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A Marine from N.J. lost his legs and sight, so a group built him a voice-activated, smart home

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Three years ago, Scott Nokes woke up from a coma.

The Marine had contracted dysentery during both of his tours of Afghanistan, but he was still walking when he discharged in 2013. He twice ran up the One World Trade Center to help raise money for charity, and was planning on running in another fundraiser when infections took hold.

Both legs were amputated below his knee. His right eye stopped working, and he lost most of the vision in his left.

On Monday, the same organization for which he climbed 104 flights of stairs gifted him with a home built to accommodate his injuries.

“It took a village to build this house,” Nokes, 28, told NJ Advance Media Thursday, while sitting in a recliner in his new living room in Howell. “There’s still good in the world.”

The Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation, a Staten Island-based nonprofit, built the home over five months, according to an organization spokeswoman. It’s the group’s first “smart home” in New Jersey.

The 2,800 square-foot house is mortgage free. The toilet automatically flushes and buttons open doors. Different-colored light switches will help Nokes tell rooms apart at night. There’s even a place for a caretaker to live, Nokes said, if he ever needs more help.

Nokes is currently living with his parents while they make final adjustments. Using an iPad and Amazon’s Alexa, he’ll eventually be able to control the oven and schedule when he wants the blinds to open.

The foundation had created a 3D model for him to feel, but the final product still took him aback.

“This house is huge!” he said, before repeatedly thanking everybody who worked on it. He also thanked staff at Hackensack Meridian Health Subacute Rehabilitation, in Wall Township, and the occupational therapists at the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, for helping him move again after infections initially rendered him “a vegetable.”

Nokes had wanted to join the Marines since he was a toddler, growing up in Neptune, he said.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks solidified that resolve. His parents helped him enlist when he was 17, and he was in boot camp soon after high school.

After serving abroad, he volunteered as a firefighter and looked for a charity to support. He thought a race up the World Trade Center would be a fitting way to honor 9/11 first responders, and he recently made the climb again as a double-amputee.

John Ponte, the man in charge of the foundation's smart home program, posted video and photographs of Nokes' new house online.

Smart homes generally cost about half-a-million dollars, said Caroline Magyarits, a spokeswoman for the foundation.

The group reported building more than 60 other similar homes for veterans around the country, and has more than a dozen underway, including another in New Jersey. In Blairstown in July, it gifted a home to the family of a soldier killed in Afghanistan.

And it's also raising money for the family of Joseph Seals, the Jersey City detective killed earlier this month at the beginning of a mass shooting.