

Explosion in Baghdad rocks GI's life plans

**Soldier who lost part of
his hand believes he can
teach about challenges.**

By Phillip O'Connor
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Within a day or two of returning home this month, Army Spc. Tim Taylor strode into a Florissant sporting goods store, slipped what remained of his left hand around a hockey stick and took a few ginger swipes at an imaginary puck.

As a young boy, Taylor filled almost every spare moment playing hockey in the street, on empty parking lots or in skating rinks not far from his parents' home in north St. Louis County. At McCluer High School, he played on the club roller hockey team and dreamed of one day making it to the pros.

But on Oct. 27, about 3:30 p.m., Taylor was driving a Humvee through the streets of Baghdad as a member of the 3rd Infantry Division, escorting private security contractors.

By then, the 20-year-old had given up his dream of playing pro hockey. He had instead decided to be a police officer, and he and his dad both thought the military might be good training for a law enforcement career. So Taylor signed on for three years and headed to basic training right after he graduated from high school in 2003.

Taylor doesn't remember anything about the improvised explosive device that went off as his eight-vehicle convoy crossed an overpass just 15 minutes short

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Tim Taylor, of O'Fallon, Mo., was featured in a 2005 story in the Post-Dispatch. He's now a member of Blues Warriors Hockey, a team made up of military veterans.

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