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# News Release

## **DHS/DOD WELCOME AMERICA'S NEWEST CITIZENS: OVERSEAS**

*Ceremony Held at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq*

WASHINGTON, DC — One hundred, twenty-three active-duty service members from 52 countries took the Oath of Allegiance and became America's newest U.S. Citizens during a special overseas military naturalization ceremony on Friday, May 12, 2006 at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq. Joining the new citizens to celebrate the swearing in were U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Rome District Deputy Director Anne Corsano and Colonel Jannett Jackson, Commander, 40<sup>th</sup> Corps Support Group.

"Thousands of immigrant troops are making extraordinary sacrifices for America," said Corsano. "These men and women have pledged to defend with their lives liberties they have yet to secure for themselves. There is no more fitting way for a grateful Nation to show its appreciation than through granting qualified military service members U.S. citizenship as quickly as possible."

Because of recent changes to the law governing U.S. citizenship, USCIS can now conduct naturalization interviews and hold naturalizations ceremonies overseas for U.S. military service members. Last year, USCIS personnel naturalized 1,006 Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines during ceremonies in Afghanistan, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Spain, the United Kingdom and in the Pacific aboard the USS Kitty Hawk.

Each year, USCIS welcomes nearly 500,000 citizens during naturalization ceremonies across the United States. That number includes nearly 7,000 members of the armed forces who naturalize both in the U.S. and abroad through an expedited process stemming from their military service.

This is the fourth trip USCIS personnel have made to Southwest Asia to naturalize military service members serving in theater.

For more information regarding immigration services, please call 1-800-375-5283 or visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

– USCIS –

In March 1, 2003, USCIS became one of three legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.