



# Pentagram

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## Map exercise orients inaugural task force

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What's 2,400 square feet and features 3D models of the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument? The Military District of Washington's map of the 2017 Presidential Inauguration.

At noon on Jan. 20, 2017, a new president of the United States will be sworn into office. The event will be attended by millions and requires months of planning.

And for hundreds of service members from across the country assigned to MDW's Joint Task Force 58th Inaugural and charged with ensuring the day goes off without a hitch, that plan begins with this map.

"A lot of us haven't been here before and it's enormously complex moving all of the pieces together. By being able to see the map and see how things work, we can begin to preliminarily deal with the questions at hand and the contingencies," said Cmdr. Jonathan Blyth, deputy director of public affairs for the task force.

During the Aug. 31 rollout at the Fort McNair Fitness Center, the map filled a basketball court. The Capitol sat at the half-court line and the Pentagon sat by the doors to the gym and the Washington Monument rose above it all. Around it, members of the task force began an exercise to map out the logistics of Inauguration Day, covering everything from parade routes to security zones.

"We go over the ceremony from beginning to end," said Army Maj. Emerson Bamba, task force inauguration exercise branch chief. "It's part of everybody's responsibility within the exercises to see if they can find a hole in the plan, or capability gaps or miscommunication so we can address it here rather than on I-Day."

Mike Wagner, chief of National Events Planning, used the map to prepare task force members for the sheer magnitude of the upcoming event. He briefed the service members on the 2013 plan, challenges for 2017, and other variables the task force will need to prepare for.

The map exercises help the task force develop a baseline understanding of the planning process so that when they need to start working with partner agencies – the Secret Service, the Capitol Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation – everyone can be on the same page, he said.

"We want to make sure that our people all have that same baseline understanding so that we can move forward," Wagner said. "We know that some things will be different, we know that some things will be the same. We don't know which is which at this point. We're planning for contingencies."

Much of the task force's planning will be based on speculation until a couple of weeks after Election Day, because the

President-elect will appoint a Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC), which will take over the planning and will make the final decisions about all aspects of the event.

"Everything that we do between now and the 22nd of November is planning on speculation. It's based on the idea that we know pretty much how things have gone down in the past and how they're expected to go down this time," Wagner said. "The Presidential Inaugural Committee will put their stamp on this inauguration in many, many ways, some of which we can't imagine now. We will be prepared once that PIC stands up... to adjust course based on the guidance we get from them."

Challenges the task force will have to work around include new restrictions regarding use of the National Mall; bus and truck restrictions on Memorial Bridge, which is in need of repairs; and an impenetrable security zone that stretches from Washington Circle in Foggy Bottom to Lincoln Park near the Capitol.

The map exercises and the continued focus of task force members will ensure the mission's success, said Army Col. William D. McGarrity, task force chief of staff.

"This is a no-fail mission, so we are expected to execute flawlessly," McGarrity told the crowd. "You're a part of history. Thanks for what you're about to do."