

Protecting a Promise. Renewing a Trust.

The Armed Forces Retirement Home is the premier retirement community for military retirees and veterans with locations in Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi.

HISTORY

Congress established a home for destitute Navy officers, sailors and Marines in Philadelphia during the War of 1812. Forty years later, Congress established an asylum for old and disabled soldiers in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Naval Home eventually moved from Philadelphia to Gulfport, Mississippi and the U.S. Soldiers and Airmen's Home stayed in Washington. For many years, they operated separately. Congress passed a law combining the two facilities into the Armed Forces Retirement Home 14 years ago.

KATRINA

Hurricane Katrina decimated the Gulfport campus leaving 416 veterans homeless in 2005. Due to the heroic efforts of the Home staff, the veterans were all safely evacuated – some on stretchers in a C130, the ambulatory on a fleet of 11 buses – within 24 hours. Most came to Washington where they remain. Congress is reviewing five options for the future of Gulfport.

MISSION

The Armed Forces Retirement Home provides an affordable, comfortable, beautiful home to America's heroes. The facility provides a continuum of care including outpatient dental and medical services, hospital and long term nursing care, three meals a day, private rooms, and extensive recreational facilities including a state of the art gym, a nine-hole golf course, artists' studios and a wood working shop. The Home guarantees its retired enlisted men and women a caring and secure home in their old age.

FINANCES

The Home is an independent federal agency funded by a permanent Trust Fund. The fund is made up of the 50 cent per month payroll deductions of active duty military personnel, fines and forfeitures from the Armed Forces and investment income. The Armed Forces Retirement Home is self-sustaining. It does not receive an annual appropriation from Congress. Several years ago, expenses outstripped revenues and began depleting the Trust Fund. In less than ten years, the Trust Fund plunged from \$156 million to \$94 million. Congress recognized the state of the Home's precarious finances and approved legislation as part of the 2002 Defense Authorization Act, granting permission to the Secretary of Defense to sell or lease land as part of an overall fiscal strategy. Congress instructed the Home to replenish the Trust Fund and put finances on a sturdier footing by leasing unused buildings and land to compatible tenants. Further, Congress required the Home to modernize and improve operations and hire professional and experienced retirement facility administrators.

FINANCIAL PROGRESS

The Home sold 49 acres of under utilized land on the Washington campus to Catholic University of America for \$22.3 million and two beachfront properties in Gulfport for \$1 million in 2004. This gave a one time boost to the Trust Fund which increased to \$118 million in 2005. The Home cannot continue to sell off its land. The Home must find savings and generate revenue in other ways. To that end, the new administrators began to implement new business processes to unify the operations of the two campuses, reduce staff redundancy and outmoded positions and new cost effective ways to deliver services. For example, the Home is now using the Bureau of Public Debt to provide accounting, property management and web site services and has transferred its payroll and personnel work to the National Finance Center. It has made changes to realize significant savings in transportation and refuse removal, grounds and facility maintenance, security and dining services. The Home is moving ahead with development of a Master Plan for use of underused property on the Washington campus.