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Men's Basketball Coach Gregory Selected for USO Tour

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University of Dayton basketball coach Brian Gregory is one of eight coaches chosen to travel to the Persian Gulf and visit troops as part of Operation Hardwood V, a USO/Armed Forces entertainment tour.

Fran Fraschilla, ESPN basketball analyst; Jeff Jones, American University head men's basketball coach; Reggie Minton, deputy director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches; Tom Pecora, Hofstra University head men's basketball coach; Barry Rohrssen, Manhattan College head men's basketball coach; Tom Schuberth, University of Texas-Pan American head men's basketball coach and Jerry Wainwright, DePaul University head basketball coach will join Gregory on the trip.

"These men and women sacrifice so much to serve our country," Gregory said. "For me to be given the opportunity to show our support is unbelievable. I'm very, very honored to be a part of it. For eight days, we hope to give them a little fun and bring a little bit of home back to them. These people are the heroes of today. They put themselves in harm's way every day, and it will be a great honor to be with them over there."

Operation Hardwood V will kick off in Washington, D.C., where the group will meet service members receiving care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center. After that, the coaches and sports personalities will journey overseas to spend time with troops, tour military vessels, pose for pictures and sign autographs.

The tour features a week-long basketball tournament and championship game with some of the best military players stationed overseas.

Created to boost morale and bring a touch of home to the troops, Operation Hardwood has deployed more than 35 NCAA basketball coaches and sports personalities to Kuwait and Japan.

Lt. Col. Chuck Schretzman is the commander of the University of Dayton's Army ROTC program and a professor of military science. He knows firsthand what tours such as Operation Hardwood mean.

"This fantastic program allows these soldiers valuable time away from the daily drudgeries of a war zone, to forget for a little while where they are and to experience a piece of home," Schretzman said. "I can tell you as a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan: The soldiers will absolutely enjoy their time with Coach Gregory. I am proud that he can bring a little of UD to our troops over there."

Jay Bilas, ESPN college basketball analyst; Mike Brey, University of Notre Dame head men's basketball coach; Tom Izzo, Michigan State University men's basketball coach; and Tubby Smith, University of Minnesota head men's basketball coach are among the basketball luminaries who have participated in previous tours.

"I've talked with coaches who have been a part of the Operation Hardwood tours, and they have all said what a rewarding experience it is," Gregory added.

The USO (United Service Organizations) provides morale, welfare and recreational services to U.S. military personnel and their families. The USO is a nonprofit, charitable organization, relying on the generosity of the American people to support its programs and services. To learn more about the USO, click on the related link.

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