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**United Voice for the National Guard Speaks Up for Critical Military Benefits**

**Washington, D.C. (February 7, 2013)** – The nation’s oldest military association lobbying solely for the benefit of the National Guard of the United States has added their respected voice to preserving and protecting commissary and exchange benefits for service members, veterans, and their families. *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits* announced today that the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) has become a Valued Associate of the Coalition.

NGAUS joins other military and veterans service organizations concerned by the ongoing attacks to commissary and exchange benefits. An increasing number of budget cutters in and outside of Congress want to eliminate the taxpayer subsidy, consolidate the commissary and exchange systems, raise prices, and close commissaries stateside. Some members of Congress even propose giving active duty service members a \$400 cash allowance in lieu of the benefit – retirees, Medal of Honor recipients, and survivors would get nothing.

“NGAUS has fought too hard to obtain Exchange and Commissary privileges for our serving and retired members to see them abandoned,” said Pete Duffy, NGAUS Acting Director of Legislation. “Our members are deeply honored with the ability to shop in a secure, peaceful, and respectful environment that offers consistent savings to a large deserving group. We hope that Congress and the Department of Defense will respect what this privilege means to all members of the military community,” said Duffy.

“We greatly appreciate the support of NGAUS and its members for these critical benefits,” said Patrick Nixon, President of *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits*. “The military resale system is too important of a benefit to lose. Last year it saved military families \$5.6 billion and contributed billions of dollars to the military communities they support through vital MWR programs,” added 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. No wonder military families consistently rank commissaries and exchanges as one of their most important non-pay benefits.

NGAUS represents over 470,000 men and women currently serving in the Army and Air National Guard, their families, employers, and all Guard retirees. NGAUS lobbies to promote national security and to improve and maintain a strong Army and Air National Guard. NGAUS also educates the public about the Guard's role and history through its partnership with the National Guard Educational Foundation.

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