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TAGLIABUE & UPSHAW TO LEAD ACTIVE/FORMER PLAYERS ON USO MEMORIAL DAY VISIT TO INJURED SOLDIERS IN GERMANY

The NFL will bring a piece of America overseas to injured U.S. soldiers this Memorial Day weekend.

A group of NFL representatives – Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE**, NFL Players Association Executive Director **GENE UPSHAW**, Philadelphia Eagles safety **BRIAN DAWKINS**, New York Giants defensive end **MICHAEL STRAHAN**, and Pro Football Hall of Famer **MIKE HAYNES** – will visit injured American troops this Sunday at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

The visit is sponsored by the USO in the 40th year of its association with the NFL.

The day before the visit to Landstuhl, the NFL group will attend the NFL Europe League's title game, World Bowl XIV, in Düsseldorf, Germany between the Amsterdam Admirals and Frankfurt Galaxy.

Soldiers who are wounded in Iraq, Afghanistan and other bases in the vicinity or in Europe and in need of critical care are transferred directly from the battlefield to Landstuhl within 48 hours of injury.

"These young men and women put their lives on the line to defend our country," said Tagliabue. "They make every citizen in the U.S. proud. It is our honor to visit them on Memorial Day weekend."

This will be the second NFL-USO overseas visit to U.S. troops this year. Defensive ends **PATRICK KERNEY** of the Atlanta Falcons and **BRYCE FISHER** of the Seattle Seahawks and Pittsburgh Steelers tackle **MAX STARKS** spent two weeks this spring visiting military bases in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans.

It is the second overseas military visit for Commissioner Tagliabue in the past three years. In 2004 he joined **TODD HEAP** of the Baltimore Ravens and **WARRICK DUNN** and **KEITH BROOKING** of the Falcons at U.S. bases in Germany.

In 1965, NFL Commissioner **PETE ROZELLE** – to demonstrate the league's support for America's fighting forces – conceived of the idea of sending NFL players to Vietnam on "goodwill tours."

The following year, the NFL teamed with the USO and became the first sports organization to send a group of players to Vietnam and other parts of Asia.

"Commissioner Tagliabue's commitment to meet with and tell our military – face-to-face – how appreciative and proud the NFL is of them is clearly evidenced by the league's annual visits to military installations around the world," said **WALTER MURREN**, vice president of USO operations in Europe. "Those trips immeasurably increase the morale of service members and their families."

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