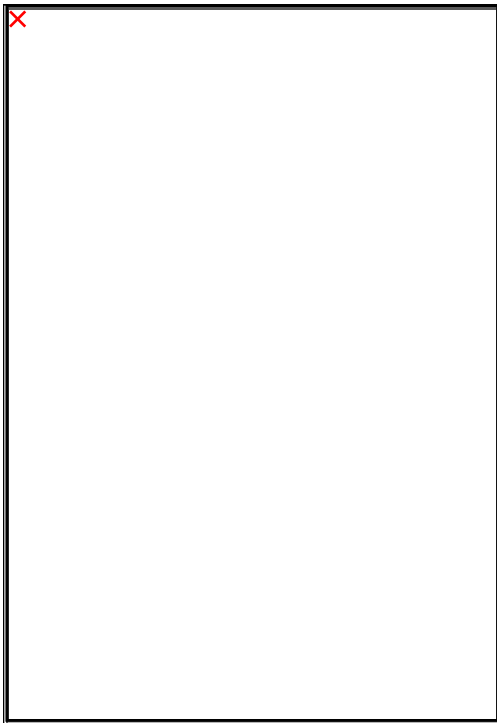


# After 33 years, Larry Hoover says Good-bye to Commissary

*Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos*

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**Larry Hoover, manager of the Carlisle Barracks Commissary , says good-bye to the commissary employees and community members during his retirement ceremony Dec. 15. Hoover has completed 33 years serving the Carlisle Barracks community through their commissary benefit.**

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos*

In 1978 Larry Hoover walked into the Carlisle Barracks commissary to start his new job as the new assistant commissary officer. Gas was \$0.63 a gallon and milk cost \$1.71 a gallon. As the year closes out, Larry Hoover will also close out this chapter of his life as he clocks out of the commissary for the last time.

“Larry Hoover is synonymous with Carlisle Barracks,” said Stephen Oldham, store administrator. “Part of the reason for this

is not only because of his longevity, but because of the way he treats his employees.”

“I don’t look at people who work for me as under me, but as part of a team working together to achieve a common goal,” said Hoover.

“I am going to miss the employees both at the store and at Carlisle Barracks the most,” he said.

“Hopefully I have made a difference in your life as you have made a difference in mine,” said Hoover to the commissary staff at his retirement ceremony.

“When I arrived we did everything manually,” said Hoover. “This was before computers were widely used. Everything had to be priced with an individual sticker and the cash registers were mechanical. Everything had to be inputted manually. There were no bar codes.”

“When I arrived, each service ran its own commissary,” said Hoover. “The Army ran it under the

Troop Support Agency. But in the early 1990s they consolidated to improve on service to the customer and the Defense Commissary Agency was established.”

Even though many things have changed during Hoover’s tenure, much has stayed the same. “The majority of our customers have always been retirees who come every two weeks to do their major shopping because of the savings they can get here,” he said. “They earned the savings they get shopping here through their service to the nation.”

In 2010, DeCA announced that the average family of four saves more than \$4,400 dollars a year by shopping regularly at the commissary. Military consumers save money by shopping at the commissary which sells at cost plus a 5 percent surcharge for operating costs.

“The surcharge covers electricity and overhead, but not salaries,” said Hoover.

As the store director, Hoover was responsible for supervising day-to-day operations in the store. This included making sure that the customers were able to find what they needed, reviewing inventory and sales records, dealing with vendors, and taking care of customer comments, among other things.

“When I was a kid, I didn’t dream of being a grocery manager,” said Hoover. “Like many people, I kind of fell into my career.

“When I was 18 I was working as a grocery manager at Giant. I was going to leave but they gave me a \$0.05 an hour raise to \$1.55 an hour so I stayed on.” Hoover stayed at Giant for a total of thirteen years before moving to the commissary at Carlisle Barracks.

“I didn’t originally plan to stay here this long,” said Hoover, about the commissary. “The original plan was to stay here until the kids finished school, but we were building a new store, and that was exciting.”

Seventeen years after the new store was built, DeCA planned a major renovation.

“We needed to renovate our refrigeration system,” said Hoover. “We still had the original refrigeration units that were put in when the store was built in 1994.”

This year the commissary completed a \$3.9 million upgrade, which included a décor package of wider aisles and brighter colors, along with new technology aimed at reducing costs and energy use.

“I was going to retire last year, but we were in the middle of our multi-million dollar renovation, so I stayed,” said Hoover.

“I was able to make a good life from the work.”

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