

Beat: Travel

Annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

2014 Finale

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USPA NEWS - The Tattoo takes place annually throughout August, as part of the Edinburgh Festival. The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is performed by British Armed Forces, Commonwealth and International military bands and display teams on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh.

The 2014 Tattoo celebrated 'Our Home, Friends and Family'.

Zulu warriors, South American steel drummers and Shetland fiddlers will be among more than 1,000 performers. The performances will celebrate the Year of Homecoming - a Scottish Government-sponsored initiative for 2014 - and fall between the Commonwealth Games and September's independence referendum.

Twenty four performances took place each day during the three-week multi-national extravaganza. The 65th Tattoo which sold out with around 2 hundred and 20 thousand visitors. The Tattoo Chief Executive & Producer, Brigadier David Allfrey, said: "We are delighted to "sell out" the Show! For me this represents a huge reward for all our staff and partners, who have worked so professionally to deliver this outstanding result.

History of the Tattoo (Source: The Edinburgh Military Tattoo)

More than 13 million people have attended the Tattoo. The annual audience is around 217,000. Around 100 million people see the Tattoo each year on international television. Approximately 70 per cent of each audience is from outwith Scotland. Half of these are from overseas. New £16 million spectator stands and hospitality facilities were put in place at the Castle Esplanade for the summer of 2011. This innovative new amphitheatre replaced the 37 year old, award winning stands which were based on the pioneering Mero system used for Germany's 1972 Munich Olympics.

The first commercial twelve inch stereo LP record of the Tattoo was released in 1961. 2014 marked the Tattoo's sixteenth successive sell-out season, generating some £8.7 million in box office receipts. Around 35 miles of cabling (the distance from Edinburgh to Glasgow) is required. The event was first seen in colour on TV in 1968. From 1950 to 1991, there were four producers - Lt Col George Malcolm of Poltalloch, Brigadier MacLean, Brigadier Sanderson and Lt Col Dow.

Major Michael Parker then took over as producer for the 1992, 1993 and 1994 Tattoos. He was succeeded by Brigadier Melville Jameson in 1995, who in turn was followed by Major General Euan Loudon from March 2007-2010. Brigadier David Allfrey, a former Commander of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, has been producer of the Tattoo since 2011. The first overseas regiment to participate was the Band of the Royal Netherlands Grenadiers. The year was 1952, and there were also performers from Canada and France. The first lone piper was Pipe Major George Stoddart. He played in every Tatoo for the first eleven years. His son, Major Gavin Stoddart, followed his father as lone piper at the Tattoo and became Director of Army Bagpipe Music for 12 years.

Hollywood movie producer Mike Todd, the fourth husband of film star Elizabeth Taylor, made a documentary programme on the Tattoo in 1950. Not a single performance of the Tattoo has ever been cancelled. The Tattoo is set up and run for charitable purposes. Over the years, it has gifted some £8 million to service and civilian organisations. At the last official independent count, visitors to the Tattoo contributed an estimated £88 million to the Scottish economy. The Tattoo has always been staged at Edinburgh Castle. Rehearsals take place at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. Over 46 countries from across six continents have been represented at the Tattoo.

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