



November 3, 2004

Press Release

QUNATICO HOSTS ALL-MILITARY NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

Washington, DC – Thirty-nine active-duty service members representing all five branches of the U.S. military became citizens this morning during a special military naturalization ceremony held on Marine Corps Base Quantico. Joining the new citizens to celebrate the swearing in were U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Deputy Director Michael Petrucelli and Brigadier General William Cato, Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command.

“As the Deputy at USCIS, I have had the privilege of attending numerous naturalization ceremonies. While each is special in it’s own way, military ceremonies are extra significant,” said Deputy Director Petrucelli. “Today, we naturalized men and women who had pledged to die in defense of liberties they had yet to receive. Thousands of immigrant troops are making extraordinary sacrifices for America. There is no more fitting way for a grateful nation to demonstrate its appreciation than through expedited citizenship.”

The new Americans hail from the following 27 countries: Afghanistan, Barbados, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Korea, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, and United Kingdom.

Under an Executive Order signed by President Bush in July 2002, legal permanent residents actively serving in the U.S. military, and legal permanent residents who were on active duty on September 11, 2001 or after, and honorably discharged, are immediately eligible to apply for naturalization. The President is authorized to waive the normal residency requirements for naturalization during specified periods of military hostilities. The July 2002 Executive Order designates the War on Terrorism, including the current conflict in Iraq, is such a period. More than 19,000 military personnel have become U.S. citizens since the Executive Order was enacted.



Service members from all five branches of the United States Military became citizens during a special naturalization ceremony held at Marine Corps Base Quantico (Va.) on November 3, 2004.