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MDW JTF Continues to Plan for Inauguration Day Post-election

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Members of the Joint Task Force – National Capital Region (JTF-NCR) 58th Presidential Inauguration gathered post-election on Nov. 15 at Fort Lesley J. McNair to further refine the concept of operations for the 2017 Presidential Inauguration. It's a mission that won't be complete until president-elect Donald J. Trump is sworn in as the 45th president of the United States.

"They elected the president — the people did their job — now it's our turn," said Navy Cmdr. Jonathan Blyth, deputy director of public affairs for the joint task force.

Several months of meetings and planning among the more than 800 service members from all branches of the military culminated into a rehearsal of a day-by-day, hour-by-hour inauguration plan, one that will begin Jan. 9 and run until through Inauguration night.

For three hours, the plan was meticulously dissected and presented to Maj. Gen. Bradley A. Becker, commander of the JTF-NCR and U.S. Army Military District of Washington, and other high ranking officials using a 2,400 square foot map with 3D models.

Members of the joint task force presented the entire concept of operations for the mission: staging and security, medical support, public affairs and a host of other logistic components.

Coast Guard Cmdr. Michelle

Watson will serve as the task force street cordon commander. She will lead 1,523 military personnel who will line the inauguration parade route. "These service members will be lining the streets, saluting the president and the vice-president as they move from the White House to the United States Capitol and back to the White House," Watson said. Watson previously served on the task force during the inauguration for both President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama.

"This is my third inauguration, but it will take a lot of effort to ensure 1,523 service members are lined up on the parade route, 15 feet apart from each other, 12 feet from the curb, and prepared to represent every aspect of the military and ready to give the next commander in chief that respect," she said.

Less visible to the public will be the security aspect of Inauguration Day. Marine Corps Capt. Eric Kaltrider is serving as the law enforcement coordinator for the task force, the liaison between local and federal law enforcement agencies including the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, the U.S. Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"There will be emergency operation centers, tactical operation centers and communication centers," Kaltrider said. "We are in a supporting role to the civil authorities who will lead security and law enforcement

operations for the inauguration and all of its associated events. But it's to be determined the number of high profile social events that will happen inauguration night that will require further coordination."

Only a select few joint task force members will have close interaction with the outgoing president and the president-elect on Inauguration Day. Marine Corps Master Sgt. Alex Barros is one of a select few whose duties will primarily be concentrated at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. He leads the task force Ceremonial and Special Events — White House Activities.

"I have the honor of working as a liaison with White House staff on Inauguration Day and up to the moment when [Donald J. Trump] will enter the White House for the first time as president of the United States and commander in chief."

In December, members of the joint task force will be joined by members of the National Guard, the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Capitol Police and numerous other local, state and federal agencies during a rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill at the National D.C. Armory. Additionally over the next 60 days, the joint task force will work closely with the Presidential Inaugural Committee who will make the final decisions surrounding all aspects and events during the Inaugural period.