



Press Release

May 29, 2007

USCIS Commemorates Memorial Day by Welcoming Newest Americans Overseas *Oath of Citizenship Administered to U.S. Military in Afghanistan and Germany*

WASHINGTON — Thirty-four active duty military men and women from 24 nations took the *Oath of Allegiance* and became America’s newest citizens during two special all-military naturalization ceremonies held yesterday and today at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan and the U.S. Consulate in Munich, Germany. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Deputy Director Jonathan “Jock” Scharfen joined the new citizens in Munich to celebrate their accomplishment.

“This Memorial Day week we naturalized a very special group of men and women who, through their military service, have already pledged to defend with their lives the very liberties that they had yet to secure for themselves, said Scharfen, who is also a retired Marine Colonel. “It is altogether fitting that we now welcome them as our fellow United States citizens.”

Today’s ceremony in Munich included 15 active duty members of the military stationed in Germany. The naturalization ceremony yesterday at Bagram Air Field included 19 Soldiers mobilized to Afghanistan in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 34 new citizens are from the territory of American Samoa, and the countries of Antigua-Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Jamaica, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Sierra Leone, St. Vincent-Grenadines, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Because of recent changes to the law governing U.S. citizenship, USCIS can hold naturalization interviews and ceremonies overseas for members of the U.S. military serving on active duty. Since the inception of the program in 2004, USCIS has naturalized more than 3,600 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines during ceremonies in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom and in the Pacific aboard the USS Kitty Hawk.

USCIS welcomes nearly 700,000 citizens each year during naturalization ceremonies across the United States. That number includes more than 7,000 active-duty members of the armed forces who naturalize both in the United States and abroad through an expedited process stemming from their military service. Since September 11, 2001, USCIS has naturalized more than 32,000 military service members.

For more information about military naturalizations and immigration services and benefits, please call 1-800-375-5283 or visit www.uscis.gov.

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