

SPOTLIGHT

California Dreamer plays part in 58th Presidential Inauguration

By U.S. Army Spc. L'Erin Wynn and U.S. Army Sgt. Paige Behringer, JTF-NCR

As a child, Air Force Lt. Col. Lynda Zamora Wilson dreamed of becoming a pilot and an astronaut. Throughout her military career she has accomplished most of her dreams and continues to keep reaching for the stars.

"I came from a small town, a family of meager means, where the odds of attending college was unlikely," said Wilson, a Susanville, California native. "That being said, I dreamed big, believed and persisted. It's pretty surreal to look back at all my experiences and see just how far I have come."

Despite her humble upbringing, Wilson was able to attend college, earning multiple degrees in mathematics and education, including a Ph.D. in economics



"Without a doubt, having a math background has proven to be an invaluable and fundamental skill, enabling me to work in vastly different areas," said Wilson.

While Wilson normally works as an economist for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller at the Pentagon, she is currently assigned to the Joint Task Force- National Capital Region as the commander of Joint Team Military Assistants.

The military assistants' mission is to support and facilitate the official involvement of authorized inaugural participants, ensuring on-time transportation to all official inaugural event venues, while promoting an image of exceptional military bearing.

Authorized inaugural participants can include anyone from First Family and their spouses of both the current president and president-elect to any person nominated for cabinet-level appointments in the new Administration.

Wilson's role involves formulating, training and managing a team of 70 service members from all military branches. She and her staff interviewed 97 service members, and are in the process of selecting team members to help complete the mission.

"I know it shouldn't be surprising, but the amount of planning and detail that goes into this event is amazing," Wilson said of the Presidential Inauguration.

In her more than 20 years of service, Wilson has flown in fighters, taught at the United States Air Force Academy, served as an intern in a laser lab, worked on futuristic space concepts and participated in operational testing of the F-22 Raptor aircraft, which she deems her biggest accomplishment.

Adding to her long list of career highlights, Wilson said volunteering to be a part of the 58th Presidential Inauguration and to witness firsthand the peaceful transfer of power is an honor and the chance of a lifetime.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of history," Wilson added. "After this inauguration, I believe I can accurately say that my U.S. Air Force career is 'complete'."