



Office of Communications

**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

News Release

November 14, 2007

USCIS NATURALIZES 253 SERVICE MEMBERS IN IRAQ, KUWAIT AND AFGHANISTAN TO HONOR VETERANS PAST AND PRESENT

WASHINGTON – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) welcomed 253 new U.S. citizens during three special Veterans Day [naturalization ceremonies](#) on Nov. 11 and 12 in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan to honor the sacrifices of all veterans, past and present.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom hail from the 52 nations of: American Samoa, Argentina, Barbados, Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Montserrat, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Senegal, South Korea, St. Lucia, St. Vincent-Grenadines, Sudan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Yemen.

“Tens of thousands of immigrant troops have made and are making extraordinary sacrifices for their adopted nation. These patriots no longer have to wait until they return stateside to naturalize and become citizens of the nation they’re fighting for,” USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez remarked. “We honor the legacy of these heroes and express our deepest appreciation to our veterans – the men and women who stepped forward in times of need and triumphed over brutality, liberated millions, and brought freedom to the oppressed.”

"I can't think of people who are more deserving of citizenship than those who are fighting to defend the country even before they are citizens," said Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "They understand that freedoms don't come free and they are willing to make sacrifices even before they reap the benefits of citizenship."

All immigrants who have served honorably on active duty in the [U.S. armed forces](#) or as a member of the selected ready reserve on or after September 11, 2001 are eligible to file for immediate citizenship under the special wartime provisions in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

In October 2004, USCIS conducted the first overseas military naturalization ceremony since the Korean War. During this time and since, USCIS has naturalized more than 4,400 members of the armed forces during overseas all-military ceremonies.