

Helpful Tips for Soldiers Applying for Citizenship Based on Military Service

by MAJ James D. Whitaker

There are many “great Americans” who are citizens of other countries and are proudly serving in the United States Armed Forces. Many of them wish to become citizens of the U.S. but are confused or intimidated by a naturalization process that is as challenging as any confidence course in the military. However, just like the most intimidating obstacles, the naturalization process can be navigated using good soldiering skills and attention to fine detail. The following is a list of tips to help Soldiers navigate the naturalization process:

1. ***GATHER ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS.*** This will include: (1) A copy of the Soldier’s lawful permanent resident card containing his or her alien number. If a copy is not available, he or she may obtain the alien number from AKO under the “My Personnel”; (2) A copy of the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400, located at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/N-400.pdf>; (3) Three copies of the request for Certification of Military or Naval Service, Form N-426, located at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/N-426.pdf>; (4) Two copies of the Biographic Information Form G-325B, located at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-325b.pdf>; (5) A list of all employers for the last five years; (6) If the Soldier is married, information relating to the spouse’s citizenship and/or immigration status to include the spouse’s alien number or naturalization number, if applicable, and domicile; (7) If the Soldier has any children, information relating to the children’s citizenship and/or immigration status to include the children’s alien number or naturalization number, if applicable, and domicile; (8) Two standard passport style photos; (9) Two sets of fingerprints on Fingerprint Form FD258 (These may be obtained by visiting an installation’s PMO or a U.S. civilian law enforcement agency. A fee may be required); and (10) All male Soldiers must have their selective service registration number which may be obtained from visiting www.sss.gov. If a male Soldier has not registered, he must do so and obtain a number before applying for naturalization.

2. ***FILL OUT EACH FORM COMPLETELY.*** First and foremost, use a mailing address on Form N-400 where the Soldier knows that he or she will be guaranteed to get his or her mail. It may be necessary to use the “Care of” portion of the form to list a relative whom the Soldier trusts to receive his or her mail. The use of temporary or short-term addresses accounts for the vast majority of all delays. Second, when completing the forms, if a question does not apply to the Soldier then fill in the blank with “Not Applicable” or “N/A”. If the Soldier answers yes to any question it may be necessary to attach an additional sheet containing an explanation as to why the Soldier answered the way he or she did. Be sure to place the Soldier’s alien number on the top of each page where required to do so. Where dates are required it is recommended that a civilian format be used and that the format remain consistent throughout the form. Form N-426 is completed in triplicate. When completing Form N-426, Soldiers will report all active duty service time on the upper half of the form and all Reserve/National Guard service time on the lower half of the form if applicable. Soldiers will need to contact their Personnel Specialist, Battalion S-1, or Personnel Services Battalion in order to have page two of Form N-426 completed. A seal or stamp is preferred but not required. Soldiers must insure that the Personnel Section indicates on page two of the N-426 that the Soldier is SERVING HONORABLY. When completing the G-325B, Soldiers need to complete the first page in duplicate. Completion of the second page is not required.

3. ***GET FINGERPRINTED.*** Soldiers are required to submit two FD258 fingerprint cards in support of their application. These cards are BLUE in color. If the person fingerprinting the Soldier tries to use a PINK or RED card ask them to use the BLUE card. Citizenship and Immigration Services will reject the PINK and RED cards. Soldiers may be fingerprinted

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4. **OBTAIN PASSPORT PHOTOS.** Soldiers will need to obtain two passport photos. These may be obtained from a civilian photo facility or utilizing a digital camera with a color printer and photo paper. The photo must be a full frontal face position with a plain generic background. No designs or bright colors. If the Soldier is printing the photos his or herself, the finished product must be 2 inches by 2 inches. The bottom of the photo should cut off at the mid chest line and the top of the photo cannot cut off any portion of the Soldier's head.

5. **DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY.** Instead, write in BIG BOLD LETTERS across the top of each page of the application "MILITARY N-400". This is important because, without such an annotation, the Soldier's application may be rejected for not containing the necessary fee.

6. **MAIL THE COMPLETED APPLICATION WITH ALL THE REQUIRED MATERIALS TO:**

*Nebraska Service Center
P.O. Box 87426
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-7426*

7. **UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS.** If for any reason the mailing address that the Soldier used on Form N-400 changes, the Soldier needs to inform Citizenship and Immigration Services immediately. Remember, incorrect addresses account for the vast majority of delays. Soldiers who deploy overseas or are stationed overseas and wish to complete the process before returning to the U.S. need to notify Citizenship and Immigration Services as soon as possible of their overseas duty location.

8. **SHOW UP FOR THE INTERVIEW.** When the Soldier is scheduled for an interview, he or she must show up at the scheduled time or the application will be deemed abandoned. If for any reason the Soldier cannot make the interview, the Soldier must call the number on the appointment letter in order to reschedule. Commanders need to keep in mind that the National Defense Authorization Act of 2004 placed a high priority on naturalization and leave should be liberally granted for Soldiers to become naturalized if the mission permits.

9. **RESPOND TO ALL REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.** If Citizenship and Immigration Services sends a request for more information, Soldiers must comply with the request or else the application will be deemed abandoned. If Soldiers are requested to submit any court documents, Soldiers must obtain the documents from the local courthouse possessing the documents.

10. **STAND TALL.** Upon successful navigation of the naturalization process, Soldiers should STAND TALL and be proud of their service to their country and their newly-awarded citizenship.





ODT Reservists Give 21st TSC Legal Assistance Program a Major Shot in the Arm...

by Steve Smith

The 21st TSC OSJA sponsors the most robust Reserve Overseas Deployment Training (ODT) program in the JAG Corps. The program annually brings more than 100 Reserve and National Guard attorneys and paralegals to Europe to work for two weeks in our law centers. The Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center and its clientele have been major beneficiaries of this program.

To get a feel for the qualities these Reservists bring to the table, you need look no further than pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter. MAJ Doug Whitaker, a Judge Advocate with the Texas National Guard, also serves as a GS-15 with the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement unit in Omaha, Nebraska. He is a bona fide subject matter expert on how Soldiers can become U.S. citizens. During his two weeks in Kaiserslautern, we directed clients with immigration and naturalization issues his way. Doug also made a lasting contribution to our program by authoring the detailed article in this newsletter on how Soldiers can apply for citizenship based on their military service.

The ODT program provides CONUS-based JAG Reservists an opportunity to see how a real Active Duty JAG office functions overseas, and exposes them to issues they rarely see on drill weekends, but often encounter in their civilian jobs. And the professional relationships forged during ODT continue long after the Reservists return home. We have a Rolodex filled with subject matter experts who are only too happy to help our clients resolve legal problems back in the States. All we have to do is ask. Reservists like the three pictured on this page are a big part of what keeps the 21st Theater Sustainment Command's legal assistance program *"First in Legal Support!"*

ODT Reservists MAJ Craig Russell (Texas National Guard), CPT Jorge Vergne (New Jersey National Guard), and MAJ Doug Whitaker (Texas National Guard) joined forces with the staff of the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center for two weeks in August.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT:

<http://www.21tsc.army.mil/SJA/index.htm>

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE JAG CORPS?

[HTTPS://WWW.21TSC.EUR.ARMY.MIL/SJA/HISTORY/HISTORY2.HTM](https://www.21tsc.eur.army.mil/SJA/HISTORY/HISTORY2.HTM)

Directions to Kleber Kaserne. From Vogelweh, Ramstein, or Landstuhl take the A6 direction Mannheim. On your right you will see a large store called Möbel Martin. Make sure you are in the right lane as you take the Kaiserslautern Ost exit/Ausfahrt. Turn right as you leave the exit ramp and drive downhill until you reach the stop light. Turn right and proceed straight until the next stoplight. Turn left and you will be in front of Kleber. Follow the perimeter until you find an open gate. Once you are on the post, park in the Shoppette parking lot. Bldg. 3210 is directly across from the Shoppette. Enter Bldg. 3210 from the end door, closest to the Shoppette.

