



Office of Communications

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

News Release

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USCIS NATURALIZES 186 SERVICE MEMBERS IN IRAQ *Naturalization Ceremony Honors All Veterans*

BAGHDAD, Iraq – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Acting Director Jonathan Scharfen administered the *Oath of Allegiance* here today to 186 members of the military, who are serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“During my tenure with USCIS, I’ve had the opportunity to naturalize soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in far reaching corners of the world from Afghanistan to Djibouti,” said Scharfen. “However, our goal is to eliminate the need for conducting overseas military naturalization ceremonies by working closely with the Department of Defense to speed up the processing of military naturalization cases. We want to ensure that every eligible service member raises his or her right hand and recites the *Oath of Allegiance* before overseas deployment.”

USCIS has naturalized more than 43,000 members of the U.S. military since the beginning of the War on Terrorism, and more than 6,000 of those service members have become U.S. citizens in ceremonies overseas.

The naturalization ceremony, held at one of the former Presidential Palaces, was conducted to honor our nation’s Veterans. USCIS has designated November as “Veterans Appreciation Month” to honor all who have served and continue to serve in the U.S. armed forces. USCIS is conducting a number of military naturalization ceremonies and holding educational seminars at military installations for veterans, service members and their families. In addition, USCIS has initiated the Wounded Warrior Recruitment program to hire severely wounded or disabled military veterans. USCIS is working with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to insure these warriors learn about career opportunities with USCIS.

Additional information about immigration services and other programs for the military and their family is available by calling USCIS’ toll-free military help line, 1-877-CIS-4MIL (1-877-247-46445), or online at: <http://www.uscis.gov/military>.

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