Sailors become U.S. citizens during naturalization ceremony

Story and photo by MC1 (EXW) Jennifer A. Villalovos, C7F Public Affairs

BANGKOK – Seven Sailors from five countries took the oath of allegiance to the United States during a naturalization ceremony to become American citizens at the Joint United States Military Advisory Group Thailand Aug. 8.

The Sailors from Ghana, Philippines, China, Ecuador and Russian are all part of the George Washington Strike Group and are in Thailand for a port visit during their latest patrol of the 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

The United States Ambassador to the Royal Kingdom of Thailand, the honorable Kristine A. Kenney, was the distinguished guest for the ceremony.

"Today we have a great privilege of welcoming new citizens and it's a double privilege because you've chosen to serve America before you even were a citizen. You choose to defend American values and freedoms and now you have chosen to become an American," said Ambassador Kenney. "I know that you will bring so many strengths, great new cultures, insights, languages and innovations. This is a country were everyone is welcome and everyone has a great chance."

Engineman Fireman Ossadtchii Pavel, one of the seven Sailors who took the oath of allegiance, said he joined the Navy to travel and see the world and now that he is U.S. citizen he has many more opportunities.

"I feel really great today. My grandfather and father were both officers and I would like to follow their footsteps. I love being in the U.S. Navy and hopefully I get accepted for an officer program and become an officer," said Pavel.

The youngest Sailor in the ceremony, Gas Turbine (Mechanical) Fireman Maria Morocho-Siguencia, from Ecuador, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance after taking the oath of allegiance.

"I've been in the Navy for two years and this is my first time in Thailand and it's awesome that I was able to do this today. It's a little bittersweet because my family is not here, but I'm very happy," said Morocho-Siguencia, assigned to the guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89).

Chief (select) Legalman Ignacio Tercero, Carrier Strike Group 5 Force Naturalization Coordinator, helped the Sailors with the process of becoming a U.S. citizen by assisting with their application.

GSM FN Maria Morocho-Siguencia, from Ecuador, leads the Pledge of Allegiance during a Naturalization Ceremony held at the Joint United States Military Advisory Group Thailand Aug. 8. Morocho-Siguencia is assigned to the guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) and was one of seven Sailors who became U.S. citizens during the ceremony.

"I myself was naturalized back in 1993 as an Airman. I can understand what each Sailor today is going through being there myself 17 years ago. It is an honor and privilege to be assisting such a group of diverse group of Sailors who come from different countries throughout the world," said Tercero. "It brings a great sense of pride knowing that these Sailors now U.S. Citizen are part of this American Blanket threaded with different diverse threads from all over the world and to know that they guard this blanket we call American freedom and liberty on a daily basis out here at sea at the tip of the spear."

USS George Washington welcomes Thai Princess

By Seaman Tatiana Avery,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

LAEM CHABANG, Thailand – The crew of the full-time forward-deployed nuclear powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN73) was paid a royal visit during a port call to the Kingdom of Thailand when Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana, a member of Thailand's royal family, boarded the ship for a tour Aug 8.

Princess of Thailand Sirivannavari Nariratana admires an E-2C Hawkeye on the flight deck of nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) Aug. 8.

During the tour, her Royal Highness was accompanied by several senior Thai military officers and an entourage of 31 members of her staff; their 16-car motorcade stretched nearly the length of the carrier along the pier.

The 26-year old Princess had the opportunity to tour the ship's flight deck, bridge, hangar bay and medical department and learn first hand how a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier operates at sea.

"The Princess had many questions and seemed geniunly interested in what we do," said *George Washington* Executive Officer Capt. Ken Reynard.

As Nariratana passed the numerous pictures on *George Washington*'s bulkheads, Reynard explained what was going on in each of the photos.

According to Reynard, the photos the Princess was most interested in were those showcasing the daily lives of *George Washington*'s crew and how they lived aboard the ship.

"For someone who lives in a palace, she was just amazed at how we live and work in such confined spaces," said Reynard. "I'm sure this is a totally different world to her."

Before departing the ship, Reynard presented the Princess with a plaque and a *USS George Washington* command ball cap.

***USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Executive Officer Captain Kenneth Reynard presents a commemorative plaque to the Princess of Thailand Sirivannavari Nariratana after her tour onboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Aug. 8.**

George Washington is in the Kingdom of Thailand for a port visit after completing 56 consequtive days at sea and, most recently, participating in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2011. The ship's mission is to ensure security and stability in the western Pacific and to work with our regional partners.