

Fact Sheet

The U.S. Army Military District of Washington

Guardian of the Nation's Capital



U.S. Army's Twilight Tattoo

Twilight Tattoo” is a time-honored tradition that blends the precision and discipline of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) with the orchestral sounds of The U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own.”

The history of Twilight Tattoo began more than 300 years ago as British troops were summoned from the warmth and hospitality of local pubs by a bugle and drum call to return to the barracks. The



familiar tune told tavern owners “doe den tap toe,” or “time to turn off the taps.” The troops knew the call to mean “taps off,” and minutes later they were back in their tents.

The modern-day call is known as “Tattoo” and during basic training the call signals the time to quiet down and hit the bunks. For the U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW), the call serves as a tribute dedicated to the vitality of our nation and to the sacrifices of those who forged America into the land of the free and the home of the brave. It is for our forefathers and fellow Americans that MDW proudly presents “Twilight Tattoo.”

The U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW) Twilight Tattoo can trace its own history back to the years before World War II. At that time, on the grounds of Fort Myer in Arlington, Va., the 3rd Cavalry Regiment held military shows during the winter months. The Military District of Washington revived the traditional show in 1961 to showcase the talents of its ceremonial units.

As Twilight Tattoo grew in popularity, the Army adapted the show, its location and the time of year it was performed to fit the growing needs of the American people. Settling on performances in the Washington, D.C. Metro area, throughout the summer months, has allowed for thousands of audience members to experience the ceremony and pageantry of the United States Army.