

'Stars' hit the stage for USAREUR contests

Soldiers display musical talents

BY LISA HORN
Stars and Stripes

KATTERBACH, Germany — For Command Sgt. Maj. William Brown, U.S. Army Europe's 25th annual Stars of Tomorrow contest is more like a reunion of friends than a competition.

In his third year of competing in the contest, the soldier from Vicenza, Italy's 14th Transportation Battalion, awed the audience again this year with his flawless fingerwork on the autoharp and placed first in the instrumental category.

The Stars of Tomorrow contest was the second day of a weekend of performances at the Katterbach Fitness Center.

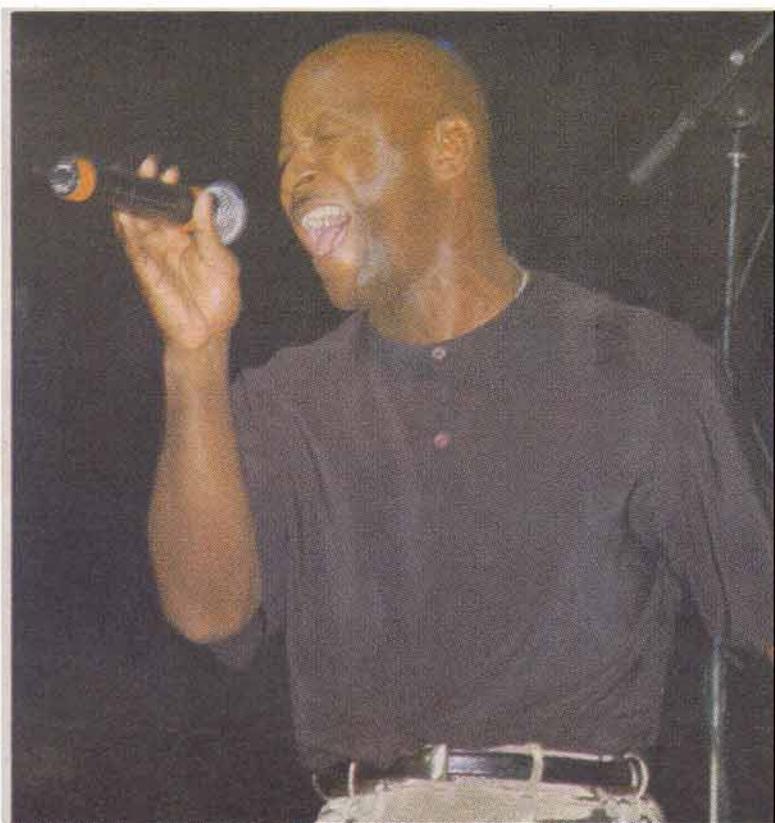
Saturday's Battle of Bands competition, also in its 25th year, featured seven bands. And just like the Stars of Tomorrow contestants, they were vying for a chance to compete at the Army-wide competition in Fort Belvoir, Va., later this year.

"I like participating in Stars of Tomorrow because it gives me a chance to meet some old friends," Brown said. "It would surprise an average person who doesn't come to an event like this, [to see] the level of talent that there is in the Army."

Brown took second in the instrumental solo category last year, but because the winner was a civilian was able to advance to the all-Army competition.

"There are some really good acts up there today," he said. "I just like to come out and compete. If I can play music, then it doesn't matter if I get a trophy or not."

Spc. Anwan Mason's performance of "One Day," a song written by an Italian producer she collaborated with on a demo tape, earned the Vicenza soldier sec-



LISA HORN/Stars and Stripes

1st Sgt. Tracy Ross, of Giebelstadt, Germany, belts out "Incomplete" Sunday at the U.S. Army Europe Stars of Tomorrow contest in Katterbach, Germany. Ross took first in the male vocal solo category and placed third in the best of show division.

ond place in the female vocal solo category.

Mason, who participated in the 2002 Stars of Tomorrow contest, was unable to perform last year because she was deployed to Iraq. A member of the 510th Personnel Service Battalion, Mason said having her demo tape downrange was a motivation for her.

She hopes to earn a spot with the USAREUR Soldier's Chorus and produce her own CD.

"I enjoy this [contest]," Mason said. "I try not to look at it as competition — it's people expressing their talents."

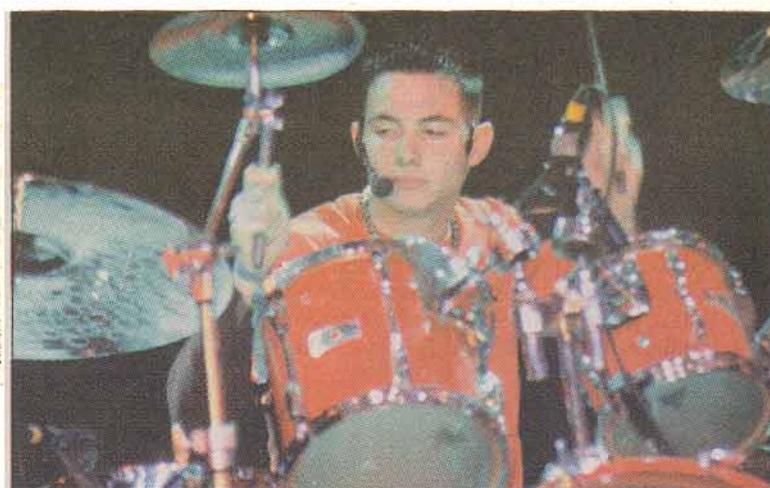
Jamie Shallish, a civilian from Hohenfels, Germany, placed first in the female vocal solo category

with her rendition of "Coal Miner's Daughter." Because Mason was the highest-placing soldier in the category, she will represent USAREUR at the Armywide contest.

Jim Sohre, USAREUR entertainment director, said that he was taken aback by the talent of the performers.

"We are just amazed at the participation that we had this year ... [with] the 1st Armored Division coming back from deployment [to Iraq] and the 1st Infantry Division currently deployed," he said. "There's just no end to the depth of talent at our disposal in this command."

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RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Jed Martin, drummer for the Hohenfels, Germany-based band Busted Amber, shows off some of the skills that won him best drummer at Saturday's USAREUR Battle of Bands in Katterbach, Germany.

And the winners are ...

Top finishers in U.S. Army Europe's 2004 Battle of Bands:

- First — Black Box 60, Hohenfels, Germany
 - Second — Silent Majority, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany
 - Third — Busted Amber, Hohenfels
- (Black Box and Busted Amber advance to All-Army Battle of Bands)
- Best guitarist — Pfc. Kyleen Downes, Just Add Water, Ansbach, Germany
 - Best bass guitarist — Spc. Warren Mixon, Just Add Water
 - Best drummer — Spc. Jed Martin, Busted Amber
 - Best vocalist — Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tony McGee, Push Button War, Ansbach
 - Best back-up vocalist — Spc. Benjamin Branson, Black Box 60

Top finishers in USAREUR's 2004 Stars of Tomorrow:

Winner advances to all-Army contest unless otherwise noted.

- Best of show
- First — Chris Sears, vocal solo, self-accompanied, Kaiserslautern, Germany
- Second — Command Sgt. Maj. William Brown, autoharp solo, Vicenza, Italy
- Third — 1st Sgt. Tracy Ross, male vocal, Giebelstadt, Germany
- Male vocal

- First — 1st Sgt. Tracy Ross, Giebelstadt
- Second — "Baby Gee": Sgt. Rodrig Olesty, Bamberg, Germany
- Third — Pfc. Joe Rochel, Heidelberg, Germany

- Female vocal
- First — Jamie Shallish, Hohenfels
- Second — Spc. Anwan Mason, Vicenza, (advances to all-Army contest)

- Third — Brandi Ladd, Ansbach
- Vocal solo, self-accompanied
- First — Chris Sears, Kaiserslautern
- Second — Pfc. James Cameron Hall, Hohenfels (advances to all-Army contest)

- Third — Sgt. 1st Class David Brocius, Hohenfels
- Vocal duet

- First — Jamie Shallish and Ralph Samuel, Hohenfels
- Second — Lost Dogz: Sgt. John Grubbs & Pfc. Steppiè Janeda, Darmstadt (advances to all-Army contest) [(BODY)]

- Third — Pat & Cat: PJ and Catherine Ahearn, Ansbach
- Instrumental solo

- First — Command Sgt. Maj. William Brown, autoharp, Vicenza

- Second — Pfc. James Cameron Hall, guitar, Hohenfels
- Third — 1st Sgt. Fred Velez, guitar, Hohenfels

- Specialty category
- First — Pfc. Kevin Taylor and Spc. Christopher Rodriguez, guitars/vocals, Hohenfels

- Second — Robert Thompson, rap, Darmstadt
- Third — Blues Delight: 1st Sgt. Fred Velez, Spc. Benjamin Branson, Pfc. Jacob Sperber, Hohenfels