

USAREUR sponsors summer program for families

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

The first visit featured men in caps who swing bats. The next will celebrate a guy who can fly. And others coming down the pike include a fitness guru, a race car driver and a man who carries pigskins for a living.

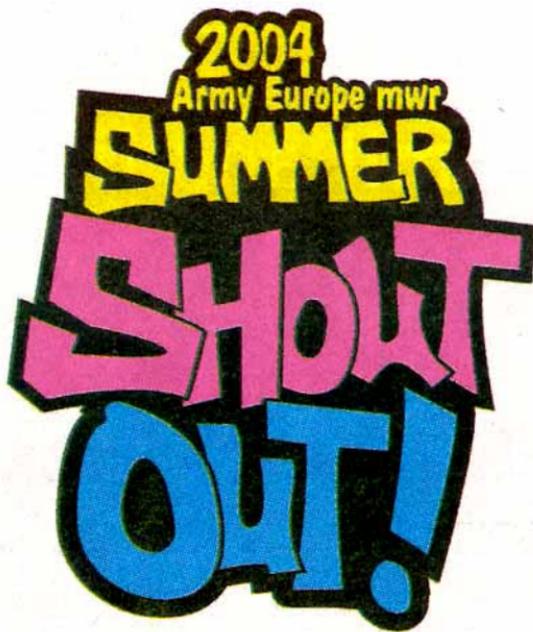
In an effort to give families in Germany more to see and do, U.S. Army Europe officials have created a new program featuring celebrity visits and clinics.

The Summer Shout Out program came together last month largely as a way for USAREUR officials to reiterate their support and appreciation for the families of deployed soldiers, Maureen Fitzgerald said.

"We have to react to our families' needs," said Fitzgerald, marketing chief for the Installation Management Agency-Europe. "They need to feel appreciated. They need to feel MWR cares for them, which we certainly do."

The program is specifically targeted at communities that makeup the 104th Area Support Group and the 98th Area Support Group. The former covers the 1st Armored Division, while the latter supports the 1st Infantry Division.

Jim Sohre, entertainment director for IMA-Europe, said "the catalyst" for the initiative "was the effect the deployments have had



on communities," particularly those in the 1st AD, which had its tour in Iraq extended well beyond one year. While the 1st AD is scheduled to return soon, possibly next month, the 1st ID will remain in Iraq until at least next spring.

Army leaders in Europe, particularly US-

AREUR commander Gen. B.B. Bell, suggested something more should be done for the families in view of the hardships they have endured, Sohre and Fitzgerald said.

The program "was certainly prompted by the need to [extend and] redeploy troops," Sohre said.

First on the list were nine Northern League baseball players, who spent this past weekend touring bases.

Late next week, Scott Cranford, an actor also known as "the official Superman of Metropolis, Ill.," will begin a nine-day tour of Army bases in Germany. His itinerary is as follows:

- June 26Baumholder
- June 28Wiesbaden
- June 29Hanau
- June 30Giessen
- July 1Würzburg
- July 2Katterbach
- July 3Bamberg
- July 4Schweinfurt

Other celebrities taking part in the program include professional football players Deuce McAllister of the New Orleans Saints and Jason Sehorn of the St. Louis Rams; NASCAR driver Ernie Ivan; Olympians Dara Torres (swimmer) and Shane Hamman (weightlifter); the Seattle Sea Gals cheerleaders; and fitness expert Billy Banks.

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