

# MilitaryTimes

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## Military planners prepping for uncertainty of a Trump inauguration ceremony

By Leo Shane III

Election night came as a shock to many in the nation's capital. Military planners want to make sure there aren't any such surprises on Inauguration Day.

On Wednesday, officials and military organizers held a walk through of logistics for transition officials and media members, complete with a map of Washington, bigger than the Oval Office to illustrate their security plans.

"Whatever the number is, the U.S. military and National Guard can support our partners," said Army Brig. Gen. William Walker, commander of Joint Task Force-District of Columbia. "We have the ability to surge. We have the ability to shift.

"We've done this all before, and we're ready."

Nearly 15,000 military members are expected to be in the greater capital region for the Jan. 20 event, a presence that planners says is typical for a new commander in chief's swearing in.

About 5,000 of those will be active-duty troops in ceremonial roles, including the inaugural parade. Another 2,000 active-duty service members will be in security support roles throughout the region. About 8,000 guardsmen from 40 states are set to be deputized to assist local law enforcement with crowd control and other tasks.

A model of the Old Post Office, now Trump International Hotel, is visible as news photographers take photos of a model of the White House on a giant planning map during a media tour highlighting inaugural preparations being made by Joint Task Force-National Capital Region. Photo Credit: Andrew Harnik/AP

None of the military personnel will be armed, according to District of Columbia National Guard Commander Army Maj. Gen. Errol Schwartz. Throughout the planning process, military officials have taken extra steps to emphasize that their role is subservient to civilian authorities, and that troops will be following their lead.

That means working closely with local police, Secret Service and inauguration officials, the latter of whom may have different ideas of how to organize the day of ceremonies than past presidential planners. Much of Wednesday's presentation was focused on how past inaugurations have proceeded, but questions remain about how traditional a ceremony President-elect Donald Trump wants after a non-traditional presidential campaign.

Air Force Brig. Gen. George Degnon, deputy commanding general for the Inauguration, told reporters that many details of the day still need to be settled, including the exact parade route, the protocol for evening parties and some specifics for protest locations.

"So we're still negotiating with the committee on a number of issues," he said. "But with the city laid out the way it is, there are only so many ways you can make all this happen."