

Delivering the Taste of Home

By TERESA HEIN
SENIOR EDITOR

Proving every day that its motto of “We Go Where You Go” is far more than just words, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) currently supports 87 direct-run retail operations within the Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom (OND/OEF) areas of responsibility (AOR), according to Tracy McDonald, inventory management specialist III (supv.), who is also referred to as Sales Directorate (SD) Planning, Allocation and Replenishment (PAR) contingency support manager.

Thirty-three of these AAFES facilities are located in Afghanistan; 35 are in Iraq; 10 are in Kuwait; one is in Saudi Arabia; seven are in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE); and one is in Oman, he explained.

Furthermore, four of these locations in Afghanistan are currently Unit Run Tactical Field Exchanges (URTFE, formally referred to as Imprest Fund Locations) that are scheduled to be converted to AAFES Direct Operations. These four are Walton, Tarin Kowt, Blackhorse and Deh Dadi. In addition, there are already 26 URTFE locations in Afghanistan.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

To make sure AAFES meets the needs of troops, stores and the commands in the AOR as best it

can, McDonald said that it pays close attention to patron feedback. “Our deployed customers are our best source of information. AAFES managers within the AOR have a SD Inventory Specialist they communicate with and share input they receive from customers.

“The Inventory Specialist will then provide that information to the SD Contingency Support Team for coordination with the buying teams,” he continued. “The buying teams will review the request and apply the standard assortment business matrix to determine whether the item is acceptable for the assortment.”

BALANCING ACT

Adapting the exchange service’s operations during the Iraq drawdown has been a balancing act. “During the Iraq drawdown, we have balanced our focus between consistent customer service levels and refining our stock assortment/inventory levels to match the shrinking population,” McDonald noted. “Assortment refinement is prevalent within the hardlines and softlines categories. Consumables will remain an important category to our customer base through the end of the drawdown,” he pointed out, and “this will result in very little assortment refinement.

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– Inventory Management Specialist III (Supv.) Tracy McDonald



The chance to stock up on refreshments at an AAFES retail facility at Camp Sather in Iraq is a welcome break.

AAFES PHOTOS

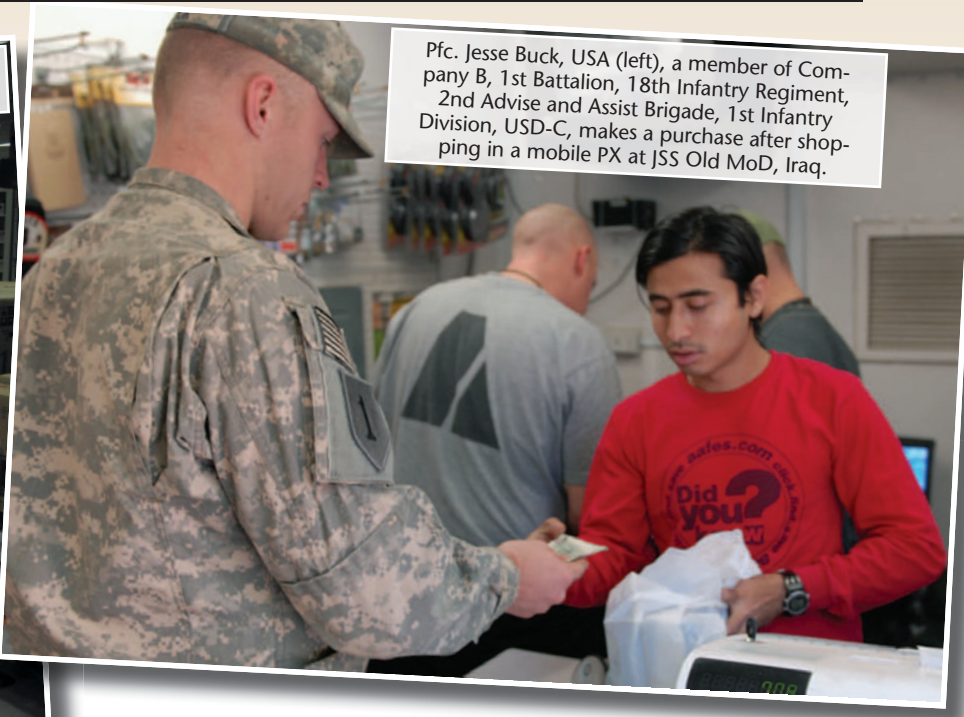


There are few places in the world where patrons appreciate the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) fulfillment of its mission and slogan “We Go Where You Go” more than at locations in the theater of combat. Troops show their appreciation of the Exchange. Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

AAFES – Exchanges Downrange



This happy AAFES customer is pleased to have the opportunity to shop at Camp Stryker in Iraq.



Pfc. Jesse Buck, USA (left), a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, USD-C, makes a purchase after shopping in a mobile PX at JSS Old MoD, Iraq.

AAFES PHOTO

“Due to the infrastructure challenges we face in Afghanistan, we are not planning assortment expansion at this time,” McDonald explained.

DOWNRANGE SALES

Exchange contingency sales through December 2010 were \$629.7 million, according to McDonald. This is a decrease of approximately 15.5 percent or \$115.8 million from 2009, he reported. “Fiscal 2011 sales will hinge on the speed of the Iraq drawdown but we estimate between \$400 million-\$500 million.”

TOP SELLERS

In the candy category, the downrange top 20 sellers by units in fiscal 2010 included five king-sized items. The list of best sellers was decisively led by Snickers King Size, with 449,495 units, followed by another Mars SKU with M&M’s Peanut King Size, at 302,188 units. In third place was Hershey’s Reese’s King Size. Next was another Mars item, Twix Caramel, King Size; and KitKat, King Size, a second Hershey’s SKU.

In the sixth slot was Mike and Ike, 6 oz., followed by Swedish Fish, 5-oz. red bag; Strawberry Twizzlers and another Snickers SKU. In tenth and 12th place were two Wrigley’s SKUs, Life Savers Gummies, five flavors, and Starburst Sours 6-oz. peg bag, separated by M&M’s Milk Chocolate, King Size.

These were followed by two other Mars SKUs, the 5.3-oz. peg bag of Peanut M&M’s and the 4.4-oz. peg bag of Snickers Mini, along with another Wrigley’s SKU, Skittles Original. Next were three Hershey’s SKUs: Jolly Rancher Megafruit Gummies; Reese’s Pieces, bag; and Reese’s Pieces, 7.4-oz. peg bag. Rounding out the category were the Jelly Belly 40-flavor and Tootsie Roll Child’s Play assortment.

SNACK TIME

Snack sales downrange, by units, were dominated in fiscal 2010 by Frito-Lay SKUs, which took nine of the top 20 slots.

Overall, the top snack best sellers list was led by Marshmallow Rice Krispies Squares, with 190,763 units. Close behind was Ritz Crackers, with 189,324 units, and Planters Pistachios, with 179,157.

Next were three Frito-Lay SKUs: Fritos Jalapeno Cheddar Cheese Dip, Crunchy Cheetos and Fritos Corn Chips Scoops. In seventh place was Fig Newtons, followed by Little Slim Jim and three more Frito-Lay SKUs: Tostitos Salsa Con Queso, Cheetos Flamin’ Hot and Ruffles Regular. In the 12th slot was a second Rice Krispies Treat, Cocoa, followed by another Ruffles SKU and the Giant Slim Jim meat stick. Wrapping up the snack category downrange were Act II Butter Lovers Popcorn; two more Frito-Lay SKUs, Tostitos Rounds Tortilla Chips and Smartfood Popcorn; Little Slim Jim Original; and Wheat Thins Crackers.

ENERGETIC SELLERS

Among energy drinks, the downrange top 20 sellers by units in fiscal 2010 were powered by two Monster SKUs: the 16-oz. energy drink and 16-oz. Lo-Carb. These were followed by two Red Bull SKUs, the 8.4-oz. can and the 16-oz. can, respectively. Next were two more Monster SKUs, Mega (24 oz.), and Khaos (16-oz.).

In seventh place by unit sales was Amp Energy Tall Boy, followed by Rockstar (16 oz.); Red Bull (8.4 oz., 4-pack); Monster M-80 (16 oz.); Starbucks Frappuccino Mocha (9.5 oz.); and Full Throttle. Two more Starbucks SKUs, Vanilla Frappuccino and Doubleshot, were served up in 13th and 14th place, followed by Monster Java Loca Mocha (15 oz.); and SoBe No Fear (16 oz.). And up next were four more Monster SKUs: Java Mean Bean (15 oz.); Hitman (3 oz.); Java Originale (15 oz.); and Lo-Carb (16 oz.).

—E and C NEWS

Spc. Justin Gray, USA, a foodservice specialist with 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, USD-C, shops at a mobile PX trailer at JSS Old MoD, Iraq.

PHOTOS BY CPL. DANIEL EDDY, USA, 196TH MPAD, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION, USD-C

