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Free tax services offered

By **CAPT. RAYMOND EDWARDS**
Chief, Legal Assistance

The Camp Shelby Office of the Command Judge Advocate will offer free income tax services for the 2012 tax year with the opening of its Income Tax Assistance Center on Monday, February 4, 2013. This service provides free personal income tax return preparation to all active duty personnel and retirees. Due to reduced staffing levels, priority will be given to mobilizing, demobilizing and CSJFTC Soldiers.

The Income Tax Assistance Center will operate out of the legal offices in Building 1485 on Lee Avenue and will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 0900 to 1400. Due to the nature of the assistance, the Income Tax Assistance Center will operate on an “appointment-only” basis and will take appointments through April 11, 2013. The 2013 Federal Income Tax filing deadline is Monday, April 15, 2013.

The Income Tax Assistance Center is a satellite program of the IRS VITA program and is supervised by a judge advocate and staffed by military members and contract employees trained to the standards required by the IRS for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The VITA program is controlled by the IRS therefore the individual filing the return is legally responsible for the return’s content and accuracy once the return is signed. If filing a married-filing-joint tax return electronically, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

VITA training includes instruction to address military-specific tax issues. However, tax assistance will be limited to the 2012 tax year and will not include preparation of certain tax schedules, e.g., Schedule E (rental property) and Schedule C (capital gains/losses).

Please dial 601-558-2190 to schedule an

appointment. Initial appointments will be scheduled for an hour and include a review of the client’s tax information. Typically, tax returns are projected to require 3-5 business days of processing time to be finalized. To properly complete each tax return, the following items must be presented at the initial appointment:

- Proof of identity (e.g. driver’s license, military ID)
- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse, and all dependants
- Birth dates for you, your spouse, and all dependants
- Current year tax package if you received one
- Wage and earning statement(s) (Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R) from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1098, 1099)
- A copy of last year’s federal and state returns if available
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit

NOTE: Military OneSource is once again offering a free, electronic tax filing service. If you are eligible under the Military OneSource program, you can complete, save, and file your 2011 federal and up to three state returns online free with the H&R Block At Home® tool.

To access this free version of H&R Block At Home®, you must start your return from the Military OneSource H&R Block At Home® link. Once you click the link you will be required to log in to Military OneSource. From the login page you will be directed to a site containing additional information on tax preparation, including the link to the Military OneSource free H&R Block At Home® service.

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Your 30-second commercial

By **BRYAN THARPE**
ACAP TSM

If you were fortunate enough to get into an elevator with a hiring official, could you successfully market yourself in the few seconds it takes for the ride up? If not, you need to prepare a commercial about yourself so you can do just that. Hiring officials are normally busy people with very little time to devote to interviewing people for jobs. They don’t want to be bored with long winded speeches about your life. They want to know quickly what you can do for their company’s bottom line. Also, this will most likely be your first impression on the hiring official. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. However, whether or not you are fortunate enough to get into an elevator with the hiring official, there are other times a 30-second commercial will come in handy for you in the job search process.

When you go for a job interview, many times the interviewer will begin by asking you to relax and tell him or her about yourself. Because you have done the necessary research on the company and have tailored your 30-second commercial to the company, you can use it here. However, if you haven’t done the research and don’t have a commercial, you could reveal more personal information than what you intended. For instance, it’s not lawful for an employer to ask you certain questions, such as your marital status, number of children, etc., but given the opportunity to respond to the question, you may reveal that information voluntarily without even realizing it. If so, it could play a part in the interviewer not se-



lecting you for the job.

Another time a 30-second commercial could benefit you is when you are networking. Networking is telling everyone you meet that you are looking for a job, and asking them for their help in finding one. Statistically speaking, this is the way most people find a job. A 30-second commercial is a succinct way to introduce yourself and at the same time market your abilities and experience. Not everyone is an extravert; therefore, an introduction to a new person can be awkward. But if you are armed with a 30-second commercial you can use it effectively on everyone.

Job Fairs or Career Expos are excellent places to use your 30-second commercial. Remember, there will be many employers gathered in one location to speak with you. There will be long lines and usually a crowded location. You may have to wait for a while before it’s your turn to speak with a recruiter, so listen to the people who go before you to see how they handle the introduction. Then, when it becomes your turn, walk right up, shake hands, and begin your 30-second commercial. Hopefully, you’ve tailored your 30-second commercial for each company representative that you plan to speak with. If so, the company representative can’t help but be impressed; but if not, it could bomb for you.

For more information on how to construct a great 30-second commercial, transitioning Soldiers and their adult Family Members should contact the Ft Rucker ACAP Center at (334) 255-2558 or log on to the ACAP website <https://www.-acap.army.mil> to make an appointment with an ACAP Counselor. The Camp Shelby, MS ACAP Office is 601-558-2298.



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