



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

USCIS Naturalizes More Members of U.S. Military in South Korea than in Any Year since 2004

SEOUL, South Korea - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today naturalized 55 noncitizen members of the U.S. military and 17 military spouses at the Yongsan U.S. Army Garrison here. The special ceremony marked a milestone for USCIS, with 196 members of the military becoming U.S. citizens in the Republic of Korea this year, more than in any other year since the inception of the overseas naturalization program in 2004.

Before administering the Oath of Allegiance, USCIS Bangkok District Director Robert Looney remarked that this achievement is a result of USCIS's willingness to travel to locations throughout South Korea and arrange for members of the military community to become citizens. Since 2004, USCIS has naturalized 961 members of the U.S. military and 134 military spouses in the Republic of Korea.

During her keynote remarks, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Kathleen Stephens addressed the new citizens. "You are from different countries and different backgrounds, but you are united by your act of service that has enabled you to become a U.S. citizen," she said. "You have chosen not just to live in America, but to serve and protect the United States."

The ambassador also cited the stories of several citizenship candidates, including one soldier who was a student in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. She said, "That day became not only part of our national history, but also part of his personal history and was part of the reason he joined the U.S. Army."

Today also marked an achievement for a family originally from Nigeria: the spouse became the third member of his family to become a U.S. citizen in Korea. He followed in the path of his wife, who naturalized in Korea last year through her service in the Army, and their daughter, who naturalized as a military dependent child.

The new citizens were born in 30 counties: Albania, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Dominican Republic, Dominica, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Palau, the Philippines, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

Since September 2001, USCIS has naturalized more than 63,000 members of the military in ceremonies across the United States and in 20 countries abroad. USCIS has also naturalized more than 820 military spouses during ceremonies in 14 countries since 2008.

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