

SPOTLIGHT

U.S. Army cavalry officer lends budgetary handiwork to Inauguration Day mission

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

During a national special security event, military personnel often provide a variety of unique capabilities that help ensure a safe and secure environment.

On any other day, U.S. Army Capt. Alice Sylvester would be serving as a defense military pay office director with the 15th Financial Management Support Unit, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in Fort Hood, Texas, but not on the days when a national special security event is taking place.

As a member of Joint Task Force-National Capital Region (JTF-NCR), Sylvester is currently lending her money management expertise to the 58th Presidential Inauguration. As a budget officer she is responsible for all requirements and projects for the inauguration, which will take place Jan. 20, in Washington, D.C.

"I was selected for this position by my division comptroller because of the extent of my military service and budget experience," said Sylvester. "I was the most qualified Finance Officer available to fulfill the [role]."

Sylvester, a native of the Caribbean island of the Commonwealth of Dominica, said that although the budget officer position is nothing new, the mission is significantly different from that of her Fort Hood position.

At Fort Hood, her responsibility is to provide an array of financial support to all personnel—approximately 45,000 soldiers, civilians and contractors. While in D.C., Sylvester's focus leading up to the inauguration is more specific. Her main role is to fund necessities like security services, food contracts, internet and cable services, emergency medical supplies, tents, sandbags, signs and even snow removal, just to name a few.

Historically, approximately 5,000 military personnel have provided ceremonial support during the inaugural period, which is defined as the five days before and four days after the presidential inauguration. Of these, approximately 820 service members will be reporting to JTF-NCR over a period of months leading up to the inauguration.

Military involvement in the inauguration is a centuries-old tradition, one of which Sylvester said she is proud to be a part.

Sylvester counts this among her most significant military experiences, along with serving in times of danger and holding a position of leadership. She appreciates having the opportunity to be a company commander and affect the lives of so many soldiers by mentoring, guiding, coaching and instilling a sense of purpose.

"From a personal perspective, serving in this position will only generate positive aspirations," said Sylvester. "It is indeed an honor to serve and represent in a time when history is in the making. I enjoy serving and to serve in such capacity will be quite rewarding."

