



STORY RELEASE



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Rose Barracks tax center opens early for wounded warriors

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ROSE BARRACKS, Germany – With tax season in full swing, 2nd Cavalry Regiment Soldiers and Family members are now afforded the opportunity to file their taxes, for free, at the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate Law Center, Rose Barracks, Germany.

A ceremony was held to commemorate the opening of the law center's income-tax services, a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sponsored service, Jan. 30, at Rose Barracks.

The center opened two days prior to its normal operating schedule to allow Troops assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit to take advantage of services offered. This is the 2nd year the Rose Barracks Law Center held this event making it an annual tradition.

Allowing wounded Troops to get their taxes done before the majority of the was a way to show appreciation for sacrifices made during their service. Some Troops assigned to WTU become civilians while assigned to the unit, and already having their taxes done may allow for a smooth transition as they are provided with a refund before separation.

"It can be a huge benefit to the soldiers if they have a refund waiting for them," said Capt. Matthew Wilson, officer in charge of the Rose Barracks Tax Center and native of Heber Springs, Ark. "its one burden we can help the WTU take off the Soldier's plate."

Last year the law center processed over 2,500 income-tax returns generating over \$4 million in refunds and saved Soldiers, Family members and retirees over \$339,000 in income-tax fees.

Meeting the needs of Soldiers and Families is a priority of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenweohr. Soldiers assigned to WTU are afforded an advantage to have their taxes prepared first; this is one of those benefits.

"First and foremost, we want to make sure we are taking care of our Soldiers, civilians and Family members," said Col. James E. Saenz, Bavarian Military Community and USAG

Grafenwoehr commander. "It provides an opportunity for our wounded warriors who have a lot of stuff going on, as they are working through medical issues they may have, to have some time set aside where they can take care of this very important task as rapidly as possible. We got ourselves ready quicker to open two days early for the wounded warriors."

Col. Douglas A. Sims, commander of 2nd Cavalry Regiment, expressed why it is important wounded warriors were afforded the opportunity to take advantage of the tax services early.

"Wounded Warriors deserve to be first in... everything we do," said Sims. "Their personal sacrifices give them a special status wherever they are and for the rest of their lives."

Spc. Travis Romero, a Soldier with WTU and native of Springdale, Ark., and his wife, Claudia Romero, took advantage of the opportunity to file their tax returns on opening day.

"It's free and it doesn't take that long to get your taxes back," said Romero. "It's pretty convenient, the lady does everything for you, just have your documents."

"I think it's a wonderful thing that we are able to provide this service to the community," said Saenz. "I hope everyone comes out and takes advantage of it."