

Commissaries to promote Warrior Care in November

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FORT LEE, Va. – There's no nobler mission than taking care of those who have suffered much to defend us all. That's the message the Defense Commissary Agency will help spread during November when organizations across the Department of Defense participate in Warrior Care Month.

The observance is designed to inform military members and their families about the many programs that are, and will be, available to assist Wounded Warriors.

In a memorandum announcing this initiative, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he wants to focus DoD's efforts in drawing attention to improvements for the support of Wounded Warriors. Through Warrior Care Month, he also intends to send "a clear message to our service members and the public that there is no higher priority for this Department than caring for those who have made personal sacrifices in the defense of our nation."

Throughout November, commissaries will display posters to help emphasize Wounded Warriors and the programs that exist for their care and support. Throughout the year, personnel from DeCA's human resources and equal employment opportunity offices have teamed to recruit Wounded Warriors along with civilians with targeted disabilities and disabled veterans with a 30 percent or more disability rating.

"Our men and women in uniform who have been wounded or injured deserve more than our spoken gratitude," said DeCA Director and Chief Executive Officer Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. "During Warrior Care Month, the Defense Commissary Agency will do its part to focus more attention on the resources to support our troops in their recovery and rehabilitation."

In addition to posters in commissaries to raise awareness, DeCA will use its Web site, <http://www.commissaries.com>, to highlight programs and initiatives being provided through the Warrior Care system and direct visitors to the agency's Wounded Warrior job opportunities.

To further help Wounded Warriors and their families with any questions, concerns or problems during their recovery process, DoD created <http://www.warriorcare.mil> to provide a lasting gateway for

resources and ongoing programs. The Web page includes a directory to find information throughout the Department of Defense, as well as Veterans Affairs, about the military health system and existing service programs. Over time, warriorcare.mil will grow as new programs are introduced.

The term "Wounded Warrior" applies to all wounded, ill and injured military members and veterans. Each military service has specific units to address the needs of these troops. The Marines and the Army, for example, have established Wounded Warrior Battalions and Warrior Transition Units, respectively, to assist their service members as they receive medical treatment.

Military OneSource also has created a 24-hour Wounded Warrior Resource Center telephone number, (1-800) 342-9647, and e-mail, wwrc@militaryonesource.com. The resource center is staffed with trained consultants who will direct callers to the military or federal agency that can best help them. The consultant is expected to maintain contact with the caller until their question or concern is resolved. The center is not designed to replace existing military units that currently support Wounded Warriors.

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