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## **American Veterans Association Steps Forward to Help Protect Commissary and Exchange Benefits**

**Washington, D.C. (February 1, 2013)** – One of America’s foremost veterans service organizations has stepped forward to help preserve commissary and exchange benefits for veterans, service members, and their families. *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits* announced today that American Veterans, also known as AMVETS, has become a Valued Associate of the Coalition.

AMVETS has joined a growing number of military and veterans organizations concerned by the ongoing threats to commissary and exchange benefits. Last year alone, there were five major attempts to undermine this “quality of life” benefit which saves service members, veterans, and their families \$4.5 billion annually and contributes billions of dollars to the military communities they support.

“Many of our American Veterans rely on their commissary and exchange benefits to make ends meet,” said Diane Zumatto, AMVETS National Legislative Director. “We are proud to join the Coalition’s efforts to protect these vital benefits, which are more important today than ever.”

“For half a century, AMVETS has been at the forefront of policy issues affecting our Nation’s veterans and their families,” said Patrick Nixon, President of *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits*. “We welcome their respected voice to the Coalition’s efforts to promote and protect the military resale benefit, which is too important of a benefit to lose,” said Nixon.

Millions of service members, veterans, and their families rely on commissaries and exchanges to stretch their household budgets. An average military family of four can save \$7,000 a year. In remote and overseas locations, it is often the only affordable shopping opportunity available. In metropolitan areas, where prices are consistently higher, commissaries and exchanges help keep prices affordable. For some junior enlisted military families and fixed income retirees, savings are the difference between making ends meet and filing for public assistance. Commissaries and exchanges are also the largest employer of military families in the world and the leading employer of veterans in the Nation, adding to the financial stability of the military community.

AMVETS is a volunteer-led organization whose members serve in more than 1,400 posts nationwide in support of veterans and their local communities. AMVETS is open to anyone who is currently serving, or who has honorably served, in the U.S. Armed Forces from World War II to the present, to include the

National Guard and Reserves. AMVETS has been at the forefront of public-policy related to national defense, services for homeless veterans, adequate funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, concurrent receipt of retirement pay and disability compensation by disabled military retirees, veterans employment and training, POW/MIA accountability, and flag protection.

Organizations, service members and their families, veterans, and concerned citizens who wish to learn more about *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits* or to join in our efforts, please visit [www.SaveOurBenefit.org](http://www.SaveOurBenefit.org).