

# MIZZOU

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[Home](#) » [Winter 2010](#) » [Alumni Profiles](#) » [Surviving an attack](#)

## Alumni Profile

### Surviving an attack

A sandstorm howled through Baghdad on June 28, 2009, as Lt. Col. Tim Karcher was en route to the third and final ceremony for the handover of power to Iraqi forces in Sadr City. He never made it.

Instead, insurgents attacked his convoy, and an explosively formed projectile ripped through the armor of his mine resistant ambush protected vehicle. Karcher was the only one injured in the attack. Both of his legs were badly injured.

“My personal security detachment saved my life,” said Karcher, BA ’89, a second-generation member of the Army and a Mizzou ROTC graduate. A personal security detachment is a group of soldiers that protect commanders in combat zones.

After emergency treatment in a field hospital in Iraq, the Army flew him to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and then to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Doctors amputated both of his legs.

As if his position as commander of the Army's 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, isn't enough to qualify him as a warrior, he battled his way out of the intensive care unit at Walter Reed on four occasions.



Abbey Karcher greets her father Lt. Col. Tim Karcher after being dismissed from class at Mountain View Elementary School in Harker Heights, Texas. This was Tim's first visit to his daughter's school since beginning therapy for injuries sustained in Iraq.

“I wasn’t ready to leave yet,” he said. “I enjoy life too much.”




Karcher is now undergoing rehab at the Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Doctors are strengthening the muscles his body uses to walk on stilts — as those are the ones that control prosthetic legs. It takes a year to heal after this type of injury, and he is expected to make a full recovery.

Alesia Karcher, BHS ’90, Tim’s wife, attributes his recovery to his physical and mental fitness, faith in God and overwhelming support from friends and family, including the couple’s three daughters: Anna, 14, Audrey, 13, and Abbey, 7.

“I don’t feel like it’s the most horrible thing that could happen,” Karcher says with characteristic optimism. “And I’m really looking forward to taking those new first steps.” — *David Wietlispach*

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