



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and Fort Riley

# **HOME OF THE BIG RED ONE**



**Jan. 18, 2017**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

#### **‘Big Red One’ mounted color guard to march in 58th Presidential Inaugural Parade**

By Chad L. Simon  
1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

The 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley will be represented on horseback by the Commanding General’s Mounted Color Guard during the 58th Presidential Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20. The CGMCG will ride 13 horses to the parade to include two draft horses that will lead the team’s 1871-era escort wagon.

The CGMCG was announced as one of the initial 40 groups participating in the parade Dec. 30 by The 58th Presidential Inaugural Committee., but the team has prepared for the parade by riding in the Chicago Memorial Day Parade and the Manhattan, Kansas, Veterans Day Parade in addition to its other community related events conducted throughout the year.

The horses departed Fort Riley via a private hauler while the 1st Inf. Div. Soldiers flew to Washington and will continue to work with the horses upon their arrival in the nation’s capital.

“When we get there we are going to keep on maintaining our equipment and horses as we prep for the event,” said Spc. Sam Ruzga, a trooper with the CGMCG.

The trip won’t be all work for the Soldiers. They will get the opportunity to tour the National Mall and museums. The Soldiers will also get to tour the Pentagon and the offices of Sens. Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts, both of whom represent Kansas.

The team spent hours of specialized training on Fort Riley in addition to its usual community involvement before departing for the inauguration.

"We have done a lot of the training leading up to this to get the horses accustomed to being in formation, being comfortable with flags and loud noises and unique objects they will encounter on the parade route," said Capt. Riley Emter, CGMCG commander. "The desensitization training we have done is key for us getting them ready for a parade on such a large stage."

The specialized training is used to desensitize the horses to the specific parade environment in Washington. The CGMCG also enlisted the help of the Fort Riley's 97th Military Police Battalion and fire department to simulate the parade. The police cars turned on their lights and sirens as the fire department sounded their horns during practice.

"We will also practice with loud speakers to simulate loud crowds and music," Staff Sgt. Kory Owen, CGMCG trooper, said. "We do demonstrations throughout the community so all of our horses are desensitized to loud gunfire. That helps us when it comes to loud noises and crowds, but there is never too much training."

The prestige of the event is not lost on the team members as they continue to prepare to represent the "Big Red One" in Washington.

"It's a once in a lifetime experience," Ruzga said. "I am very proud to get the opportunity to do it and get to ride with the Commanding General's Mounted Color Guard. It will be a really cool experience and something nobody on this team will forget."

This is not the first inaugural parade for the CGMCG. Since the team's inception in 1992, it has participated in three prior inauguration parades including President Barack Obama's first Inaugural Parade in 2009.

The CGMCG comprises active-duty U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to the 1st. Inf. Div. at Fort Riley on a temporary basis, so none of the current members were on the team during Obama's first parade. However, five of the 13 horses have made the trip to Washington.

-30-

Photos and cutlines to accompany this story can be found at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/firstinfantrydivision/albums/72157677637543930>.

Jan. 18, 2017

Release No. 20170118-01