



November 12, 2004

# Press Release

## U.S.S. MIDWAY HOSTS ALL-MILITARY NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

**San Diego, California** – With the sun shining brightly over San Diego Harbor and the Naval Air Station North Island Color Guard and a host of patriot songs filling the air, almost 80 men and women in crisp dress uniform from 25 countries took the Oath of Allegiance to their adopted country on November 11. Family, friends, colleagues, press and tourists gathered up on the flight deck of the former U.S.S. Midway in this seaside military town to join with the U.S. military personnel in this special Veterans Day naturalization ceremony.

Joining the new citizens to celebrate the swearing in were presiding Federal District Judge William Q. Hayes, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District Director Debra Rogers, Captain Townsend G. Alexander, USN, Commanding Officer, Naval Base, Coronado, Scott McGough, Marketing Director, San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum aboard the U.S.S. Midway and Vicki Alba, Citizenship Coordinator, Naval Base, Coronado.

"Thousands of immigrant troops are making sacrifices each day for this country. Today, we naturalized individuals who have served in our military for as many as 13 years, and have already pledged to defend liberties they themselves did not fully have," said Rogers. "Welcoming new citizens is one of the most important things we do as a nation -- for all people -- but it is a particular privilege to welcome those who serve our nation and put their lives on the line to protect the ideals and principles of freedom."

The new Americans, including Sailors, Marines and one member of the U.S. Coast Guard, hail from the following 25 countries: Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Kampuchea, Liberia, Laos, Mexico, Peoples Rep of China, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, St. Kitt West Indies, Syria, Thailand, The Gambia, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Western Samoa.

Included in this group of new citizens were the first nine service members to benefit from a recent filing fee waiver extended to military personnel as of October 1.

– USCIS –

On 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 the integrity of our nation's security.