

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

IMMIGRATION *and*
NATURALIZATION
SERVICE

Monthly Review

MARCH 1945

Vol. II No. 9

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UGO CARUSI

Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization

JERRE MANGIONE

Editor, Monthly Review

On matters pertaining
to subscriptions, please
write *Monthly Review*,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.
Other correspondence
should be sent to
Franklin Trust Build-
ing, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

My Naturalization Work in the Pacific War Theater

By Henry B. Hazard *

ONCE again I have come back to the United States, this time after an absence of eleven months.¹ As Designated Representative of the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, during that period I conferred American citizenship administratively upon 2,896 non-citizens of the armed forces of the United States, representing 80 different countries. This assignment necessitated travel of more than 50,000 miles, principally by air, during which I visited many islands of the Pacific, and the Australian continent, New Zealand, and New Guinea. Crossing the Equator and the International Date Line (180th meridian) became almost commonplace. During the two trips of 1943 and 1944-45, I crossed the Arctic Circle and the International Date Line each four times, the Equator six times.

Practically all of this naturalization work in the Pacific was completed prior to the amendment of sections 701 and 702 of the Second War Powers Act of 1942, by the statute of December 22, 1944.² As a result of this amendment, members of our armed forces who entered the United States, including its Territories and possessions, prior to September 1, 1943, are not required to establish lawful admission into the United States, if serving honorably in such forces beyond the continental limits of the United States, or have served there.

While a considerable number of non-citizens were naturalized on the continent of Australia, 1,371, or nearly half of the total, became citizens in the wilds of New Guinea. Other naturalizations were scattered across the breadth and length of the Pacific from the Palau Islands to Christmas Island, and from Saipan and Tinian to the Solomons and the New Hebrides.

Whether the group of applicants in the command numbered in the hundreds, as was the case at Oro Bay, New Guinea, where 547 were naturalized, or consisted of a lone soldier ma-

rooned on a tiny bit of coral, as at Canton or Christmas Island, naturalization facilities were gladly made available to them. In order to go to the one applicant on Canton Island, 1,300 miles distant from Tarawa where I happened to be at the time, I did not hesitate to fly 3,000 miles by way of Guadalcanal in order to reach him by the only available means of transportation.

At Maffin Bay, where our men had just begun to make inroads into the Japanese-held shore of Dutch New Guinea, I naturalized a group of men at a spot that was three hundred yards from the area of combat. It was not at all unusual to confer citizenship on men fresh from the battlefields or on men who were about to go into battle. The time factor was always important, for the distances between islands are tremendous, and transportation was not always available when it was needed. Sometimes the amount of time I had would be suddenly curtailed by the urgency of catching a plane. When that happened, applicants and their witnesses would be notified to appear at the airport. At a number of places, naturalization took place while the plane was refueling, and the oath of allegiance was administered from the doorway of the plane to applicants standing on the air strip.

The first person I naturalized was a Negro from the British West Indies, and the last one was a native of England. While 80 countries of birth were represented, more than 80 percent of the 2,896 new citizens were from 10 countries of birth, in this order: Philippine Islands, 802; Canada, 526; Mexico, 418; Germany, 195; Italy, 158; Poland, 90; Scotland, 66; England, 53; Irish Free State, 51; and Russia, 43.

Naturally, there would be cases of unusual interest in such a large group. For instance,

* Dr. Hazard is Director of Research and Educational Services, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

¹ *Monthly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 1943), pp. 6-11; Vol. 1, No. 5 (November 1943), pp. 8-9; Vol. 1, No. 8 (February 1944), pp. 2-3.

² Public Law 531—78th Congress; Chapter 662-2d Sess.; approved December 22, 1944.

a native of French Senegal, Africa, a Negro, naturalized on Bougainville in the Solomons, had served in the French Foreign Legion for several years. In the first World War he had been with the Allied forces in Syria, and bore long, deep scars on his abdomen from a German bayonet wound. Many others had received battle wounds in the Pacific, or had participated in active combat.

As in other theaters of war, the three outstanding facts revealed by the naturalizations of members of our armed forces were the high recommendations by their commanding officers of these men and women, the service records of courage or wounds in combat of many of them, and their deep emotion and gratitude upon receiving this high privilege.

Among the natural inconveniences of such a journey were the profusion of ants in and out of one's clothing and bedding throughout the Pacific area, a scourge of centipedes on the New Georgia Islands, salamanders and formidable-sized rats which insisted on becoming unwanted bedfellows, and the scarcity in many places of water for drinking and bathing.

One of the unexpected situations on islands supposedly inhabited by head hunters was the friendliness and kindness of the natives, whether Micronesians, Melanesians, or Polynesians. One instance of their attitude is striking. A graves' registration officer in the Gilbert Islands had occasion to go to another island which had not been visited for several months, in order to learn the condition of the military cemetery. He had anticipated con-

siderable deterioration during the interim. One can imagine his surprise and delight when he found that the graves had been beautifully kept, with not a stray leaf on them, and that fresh flowers had been placed upon them periodically by the considerate natives.

Valor knows neither nationality, race, nor creed. A few short weeks ago I stood with bared head and moist eyes in a military cemetery on bloody Tarawa—a tiny bit of coral in the Gilbert Islands of the lonely Pacific. Immaculately kept, the small mounds of glistening sand were marked by gleaming white crosses. Sympathetic hands tenderly had planted borders of beautiful white and pink phlox and green plants which were nodding in the warm breeze. The plot was enclosed by a fence of Navy chains swinging between polished posts. The inscription "Unknown" appeared upon a number of the markers. On each of the others with the man's identification tag, was the date he fell—during that historic November of 1943 when hundreds of our men fell—his rank, and his name. And many of those names reflected family origins far beyond the shores of America. On a tablet at the entrance were these poignant words:

*So there let them rest
On their sun-scorched atoll,
The wind for their watcher,
The waves for their shroud;
Where palm and pandanus
Shall whisper forever
A requiem fitting
For heroes so proud.*

Aliens in the Labor Market, 1940

By Edward P. Hutchinson*

ACCORDING to census enumeration, the number of foreign-born in the United States diminished from approximately 14,200,000 in 1930 to 11,600,000 in 1940. Accompanying this decrease of numbers was a marked aging of the foreign-born, their median age increasing from 44 in 1930 to 51 in

1940, almost double that of the native white population. Nevertheless, the foreign-born are still an important element on the labor market. As recently as 1940 over 9,000,000 of the foreign-born were of employable age (taken as

* Dr. Hutchinson is Supervisor of General Research, Immigration and Naturalization Service.