



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

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Senegalese Soldier becomes U.S. citizen during deployment

SIDY

By Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — He came to the U.S. in 2001 to go to school, but now he is a Soldier in the U.S. Army deployed to Iraq, and about to accomplish a long-time goal, to become a citizen.

Spc. Sidy Sidibe, mechanic, Alpha Co, 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, will become a full-fledged citizen when he is naturalized, along with other Soldiers, during a ceremony at Joint Base Balad in November.

“It’s been on my mind for a long time,” said the 33-year-old from Dakar, Senegal. “I will be proud to be an American, and it’s a privilege to serve in the Army.”

The naturalization ceremony is an end to a six-year process for the married, father of one. He got married in 2002, but was told he had to wait three years after getting married to file for citizenship, so he filed in 2005.

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Sidibe left his wife, Marquita, and one-month-old baby, Mina, behind when he deployed, but said the sacrifice was worthwhile, and he was following in father's footsteps.

"My dad was in the French army so I thought I'd follow his path," Sidibe said. "He's my reference. I had some issues growing up and he put me back on track."

Sidibe said that despite having to leave a newborn behind, his deployment was worthwhile, and actually sped-up the naturalization process, and he recommended it for other immigrants considering citizenship.

"It's one of those experiences you can't get anywhere else," Sidibe said. "And it's the best thing they could do to get their stuff going. There are many advantages."

Sidibe earned the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in Dakar, before he came to America, but is now studying business administration and bio-technology in Illinois, and has taken courses online during his deployment.

Sidibe said he plans to return to Indiana and finish his courses after the deployment, and would like to someday move to New York City.



sidy.jpg

Spc. Sidy Sidibe (pictured at work), mechanic, Alpha Co, 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, will become a full-fledged citizen when he is naturalized, along with other Soldiers, during a ceremony at Joint Base Balad in November. "It's been on my mind for a long time," said the 33-year-old from Dakar, Senegal. "I will be proud to be an American, and it's a privilege to serve in the Army." (courtesy photo)