

Injured U.S. Army veteran hero thanked with new home

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By **David Foster** | **The Express-Times**



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With a flag on his lap that had flown over the capital building, Rob Kislow salutes the Patriot Guard that gave him a pin honoring his service. The Patriot Guard is a diverse amalgamation of riders from around the nation that honor fallen soldiers at funeral services across the country. With Rob is his fiancée, Amanda, and his son, Brayden, 4-months-old.

When U.S. Army Spc. **Rob Kislow** told a crowd today of approximately 300 people that he didn't deserve a home that was donated to him from a nonprofit organization, the group filled with veterans, bikers, politicians and family responded "Yes you do" with applause.

Kislow, 25, was given the keys to his new 2,600-square-foot home in **Moore Township** today from **Homes for our Troops**.

Kislow, an 82nd Airborne Division veteran, was shot five times in Afghanistan six years ago when his unit was attacked by Taliban fighters. He was hit in the back of the head, twice in the right leg and once in his right arm. His right leg was eventually amputated.

"There are no words to describe what this will do for me, my family and my future," Kislow said during his speech.

Kislow was escorted by no other than racing legend **Mario Andretti** to his home on the 3000 block of Delps Road.

"This shows some of the positive that comes out of so many negative things," said Andretti, who joked he did a couple of tire-burnouts in his grey Corvette with Kislow as a passenger. **"It's so rewarding to see the community come together by giving time up and the local companies donating materials."**

Andretti also spent 12 days in January with troops overseas.

“After this life-changing event, there is now a degree of sunshine through this,” Andretti said. **“We can see here today a stunning example of how beautiful human spirit can be.”**

The road to recovery has been long for Kislow, who spent two years in the Walter Reed Army Medial Center in Washington, D.C.

Kislow’s grandfather, Robert Kislow Sr., took the trip to Walter Reed so often he could do it with his **“eyes closed,”** he said.

“It’s a great honor to my grandson and all service people,” Kislow Sr. said of the home donation, noting he served in the military in the 50s. **“I can’t relate what he went through. I’m so proud of him.”**

With all the celebrities Kislow met at Walter Reed and Homes for our Troops, he still cites his grandfather as his biggest influence.

“He never left my side through any of this,” Kislow said.

At the same time Kislow was at Walter Reed, the veterans liaison for Homes for our Troops recuperated at the hospital.

“I can’t take care of the troop in the battlefield anymore, so I get a great sense of looking out for them in the aftermath,” said Larry Gill, who is a 22-year veteran with two Purple Hearts.

Gill said the home took four to five months to build.

“Enough people in the U.S. generally love the men and women who serve,” Gill said. **“People jumped on the opportunity to say thank you by swinging a hammer or serving volunteers food and drink.”**

Homes for our Troop has now completed more than 100 homes since it formed in February 2004, according to Gill.

U.S. Rep Charlie Dent, R-Lehigh Valley, who attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony, said he met Kislow at Walter Reed.

“I met him and he told me he 'wanted to get on with his life,'” Dent said during his speech. **“He certainly got on with his life.”**

Kislow will be joined at his new home by his fiancée, Amanda Snyder, and their 4-month-old son, Brayden Hunter Kislow.

The wheelchair accessible home was custom-built by contractor Mike Kemmerer for Kislow, who wears a prosthetic leg.

Kislow Sr. said the family planned to move in this afternoon and that a U-Haul truck is already in his driveway.

Kislow knows there is work still to be done for his fellow veterans.

“It’s amazing and I’m not going to let it end,” Kislow said. **“There’s a lot of fundraising that needs to be done, and other guys need a home.”**



Rob Kislow received a grand reception as he approached his new home in Mario Andretti's Corvette. Kislow is an 82nd Airborne Division veteran who was shot and injured in Afghanistan six years ago. Express-Times Photo | JIM MIDDLEKAUFF



Rob Kislow cuts the ribbon at the entrance to his new home with his fiance Amanda by his side. At the extreme left is the home's general contractor, Mike Kemmerer, and on the extreme right is Mario Andretti. Express-Times Photo | JIM MIDDLEKAUFF