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# Our New Citizens of the Armed Forces Overseas

By Henry B. Hazard

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IN December I returned to the United States after an absence of about ten months. During that period, in my capacity as designated representative of the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, I conferred American citizenship on 3,678 aliens serving with our armed forces who represented 66 countries. In connection with this assignment, it was necessary to travel some 40,000 miles visiting four continents, and crossing and recrossing both the Arctic Circle and the Equator.

In the past it was necessary that the foreign-born come to this country for permanent residence in order to become United States citizens. Under the exigencies of World War II, however, noncitizens serving honorably in our armed forces are required merely to have been lawfully admitted to the United States. They may have come only for temporary stay. Furthermore, if in line of duty they have proceeded beyond the jurisdiction of the courts in continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, they are entitled to naturalization on foreign soil under the conditions set forth in section 702 of the Second War Powers Act of 1942.<sup>1</sup>

It is no longer a secret that soldiers and sailors of the United States forces are scattered pretty well throughout many parts of the world. Their exact numbers and locations are, of course, military matters which ought not to be and cannot be revealed, but that there are considerable numbers of them distributed about the outposts of North America, the Caribbean area, South America, Iceland, Great Britain, North Africa, Sicily, the mainland of Italy, Egypt, and certain portions of Asia, is a matter of public knowledge. Designated representatives of the Immigration and Naturalization Service chosen by the Commissioner of

that Service have performed the naturalization function in the areas described.<sup>2</sup>

Those familiar with the process attending the induction of new citizens in the United States will be struck with the unorthodox surroundings and circumstances in and under which our soldiers and sailors are becoming American citizens abroad. Whether the naturalization over which I presided consisted of a single applicant being inducted into citizenship or reached hundreds at the same station, I saw to it that as far as possible proceedings were conducted with as much dignity as though they were being heard before the judge of a court in this country. But the setting was widely different. The work was done in Nissen huts, amid howling blizzards, on lurching ships on the high seas, on hospital sickbeds, in cork forests and on the blazing deserts.

I have naturalized a contingent of Navy men in a remote fjord in Iceland, a Netherlander in my tiny cabin on a British ship in Icelandic waters, and an applicant quarantined in a hut with a number of his comrades on account of German measles. I recall an occasion where the applicant and his witnesses at the time of his induction were wearing gas masks because of an air alarm. On the mainland of Italy naturalization hearings had to be shifted from the headquarters offices to subterranean air shelters because of a similar alarm. It may be of interest, by the way, that the first person I naturalized in Sicily proved to be a Sicilian, while the last applicant I naturalized before leaving Africa was a Negro.

In general, those who have first-hand knowledge of them—the naturalization representative, their officers and comrades—have been deeply impressed by the qualities of these new citizens. We have no fears as to their

<sup>1</sup> "Naturalization of Aliens in our Armed Forces," *Monthly Review*, September 1943, pp. 6-11; "Naturalization of Non-citizens Serving Abroad With our Armed Forces," *Monthly Review*, November 1943, pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Designated representatives of the Service include: T. B. Shoemaker, George W. Tyler, David Scoles, Henry B. Hazard, Albert E. Reitzel, Charles W. Donoghue, Felix W. Graham and Howard E. Norwood.

future effect upon us and our country but believe that they will fulfill the high duties of citizenship in equal degree with those of their native-born military associates. Among those I naturalized, many had already rendered outstanding service. One applicant in England, for instance, tail gunner in a well-known fighting squadron and a son of a German father and a Filipino mother, had shot down four German planes over or near France within the period of three months and had been awarded four decorations. Incidentally, he had been wounded several times. In a number of cases, wounds and other injuries received in battle served as the "visible distinctive marks" required in connection with the personal description of the applicant.

Though this overseas assignment will remain one of my most cherished memories, there are incidents connected with it which I still recall with some trepidation. The night, for instance, in North Africa when the radio of the plane in which I was traveling went out of commission and we got lost. After flying in a zig-zag pattern for several hours in search of an airport that seemed to have disappeared, the pilot rolled to a perfect landing on an unlighted

and secret field, much to the surprise of the air officers in charge. Or the time I dove into a bay for a swim and struck my head upon a hard object which proved to be a bomb, apparently unexploded, which was swaying lazily to and fro on the sandy bottom. I shall also always recall my feeling of utter helplessness when during a severe storm in Iceland I was blown off a road and part way across a field, until caught by some soldiers who had braced themselves for the impact.

In spite of mishaps such as these, this official journey has been a wonderful experience. I shall always remember the hearty cooperation extended through me to the Service by the various military chiefs, and the numerous naturalization ceremonies made impressive through programs participated in by the commanding officers, their staffs, and their troops.<sup>1</sup> Above all, I shall remember the fine people, men and women—for there were eighteen nurses—on whom I was privileged to confer American citizenship and their very deep appreciation and gratitude at having achieved that goal.

<sup>1</sup> See *Monthly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 7, page 6.

## How Many Refugees Are There in the United States?

Much misunderstanding has arisen as a result of testimony before a Congressional Committee which was considering the number of refugees admitted into the United States during the past decade from European countries which are now Axis occupied or dominated. The misunderstanding has been somewhat dissipated by subsequent explanation and correction. As is generally known, the State Department concerns itself with records of visas authorized and issued; records of persons admitted into the United States are kept by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Although the immigration laws make no distinction between refugees and other immigrants and, therefore, no exact statistical information on the subject is available, the following table is useful in clarifying the situation.

The table shows the number of immigrant and nonimmigrant aliens who were admitted into the United States between July 1, 1933, and June 30, 1943, from European countries which are now Axis occupied or Axis dominated. Two factors should be considered in interpreting the statistics: (1) a number of the countries shown on the list could not be considered to have been Axis-occupied or dominated until 1940; (2) a large majority of the nonimmigrants admitted during the period covered by the table have now left the United States. In this connection, it may be of interest to note that during the period in question—July 1, 1933, to June 30, 1943—emigration from the United States to Axis-occupied or dominated countries totaled 221,784—emigrant aliens, 66,683 and nonemigrant aliens, 155,101.