

Diverse acts set to play for 1st AD return

BY TERRY BOYD

Stars and Stripes

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — Installation Management Agency-Europe is welcoming home 1st Armored Division troops with world-class entertainment at 1st AD bases across western Germany.

Many of the bands and comics will then travel to entertain other troops in Iraq, Britain, the Balkans, elsewhere in Germany and at remote bases in the Middle East.

The acts include:

■ Sawyer Brown, the veteran country band that has had five No. 1 hits and multiple platinum albums over a 25-year recording career.

■ The Mavericks, a country/rock/Latino band best known for its No. 1 record, "Crying Shame."

■ Puddle of Mudd, an alternative rock band that's touring to support its new album "Life on Display," which includes the hit song "Away from Me."

■ Comedian Chris Titus, who had his own Fox sitcom, "Titus."

■ Comedian A.J. Jamal, a regular on television comedy showcases such as "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

The acts were chosen to appeal to the entire military community, not just the Army's core 18- to 25-year-old demographic, said Jim Sohre, entertainment director at IMA-Europe headquarters in Heidelberg. "We want to hit as many types of music, as many [demographics] as we can," Sohre said.

To come up with a high-interest rock act, Sohre said he polled young gate guards.

"I'd say, 'Do you like Puddle of Mudd? Would you go see them?' And they said, 'Yeah!' They really reacted to this," Sohre said. "The acts they were most interested in seeing were Puddle of Mudd, Korn and Limp Bizkit."

IMA-E officials used civilian agencies to find acts that could fit the 1st AD events into their schedules, Sohre said.

"We cast a very wide net," Sohre said. "We told them, 'Here's the caliber we want.' We had a lot of acts interested but not available. On several occasions, we almost had an act lined up



Photo courtesy of Puddle of Mudd



Photo courtesy of Chris Titus

Welcome home ceremonies for troops

Alternative rock band Puddle of Mudd, above left, and comedian Chris Titus, above right, will be the headline entertainment for 1st Armored Division welcome home celebrations:

■ Sept. 10 for 2nd Brigade/Divarty headquarters in Baumholder. The show starts 7

p.m.

■ Sept. 15 at Ray Barracks, Friedberg, 1st Brigade headquarters. The show is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Mavericks will headline the 4th Brigade Headquarters celebration in Hanau, Germany, on Sept. 17.

Sawyer Brown will be the featured act for the headquarters celebration Oct. 7 in Wiesbaden, with comic A.J. Jamal on the bill.

Opening each celebration is the Top 40 band Custom Made, which is recently back from entertaining deployed soldiers in the Balkans and Iraq.

[only to have] tour changes or record promotion come up," he said. "But we think we ended up with a really good balance."

All shows will be free. A Department of Defense identification card is all that's required for admission, Sohre said.

Puddle of Mudd will play Baumholder on Sept. 10. After Baumholder, the band goes to Iraq for a show, then back to Friedberg for a Sept. 15 concert, Sohre said.

The Mavericks are scheduled to go on to Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina after playing Hanau on Sept. 17. Chris Titus will do solo shows Sept. 11 at Spangdahlem's Brick House and Sept. 30 at RAF Mildenhall's Galaxy Club in England.

"We're getting a lot of mileage out of these acts," Sohre said.

Perhaps the most established act is Sawyer Brown. In more than two decades of recording, the band has had three No. 1 country hits, "Step That Step," "Some Girls Do" and "Thank God for You."

Their 1995 album, "This Thing Called Wantin' and Havin' It All," produced five top-10 hits including "Treat Her Right."

By comparison, Puddle of Mudd is a relative newcomer, though its 2001 debut album, "Come Clean" went platinum. The Kansas City, Mo.-based quartet has had several hits, including "Heel Over Head," and has opened for Nickelback and Detroit rocker/rapper Kid Rock.

Comedian Titus had his own sitcom series, "Titus," on Fox from 2000 through 2002. The show was based on his own dysfunctional family.

"Once you've driven your drunk father to your mom's parole hearing ... what else is there," is one of his signature lines.

Comedian and impressionist Jamal — a former IBM computer engineer — has appeared as part of the "In Living Color" ensemble comedy group, on Comedy Central and on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

His material is family-friendly, according to reviews, and Jamal also has his own animation pro-

duction company, A.J. and Imagine Films. In addition, he wrote, directed and produced a just-released movie, "Super-Spy," spoofing James Bond films.

Each show should be "a real concert experience," with stages and lighting within the limits of a military base, Sohre said. Most acts have specific contract riders stating their requirements, some of which the military can't accommodate, he said.

"They make lots of concessions," often waiving fees, travel and hotel demands just to be able to play for troops, Sohre said.

"The people who come and do this are doing it for all the right reasons," he said.

E-mail Terry Boyd at: boydt@mail.estripes.osd.mil