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May 22, 2013-- New U.S. citizens hailing from around the world raised their hands and took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States on the historic grounds of Carlisle Barracks today. The 17 new citizens came to the United States from Bangladesh, Columbia, Croatia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Liberia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.



Pennsylvania Army National Guard Pvt. Edson Wright takes the Oath of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony at the Army Heritage and Education Ceremony May 22. Wright became a citizen with 16 others during the ceremony.

Airman Ramon Garcia Flores and Army Pvt. Edson Wright took the Oath of Allegiance, through a program linking military service and citizenship. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services expedites applications and the naturalization process

for members of the U.S. armed forces. Fiscal year 2012 produced nearly 8,700 new citizens serving in the military.

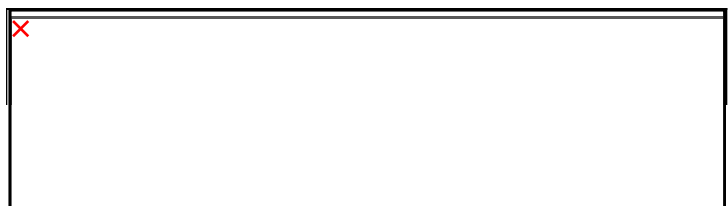
Army War College student **Col. Thomas Nguyen**, a U.S. naturalized citizen originally from Vietnam, shared his thoughts on citizenship in the public celebration.

"Welcome, welcome, welcome," said Nguyen, before telling his story. Saigon was ready to fall when 7-year-old Nguyen, his mom and sister headed to the U.S. Embassy with three suitcases in hand. Eight thousand miles later, they found refuge and opportunity - not only for a better life but for life, he said. At 18, in Baltimore, he took the oath of citizenship.

"I was overcome with emotion on the day I took my oath," he said.

The new U.S. citizens nodded with understanding about one of Nguyen's memories. "I remember saying to myself, hey self, from this day forth, you no longer have to carry that green card in your back pocket," he said.

Now married, with three kids and a successful Army career, he celebrated "the opportunity to be part of the greatest nation on earth." His story is not an anomaly but the story of the American dream, said Nguyen.



Two Immigrants attend a naturalization ceremony at the Army Heritage and Education Center May 22. In all, the 17 new U.S. citizens hailed from Bangladesh, Columbia, Croatia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Liberia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.

USCIS District Director **Tony Bryson** administered the Oath of Allegiance and offered remarks.

I can only imagine how difficult your journey has been, said Bryson, who urged them to take advantage of your new rights and privileges.

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