Catineau</td>
<td>Distribution Center Manager III, (LG) Dan Daniel DC</td>
<td>Distribution Center Manager II, (LG) West Coast DC</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
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<td><strong>HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) DIRECTORATE</strong></td>
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<td>Miles Bowman</td>
<td>Chief, Employee Relations</td>
<td>Chief, HR Policy and Labor</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Keilholz</td>
<td>Chief, HR Policy and Labor</td>
<td>Chief, Employee Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick L. Oldenburgh</td>
<td>Chief, Employee Relations</td>
<td>Chief, Organization Systems and Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Randy Ramirez</td>
<td>Chief, Career Assignments</td>
<td>Chief, Employee Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arna Yarbough</td>
<td>Chief, Employee Relations</td>
<td>Chief, Career Assignments</td>
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<td><strong>REGIONAL AND STORE-LEVEL POSITIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin Kim</td>
<td>Region Food Program Specialist Pacrim Food Office, Pacific Region</td>
<td>Region Food Program Specialist Eastern Region Food Office</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Barriga</td>
<td>Region Retail Program Specialist Europe Region</td>
<td>Retail Operations Office</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Cammel</td>
<td>General Manager, Wiesbaden Exchange, Germany</td>
<td>General Manager, Wiesbaden Exchange, Germany</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Pena</td>
<td>General Manager, Capital Exchange, Yongsan and Camp Humphreys, Korea</td>
<td>General Manager, Osan Exchange, Korea</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley Young</td>
<td>General Manager, Osan Exchange, Korea</td>
<td>General Manager, Capital Exchange, Yongsan and Camp Humphreys, Korea</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
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Source: AAFES

DeCA Shopper Wins a Year of Free Groceries

Army Specialist Daquana Brown (at left in the photo) showed up at the commissary on Sept. 11, she expected to pick up VIP passes she had won to a NASCAR race for the following night at the Richmond International Raceway. She might have even expected to pick up a few items at the store’s customer appreciation case-lot sales event.

But she ended up receiving quite a lot more. Waiting for Brown was a ceremony, with representatives from co-sponsor Smithfield Foods’ Eckrich brand, the national non-profit organization Operation Homefront, Richard Petty Motorsports and DeCA.

In addition to the race passes, the single mother received Richard Petty Motorsports team shirts and ball caps for her and her children, 4-year-old Angelina, and 3-year-old Noah. The children sat in NASCAR driver Aric Almirola’s No. 43 Ford Fusion, and stood back and held their ears as a Richard Petty team rep fired it up and unleashed the roar of 750 un-muffled horses stampeding under the car’s hood.

But the capper to the special day was when Eckrich representative Jeff Dennison (at right in the photo) stepped up with a giant placard announcing that Brown had also won free groceries for a year at the commissary sponsored by Eckrich.

“I’m just really shocked,” Brown said. “I didn’t expect this, and I am thankful to Eckrich and Operation Homefront for everything they did today.”

The day’s events were part of a year-long effort to recognize servicemembers and their families, said Chuck Gitkin, senior vice president of marketing for Smithfield Foods.

“Richard Petty Motorsports has joined Eckrich for the third consecutive year to honor our military families,” Gitkin said. “We are proud to give back to the Brown family, and we hope they enjoy their year of free groceries and their time at the race.”

A gency officials thanked industry for its efforts on behalf of military families. “The support that our industry partners provide is outstanding and our customers truly benefit from this additional support,” said Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt. Stuart M. Allison, the senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director.
DeCA Commissary Reopens After Extensive Remodeling

After a year-long renovation — avoiding the expense of building a completely new store — the commissary here reopened on July 14. The extensive remodeling began last summer and completely renovated the store’s interior and exterior.

With the grand opening of the new store punctuated with events including sales promotions, product samplings and drawings for prizes, Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) officials and patrons were able to reflect on how much their commissary had changed during the past year.

NEW STORE INSIDE AND OUT

“Customers who remember the old Quonset hut building that housed the Camp Carroll Commissary will find it hard to believe what they see,” said Wayne Walk, DeCA’s Zone 36 manager in Korea.

Among these changes was a reapportioning of sales and storage space. To give the sales floor an additional 648 square feet to push the store size past the 8,000-square foot mark, a wall was removed and the sales floor was extended 8 feet into the warehouse. “Every corner of the store is virtually new. Very few signs of the former commissary remain. Bumping into the warehouse increased the sales floor by nearly 15 percent, giving us more space to stock groceries, and customers will have more elbow room in the aisles.”

Most of the store equipment was replaced, including all the chill and frozen cases that were upgraded to energy-efficient models. All interior finishes and signage were replaced with a colorful new décor that draws its hues from nature and complements the new larger produce department.

Outside, an entrance canopy and a covered walkway give customers protection from the elements, and a large freestanding exterior sign announces the store is open six days a week — open every day but Wednesday — and lists store hours.

Other work that was included in the renovation included replacing the roof; the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system; lighting; and electrical and fire suppression systems. The parking lot was also resurfaced and restriped.

IMPROVED ASSORTMENT

Store Director Solange Gates, who also helms the Daegu (Camp Walker), Korea, Commissary, said, “We’re proud to open this beautiful and modern, compact grocery store. The renovation brings a greater selection and variety to our customers, while offering a fresh, new feel to their shopping experience.”

Gates added that the Camp Carroll store — which now carries an assortment of 6,000 items — can fill customer orders for fresh fruit and vegetable trays, as well as grocery and meat items not regularly stocked at Camp Carroll but available at the larger Camp Walker Commissary. She said most orders can be filled within 48 hours.

During the year-long construction project, while the commissary was closed for renovation, Daegu ran a shuttle bus from Camp Carroll to the Walker commissary — a 40 minute trip each way — two days a week for the convenience of the 2,000 soldiers and family members who relied on the Camp Carroll Commissary for groceries. The bus service ended when the Camp Carroll store reopened.

Customer Brianna Dubois told Army Reporter Sgt. Kelly Wiebe that, “I’ve been waiting about a year … for it to finally open up … It’s very convenient to come over to Camp Carroll, instead of going all the way over to Camp Walker.”