



Courtesy photo

DON'T CALL IT A TENT: The Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter, or DRASH, is a quick-erect shelter system that integrates shelter, mobility, lighting, heating, cooling and power in one package.

DRASH provides shelter for military personnel

Facility in DuPont serves as Western Regional support center

BY MELISSA RENAHAN

Most members of the military know what a DRASH is and what its all about mainly because if they've deployed within the last five years they've either worked or lived in a DRASH shelter.

The shelters are a fully contained system, complete with electricity and an environmental control unit. DRASH also deals in deployable command and control equipment, which allows for total audio-visual surveillance of everything happening within the Tactical Operations Center.

In 2008, DRASH manufacturer DHS Technologies LLC was awarded a \$240 million multi-year contract with the U.S. Army to provide the next generation of Command Post Equipment through their Trailer Mounted Support System (TMSS). At the same time, they opened a Western Regional Support facility adjacent to then Fort Lewis, in DuPont.

"We got as close as we could to base since there was no room on the actual base," said Hoyle Hodges, who is the Western Regional manager. "We have someone on call at all times to deal with the greater JBLM and Yakima area."

The local facility, which measures in at 15,000 square feet and has a staff of eight, is large enough to store an entire brigade's worth of equipment at once and has the capability to handle repairs, retrofitting, training and demonstrations for their

customers.

"We can relate to the soldiers we're dealing with since many of us are former military," said Hodges, who retired in 2004 as a command sergeant major after 24 years in the Army.

Currently, DRASH has outfitted the U.S. military and NATO with 17,000 shelters and 7,500 trailers. The Army, when taking into account its active duty, reserve and National Guard branches, is the largest customer from the military. To date, DRASH has worked with every Army brigade and battalion on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, with the exception of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which is scheduled to be fielded with DRASH TMSS equipment in March.

They are also in talks with the Tacoma Police Department, which is looking to acquire a combination of military and civilian gear, as DRASH also specializes in First Responder equipment.

On Aug. 18, the DuPont DRASH location, 2620 Williamson Place, Suite 149, will host a Disaster Management Demonstration from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event, which is open to the public, will show off a 50-bed mobile field hospital, decontamination equipment and the set up of a an Incident Command Post, which can be used at a regional, state and national level.

"Our products continue to improve based on the feedback we get from soldiers," Hodges said. "As more continue to use it and be trained on it, we can continue to react to their feedback and make things better. That is always our goal."