



News Release

June 29, 2009

USCIS Naturalizes 84 Members of U.S. Military in Kuwait Ceremony *41 Soldiers from American Samoa Include Brothers and Cousins*

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait –An impromptu island theme filled the chapel here on June 27, 2009, when 84 Soldiers and Sailors recited the *Oath of Allegiance* and became the newest citizens of the United States. This was the largest naturalization ceremony held in Kuwait to date.

Before the ceremony started, Army Spec. Tanu Liulamaga Tanu led the 41 citizenship candidates from American Samoa in traditional island songs.

“Two of my staff from Rome volunteered to travel to Kuwait to process the applications and conduct the citizenship tests,” said Lori Pietropaoli, USCIS Deputy District Director for Rome. “It was a memorable moment for all of us to hear them sing, and an even greater moment after the ceremony to hear them cheer after receiving their citizenship certificates.”

Brothers Dave and Douglas Satele and their cousin Ignosy Faafoi Toeava now share more than family bonds; they are celebrating their citizenship with 38 fellow American Samoans who serve in the 100th Infantry Battalion of the Army Reserve.

Another family connection occurred for Spec. Thomas Jefferson Leimbach, who was fortunate that his sister, 1stLt. Christine Leimbach, was a witness as he became a U.S. citizen. 1stLt. Leimbach, a U.S. citizen by birth, and her brother are originally from the Philippines and are now serving with the Army National Guard in Hawaii. Their unit is currently deployed to Kuwait.

In addition to American Samoa, the new citizens were born in the following 13 countries: Canada, Dominica, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Philippines, Romania, Ukraine, and Trinidad & Tobago.

Since September 2001, USCIS officials have naturalized more than 49,000 members of the U.S. armed forces, including 492 in Kuwait. For more information about USCIS’ special services for the military and their families, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/military>.

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