



Building Homes for Heroes

Army Sergeant Charles "Clay" Claybaker



St. Petersburg, Florida





Sgt. Charles "Clay" Claybaker



Hero Story

On April 9, 2010, Army Sergeant Charles "Clay" Claybaker of the 75th Ranger Regiment, a Special Operations light infantry elite unit, was severely wounded in the Zabul Province of Afghanistan when his aircraft, an Air Force CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor, crashed. His unit's night mission was to capture/kill a high value target (HVT). An Osprey is an aircraft that takes off and lands vertically like a helicopter and flies like a plane by tilting its wing-mounted rotors to function as propellers. Its flexibility, speed, range, and efficiency enables the osprey to perform such missions as troop/cargo transport, amphibious assault, special operations, and search and rescue operations.

While in flight, the aircraft had a 17 mph tailwind. Due to the speed of the aircraft and the tailwind, the aircraft overshot its landing and hit the ground at about 90 miles per hour. The aircraft is designed to land at approximately 10 miles per hour. Upon impact, the landing gear collapsed and the aircraft flipped over before coming to a halt about 500 meters away. The aircraft caught fire and its wings broke off. The pilot, flight engineer, an Army Ranger, and a civilian contract employee were killed, while 16 were wounded.

Sgt. Claymaker dislocated his right hip, broke his acetabulum (the surface of the pelvis that meets the femur to form the hip joint), had a right tibia plateau fracture, a shattered tibia/fibia post fracture at the right ankle, a double right leg fasciotomy, several damaged discs throughout his back, a traumatic brain injury, and issues with post traumatic stress disorder.

Sgt. Claybaker earned the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (4x), Army Commendation Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Ranger Tab, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, US Army Parachutist Badge, Chilean Parachutist Badge, Ecuadorian Parachutist Badge, and the Guatemalan Parachutist Badge.

Claybaker and his wife Kandice would like to live in Hillsborough or Pinellas county.





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Kandice Claymaker welcomed her husband home to Fort Benning (Georgia) when his unit returned from its first deployment in 2007.





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Charles Claymaker and 15 others were severely injured when their CV-22 Osprey crashed in Afghanistan. The pilot, flight engineer, an Army Ranger, and a civilian contract employee were killed.





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Injuries to Sgt. Claymaker's leg were so severe, doctors thought they would have to amputate.





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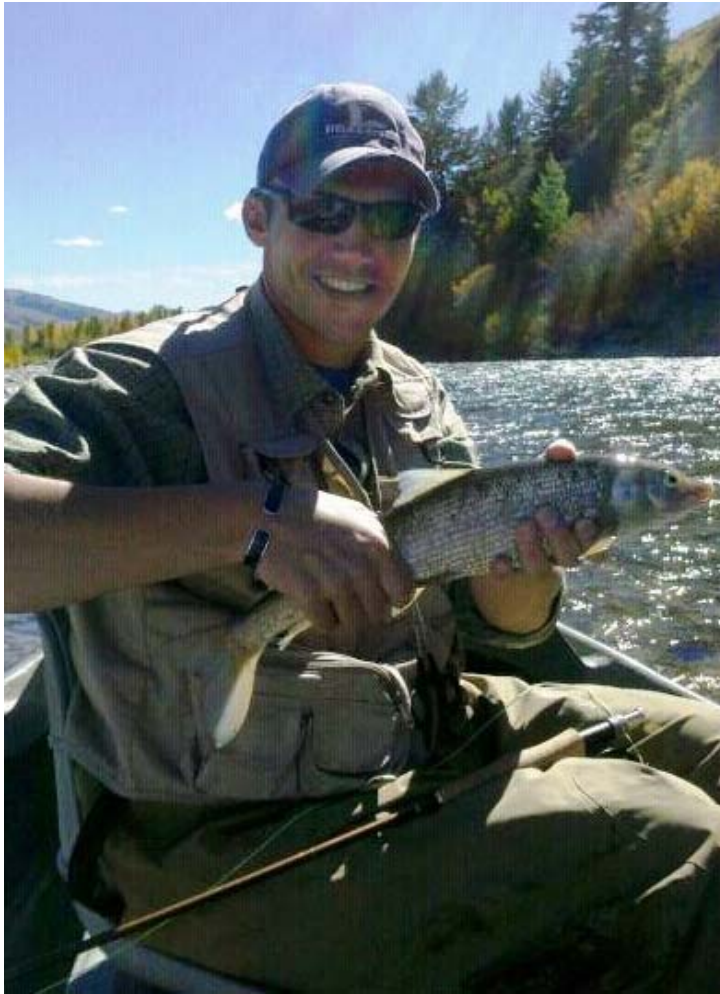
Charles & Kandice Claybaker at the annual Army Ranger Ball.





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Sgt. Claybaker fishing at Veterans Retreat events in Wyoming (left) and Louisiana.





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Charles & Kandice Claybaker

