

## Tattoo: A Journey

CJ (Christine) Spaulding ~ Culver Girls Academy '10 ~ Band and Drill Team Member

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April 10, 2010. 8:00 AM. 68 grumbling students and 15 stressed adults begin to load the two buses and U-Haul van for the long three hour drive to the northwest side of Chicago. Most just fall back asleep on the bus, but the few who know what the day holds stay awake with anticipation.

The CMA Band, the Culver Pipes and Drum Corps, and the CGA Drill Team were invited to perform for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Heartland International Tattoo at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates, IL. This was the second year in a row for the Culver Pipes and Drum Corps and the CGA Drill Team to perform at the festival.

April 10, 2010. 3:00 PM. 68 antsy students and 15 anxious adults have practiced and are continuing to practice for that night's performance. Perfection is key—steps must be together, play the right notes, never drop the rifles. It's crunch time...or just about.

So I bet you're wondering what a military tattoo is. The tradition of a tattoo started in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when musicians were vital to relaying orders during battle. The word "tattoo" comes from the closing time orders in Dutch meaning "doe den tap toe" ("toe" pronounced "too"), or just "tap toe," which literally means "close or turn off the tap." In the evening, the Taptoo consisted of the military band marching through a garrison town to alert the taverns and inns that it was curfew for the soldiers, the beer taps should be turned off, and the soldiers should return to their barracks. But by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Taptoo was losing its original meaning and instead became a signal for lights out and, with the rise of the Military Band of Music, for entertainment.

April 10, 2010. 7:00 PM. 68 fairly calm students and 15 excited adults watch as Act I starts. Thousands of people are sitting around the arena and the pressure hasn't quite set in yet. Everyone is ready—uniforms on and looking sharp, instruments in tune and ready to be played, and rifles oiled and straps tightened.

The Heartland International Tattoo is an exhibition of military and civilian marching bands, bagpipe bands, highland dancers, and much more. Performers come from many different countries, such as Holland, to create an unforgettable experience, and Culver has had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of that experience.

April 10, 2010. 11:00 PM. 68 exhausted (yet happy) students and 15 proud adults, after having the performance of a lifetime, pack everything back into the buses and the U-Haul van, prepared to come back to school. The show couldn't have gone any better. As the buses pull out of the parking lot, almost everyone is already asleep, exhausted from the long day.

The 2010 Heartland International Tattoo consisted of performances from a men's choir, a brass band, a world champion step dancer, a circus group, a soul step team, a whistling champion, numerous bagpipe bands, and even a drum line that met and began playing together in a bowling alley.

April 11, 2010. 3:30 AM. 68 half-awake students and 15 tired adults finally arrive back to campus. After unloading the U-Haul van, taking everything into the M & A, and making sure everything is off the buses, everyone slowly makes it back to their dorms and barracks to crawl into bed for a few hours of sleep.