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Friday, April 28, 2006

Womack to head Stadium of Fire

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DOUG FOX - Daily Herald

Beginning today, patrons buying tickets to this year's Stadium of Fire spectacular will actually know who is headlining the event.

And that will be Lee Ann Womack, the Daily Herald has learned.

Tickets for Stadium of Fire, scheduled for July 1 at LaVell Edwards Stadium, went on sale Saturday -- without the names of the acts booked to perform.

Officials of America's Freedom Festival at Provo, which organizes the annual event, are scheduled to make the

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official announcement later today.

Womack, who has won multiple Grammy and Country Music Association awards during her career, will be joined on the bill by Keni Thomas and Cornbread, among other acts.

It's hard to imagine Freedom Festival organizers finding a more perfect fit for the Stadium of Fire theme than Thomas. Not only did he serve in the military -- earning the Bronze Star for Valor and the Combat Infantryman's Badge as an Army Ranger while fighting in the Somalian battle that was the basis for the book and motion picture "Black Hawk Down" -- but his debut album, "Flags of Our Fathers; A Soldier's Story" is culled from his unique military perspective.

"Every writer is influenced by life," Thomas said in a phone interview Thursday night from a Nashville recording studio. "Some people have gone through divorce, some people have gone through drinking and some people have gone through breakups. One of the things that I can talk about is stories I've learned from having been in the military, which is a unique thing. We actually did the whole record just for that."

Thomas enlisted the help of several big-name guest artists to appear on the record, including Kenny Rogers, Michael McDonald, Emmylou Harris and Vince Gill among others.

"Some (songs) were happy. Some were sad. Some were pretty motivational and some were just rockin'," Thomas said. "It was a concept record, because we knew that you wouldn't be able to do this for the rest of your career."

Thomas said the Stadium of Fire show will be his first performance in the Beehive State, noting it is a special thrill that it will also tie into his military background.

"Anything that has to do with veterans and the military, when they think of me to ask ... it's a privilege," he said. "I never take that for granted."

Womack has released seven albums, with "There's More

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Where That Came From" being the latest. She earned three CMA awards in 2005 -- including single of the year for "I May Hate Myself in the Morning," album of the year for "There's More ... " and best musical event for "Good News, Bad News" with George Strait. She's up for three more CMA awards this year.

She won Grammys in 2002 (country vocal event of the year, "Mendocino County Line") and in 2001 (best country song, "I Hope You Dance").

Womack also has been supportive of American troops. She recently partnered up with the Web site AnySoldier.com to help supply soldiers serving overseas with care packages and other items they may need.

Tickets for Stadium of Fire can be purchased by calling the BYU ticket office (800-322-BYU1) or online at www.byutickets.com. Prices range from \$20 - \$100.

This story appeared in The Daily Herald on page A1.

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