

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

ANGE SAMMA *et al.*, on behalf of
themselves and others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE *et al.*,

Defendants.

No. 20-cv-1104-PLF

DECLARATION OF MATTHEW RINALDI

I, Matthew Rinaldi, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a 25-year-old native and citizen of Indonesia.
2. In May of 2000, I entered the United States on a visitor's visa. I later received "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) status, which qualified me to enlist in the United States Army through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest ("MAVNI") program.
3. On February 9, 2016, I enlisted in the United States Army. On that day, I signed an eight-year enlistment contract and took the oath of enlistment.
4. I currently serve on active duty as a Specialist (E-4) and my military occupational specialty is 92A, Automated Logistical Specialist.
5. I shipped to basic combat training ("BCT") at Fort Jackson, South Carolina on April 11, 2018, and completed BCT on June 22, 2018. The Army did not allow me to apply for naturalization while I was at BCT.
6. I shipped to advanced individual training ("AIT") at Fort Lee, Virginia on June 23, 2018, and completed AIT on September 17, 2018. The Army did not allow me to apply for

naturalization while I was at AIT.

7. I am currently serving with the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade (“CAB”) at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu, Hawaii.
8. On or around January 12, 2021, while serving with the 25th CAB, I requested my certification of honorable service (“N-426 certification”) from a non-commissioned officer (“NCO”) so that I could finally submit my naturalization application. The NCO shared with me a specific checklist for requesting N-426 certification on an internal website, which he had received via email from my first sergeant (“1SG”). My 1SG had received this checklist from a sergeant in the brigade S1 office, which provides personnel and administrative support. It appears that the brigade’s legal assistance office had directed the brigade S1 office to send this checklist out to soldiers trying to naturalize. The checklist states that soldiers must serve in the 25th CAB for at least one year before they can get their N-426 certification. Attached as Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of the checklist.
9. On or around February 16, 2021, I contacted Attorney Margaret Stock to obtain assistance in getting my N-426 certified so that I could submit my N-400, Application for Naturalization.
10. On March 1, 2021, I received an incorrectly certified N-426 from my Commander.
11. On March 2, 2021, Attorney Stock informed me that my N-426 was incorrectly certified. The “end of service” date in Part 3 did not include “PRESENT” and boxes in Parts 5 and 6 were left unchecked.
12. On March 3, 2021, Attorney Stock’s office informed me that they could not request a corrected N-426 certification directly from the Commander, because there was also an error in the Commander’s email address listed on the previously certified N-426. I

retrieved and forwarded the correct email address to Attorney Stock's office on March 4, 2021.

13. On March 4, 2021, Attorney Stock's office was in correspondence with a Lieutenant Colonel ("LTC") in the JAG Corps regarding the issues we were having with obtaining a corrected N-426 certification. This LTC forwarded Attorney Stock's concerns about the errors on my N-426 to a Major ("MAJ"), Brigade Judge Advocate, in the 25th CAB.
14. On March 4, 2021, the Major ("MAJ") was able to request a corrected copy of my N-426 certification from my Commander. The MAJ then forwarded my corrected N-426 certification to Attorney Stock, so that I could submit my N-400, Application for Naturalization, to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS").
15. At the time I received my N-426 certification, it had been nearly two years since I began serving in an active duty status by shipping to BCT.
16. At the time I received my N-426 certification, it had been nearly two months since I first requested my N-426 certification.
17. I have served honorably at all times since entering service.
18. I am not aware of any legitimate reason that would have prevented the Army from certifying my honorable service as soon as I requested my N-426 certification.
19. I am not aware of any legitimate reason that would prevent USCIS from granting my naturalization application.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on June 25, 2021.



Matthew Rinaldi