

Falcons football coach Calhoun looking forward to visiting troops

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[JAKE SCHALLER](#)

During the next 10 days, Troy Calhoun figures he'll give some talks, do some listening and maybe even coach some touch football.

Most importantly, however, Air Force's football coach plans to say "thanks."

Calhoun will depart today on the second annual Under Armour Coaches Tour, which visits U.S. troops serving overseas. Along with former Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville and coaches Mack Brown of Texas, Jim Tressel of Ohio State, Rick Neuheisel of UCLA and Houston Nutt of Mississippi, he'll make stops in Europe and the Middle East.

"It's just the gratitude - being able to say, 'Thank you,'" said Calhoun, a 1989 Air Force graduate. "You just have immense admiration for the professionalism, the dedication and just the heart when it comes to serving our country that the young women and young men have in all branches of service, especially those that are deployed. ... I think all of us are looking forward to looking into the eyes and shaking the hands of the young men and young women that are serving our country, especially in that area of the globe."

The tour will depart from McConnell Air Force Base just outside of Wichita, Kan., and fly to Germany. They'll visit troops in a hospital, go to Turkey and several spots in the Middle East and then stop at a base outside of Spain before returning June 5.

Calhoun said he'll likely see troops he knows, including former football players. He said he has received "a ton of e-mails" from players.

"You can't wait to see those guys," he said. "These guys, they're as strong as they come."