

CLOSER TO THE AMERICAN DREAM...

Military Naturalization Ceremony – Dallas



“I would give four more years if it meant my two younger brothers would never see what I saw,” Christian Guillen, United States Air Force.

He refuses to be called a hero, even though one might say, he has done heroic deeds. Christian Guillen says the days he spent supporting the Global War against Terror were simply his civic duty.

“I joined the Air Force for one reason... to do my part in securing this great nation for my family,” said Christian.

Christian has served nearly four years in the United States Air Force working as a civil engineer. He risked his life in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, working on spy drones known as “The Predator.”

Today, Christian continues to serve his country at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas. But, he does so chasing after dreams of becoming an American.

An American Dream

On December 29, 2003, Christian Guillen will become one of America’s newest U.S. citizens, fulfilling one of his most treasured goals. He will take the Oath of Citizenship in Dallas, Texas, alongside several other military servicemen and women who have fought to protect the privileges afforded to each American citizen.

“I’m proud of becoming an American... this is why I joined the military, to protect my home. This will be a proud moment for me,” Christian said.

One year ago, in December, Christian was unsure if this moment would ever become a reality. He was originally scheduled for naturalization on December 14, 2002 in Dallas. One day before his naturalization ceremony, Christian was called to duty. He left the United States to protect the country from terrorism.

“The U.S. was at war... I had to go,” said Christian.

Christian simply stated that while he was deployed, he saw much, but didn't want to say too much about what he had witnessed.

"Let's just say I don't ever want what I saw to come here. I have two younger brothers... they're 18 and 15. I just kept telling myself that if I keep doing what I'm doing, they won't have to know what I know," Christian said.

Christian came back to the United States in July of 2003 after spending 210 days supporting U.S. war efforts.

Christian's older brother also serves in the U.S. military in the Marine Corps. He attributes much of his passion to protect the United States to his older brother.

"I'm more proud of him than I am of myself. He's 28 and keeps on going," Christian said.

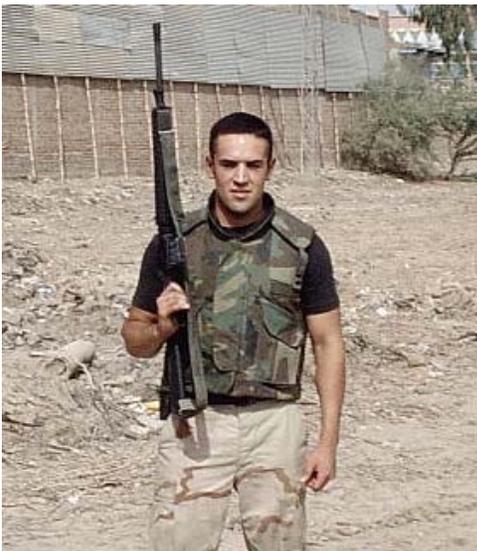
Toluca, Mexico

Christian was born in Toluca, Mexico, an area rich in culture. He remembers his father, who worked for the Chrysler Company in Mexico at the time, wanting more opportunities for his family.

At the age of 8, Christian and his family moved to the U.S., eventually settling in Southern California, as permanent residents. However, Christian said, he always knew something was missing.

"I've always wanted my citizenship... without it, I can't vote. I was always limited in my choices. I'm excited now... I'll have the chance to do what I want," said Christian.

The Journey Ahead



After Christian swears-in as an American citizen, he says he doesn't plan to waste any time in getting his future off the ground. He has decided to re-enlist in the Air Force when he has fulfilled his four years of service in May of 2004. He also plans to cross train into the Air Force Dental Lab. He hopes to become a Dentist one day while remaining in the Air Force, this time serving as an officer.

And now that he's back in the United States, he also hopes to set a wedding date with his fiancé, Alejandra. He's already mentioned wanting to have two or three children and says, he will teach them to never take anything for granted. He plans to talk to them about how proud he was serving in the Air

Force and how the U.S. gave him the gift of citizenship during the holidays and right before his birthday that falls on New Year's Day.

Christian said, "I have much to look forward to in the coming years."