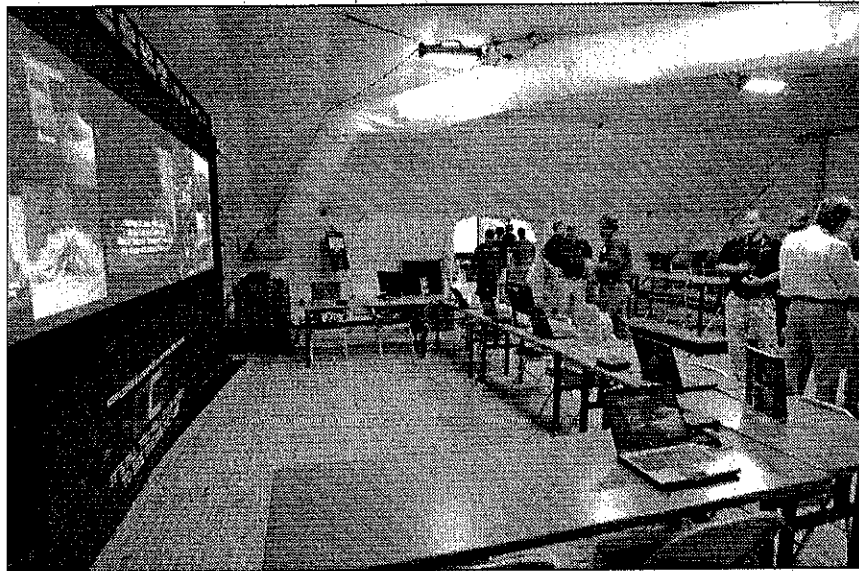


## The business of government



Photos by Michael Mercler/The Huntsville Times

DHS Systems, which has a manufacturing facility in Tanner, showcases its Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelters in a field in Madison. At left is inside the J shelter, one of the largest the company manufactures. It is set up as a tactical operations center. At right is a self-contained field hospital. For more photos, visit [photos.al.com/huntsville-times](http://photos.al.com/huntsville-times).

# Not your granddad's Army tent

Shelter-maker displays units that are versatile, quick, easy to assemble

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It looked a bit like someone was filming a 21st Century version of MASH. But the grouping of khaki-colored, soft-walled shelters that drivers saw Wednesday in the fields on the south side of Interstate 565 near Madison was actually a product demonstration for DHS Systems, makers of the DRASH - Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter - and of Reeves emergency management equipment.

### On the Net

DHS Systems: [drash.com](http://drash.com)

These are definitely not the canvas-and-wood Tactical Operations Centers or mess tents seen in old movies and TV shows. Generally, a complete DRASH system includes the shelter material and framework, an electricity generator, heating and air conditioning and other systems, all mounted on a trailer that can be pulled where needed to create a quick Incident Command Post, medical treatment center, decontamination facility, dining area, barracks - you name it, said Kevin Shirey, a DRASH

business development representative from its Fort Bragg office.

"They're fast to set up, fast to strike," he said, but they can still take bad weather and winds of 50 to 60 miles an hour.

Shirey was a longtime infantryman who became familiar with DRASH products as a user - at Fort Bragg and Afghanistan, among other places - before going to work for the company.

"I still get to deal with soldiers," he said, adding that now he tries to make their lives easier by providing them with easy-to-set-up TOCs and other facilities.

There is a range of sizes but even the larger ones - 1,200

square feet or more - can be up and running in an hour with about six people, he said. The frame, graphite-based and modeled on a geodesic dome, collapses to about a third of its assembled volume.

Among the shelters on display was a 1,915 square-foot DRASH designed with 32-foot wide clamshell door, making it a durable, weather-protected portable hangar in which soldiers can easily store and maintain Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

The shelters can be interconnected to form a complex of rooms, and the company showed off new computer technology that manages the generators from multiple trailers, forming an intelligent

power grid to reduce overall fuel consumption by a third, Shirey said.

Inside a DRASH, white walls make best use of the lights suspended from loops in the fabric, and cloth ductwork for the air conditioning blended into the roof and walls.

The air conditioning is a necessity for the communications, weapons management and other tools of modern warfare and emergency management.

"The soldiers benefit from the AC, but the AC was developed for all the electronics and computer systems," Shirey said. "Not only do you

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# Tent

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have to keep them cool, you have to keep them out of the elements."

DHS Systems sponsored the demonstration this week for its Army customers as well as law enforcement, hospitals, emergency management and disaster response agencies and others who might use their shelters. According to the company,

more than 17,000 shelters and 7,500 trailers are in use around the world among all branches of the U.S. military and NATO, among others.

The DRASH shelter walls and materials are made in Orangeburg, N.Y., then shipped to the company's

130,000 square foot facility in Tanner, where about 180 employees build the trailers and the entire system - including generators, heating and air conditioning units, communications systems and more - is integrated for final delivery to customers.