

SPOTLIGHT

Chaplain assistant provides essential service to inaugural team

By U.S. Army Spc. L'Erin Wynn

Fourteen teams are charged with providing religious support to more than 800 Joint Task Force-National Capital Region military personnel supporting the 58th Presidential Inauguration.

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Dustin Stull, representing Air Mobility Command, Chaplain's Office, is the assistant to the head chaplain in the Military District of Washington. Together, the team will coordinate positions and deliver care to the 13 other joint force two-person teams (consisting of a chaplain and chaplain assistant) that will be strategically placed along Pennsylvania Avenue on Inauguration Day.

"We'll be roving around as a command and control element to make sure that our teams are doing well and to check on how they're doing taking care of people," said Stull, a St. Petersburg, Fla., native assigned to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

With the goal of impacting the esteem of service members, Stull and the other military chaplaincy staff members contribute to the mission by fostering the free exercise of religion and supporting moral, ethical and warrior care by advising leadership on matters of religious accommodation.

"The plan is to be with the various service components," said Stull. "Just another great opportunity to take care of people."

The history of military chaplaincy dates back to 1775, when the Continental Congress established chaplains as an integral part of the Continental Army. During the Presidential Inauguration of George Washington in 1789, the only other official inaugural event of the day was a religious service at St. Paul's Chapel in New York City.

Beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1933, most president-elects have attended a service at St. John's Episcopal Church, next to the White House, the morning of the inauguration prior to taking the oath of office and assuming the awesome responsibility as our country's new Commander in Chief.

"It's a reminder that the military has been an integral part of this country's tradition since day one," said Stull. "The military is a time-honored institution in our country. Just to be a part of the inauguration is real confirmation of that."

