

# GS&M/DOD

## DRASH shelter systems provide major support during 2005 hurricanes

By Naaran Rubio  
DHS Systems, LLC

Last year Hurricane Katrina devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast as well as numerous surrounding areas. In the aftermath of this horrific storm, many different government agencies were deployed to help with the relief effort, spending weeks wading through swampy ground and flooded areas, not only to help the victims of the storm but the emergency medical services (EMS) teams as well.

In a situation where there were no shelters, showers or even fuel, military crews deployed on the scene had to fend for themselves as well as provide for those trying to help the victims of Katrina. During this time, life support

areas, or shelters that each unit could use as a command base for basics, such as showering or sleeping were at a premium.

To fulfill this need, DHS Systems, a leading manufacturer of high-tech, soft-wall tent shelters, or Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter (DRASH) systems, set up and provided customer support for more than 100 shelters and related equipment for both civilian and military organizations helping with the relief effort. Government units supported by DHS included the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the 82nd Airborne Division, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau, 13th Core Support Command, 14th Combat Support Hospital (CSH), JTF Katrina's 93rd Signal Brigade, the 24th

Marine Expeditionary Unit and 621st AMOG.

"One thing that is hardly reported in the news is how recovery personnel were trying to do their jobs without basic supplies, such as diesel or gas," says Matt Muser, a DHS technician and former airborne infantryman for the 82nd Airborne Division. "That's where the government units came in. They were supposed to be completely self-sufficient, so they could help the civilian organizations."

To help the relief effort, both Muser and colleague Roy Price, also a former 82nd man, spent their time in New Orleans' Algiers Parish working around the clock to service DRASH equipment for the 82nd Airborne Division and other units stationed in the area.

"All of the unit's shelters and facilities were completely consumed," says Muser. "They even had to take over an abandoned bowling alley in order to make space for the hundreds of soldiers, American Red Cross and first aid workers."

According to Price, the air conditioners (in the bowling alley) were inoperable and the only way that they could make the space livable in the intense heat was by installing a DRASH 12 ton, 35k ECU (environmental control unit) in an upstairs window.

DHS, through its sister company Reeves EMS, also sent numerous systems to Gulfport, Mississippi, providing life support areas for the Mississippi State Police personnel.

"Before we brought the shelters and equipment to the area, the workers were sleeping in their cars and using a 48-

foot box as a headquarters facility," says Mark Wlazlak, a Reeves EMS business development representative who worked with DHS colleagues Brad Stobb and Business Development Manager Jeff Jackson during most of the month of September to service the equipment and provide logistical support.

The systems provided a sleeping, showering and laundry area for the more than 200 on-scene law enforcement officers, and helped to make hot and humid living conditions a little more bearable with onsite air conditioning.

"Compared to Algiers, Gulfport was heaven," says Muser, who spent a total of 44 days in both regions. "It was good to be a part of something where we were helping to make life a little more comfortable for the soldiers and workers. I wish I had this when I was serving in the air force," he adds wistfully.

The Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter, or DRASH, is a mobile, quick-erect/strike shelter system that integrates shelter, mobility, lighting, heating, cooling and power distribution. The DRASH product features five different series of shelters with 42 models of multiple widths and lengths. Although single models range in size from 112 - 1,100 square feet, all shelters can be interconnected, allowing for effective joint operations.

All products are supported by training, continuous technical support and rapid delivery of spare parts.

For more information on DRASH, visit [www.drash.com](http://www.drash.com) or call 845-359-6066.



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