As soldiers stream home from Iraq and Afghanistan, the biggest charity inside the U.S. military has been stockpiling tens of millions of dollars meant to help put returning fighters back on their feet, an Associated Press investigation shows.

Between 2003 and 2007 — as many military families dealt with long war deployments and increased numbers of home foreclosures — Army Emergency Relief grew into a $345 million behemoth. During those years, the charity packed away $117 million into its own reserves while spending just $64 million on direct aid, according to an AP analysis of its tax records.

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