



Office of Communications

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

News Release

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USCIS Recognizes Important Contributions of U.S. Military

Promotes Naturalization of Servicemembers During National Military Appreciation Month

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama kicked off National Military Appreciation Month on May 1 by hosting a special all-military naturalization ceremony for 25 servicemembers at the White House.

The White House ceremony, and other military naturalization ceremonies that are held every day around the country and overseas, not only recognize the commitment and contributions made by immigrant members of the U.S. armed forces, but also demonstrate the strength of the partnership of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Department of Defense and all branches of the military. During fiscal year 2008, that partnership contributed to USCIS naturalizing 7,865 members of the military, a 33 percent increase from the previous year.

“Members of the military represent the best of this nation; their service in our armed forces continues to enrich and strengthen the fabric of American life,” said USCIS Acting Deputy Director Mike Aytes. “As a nation of immigrants, we celebrate their choice of citizenship.”

USCIS works with the Department of Defense to promote the successful naturalization of non-citizen members of the military and their families. While May provides a focus on the contributions of our nation’s military, USCIS demonstrates its unwavering commitment to the military everyday by processing applications and conducting naturalization ceremonies for servicemembers.

Specialists across USCIS, who process applications for naturalization from the military, consider it a privilege and an honor, and do all that they can to ensure that applications are processed and completed as expeditiously as possible. In April, USCIS doubled the number of military naturalizations completed in March, and launched a concerted effort to make May the most successful military naturalization month in the agency’s history.

Specially trained customer service specialists at USCIS’ Nebraska Service Center staff the toll-free Military Help Line, 1-877-CIS-4MIL, (1-877-247-4645). They assist service members, their families, attorneys and others with military-specific naturalization and immigration issues.

Naturalization information for members of the military and their families is available on USCIS’ military Web site, www.uscis.gov/military.

Photo: http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/wh_natz_ceremony_14may09.jpg

Caption: President Obama and Secretary Napolitano with the new citizens as they take the Oath of Allegiance. The President later welcomed the new citizens, saying, "You all have your own stories of how you came to this country. You all have your own personal reasons for why you joined the military. But in the service that you render, in the sacrifices that each of you have made and will continue to make, and the commitment you've shown to your adopted nation, you're part of a larger story, America's story."