

DEPLOYABLE RAPID ASSEMBLY SHELTER- A NEW WAY TO COLLECT BLOOD DURING THE HOLIDAYS

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Blood donations drop significantly during the holidays and each year, blood donor recruiters are challenged to find new ways to encourage people to donate.

For years, Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) blood donor recruiter at Ft. Bliss, TX Carmen Dietrich-Williams has contemplated the logistics to hold a mobile blood drive in a busy area where the donors would be plentiful and all government safety regulations would be met for a safe and successful blood drive. Luckily, this year Carmen has found the answer- to host a mobile blood drive held in a unique tent in front of a busy post exchange (PX).



A technician drawing blood from two volunteers inside of the DRASH tent.

The tent, Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter (DRASH) M Series, was generously provided by the DRASH team when one of the representatives heard about Carmen's wish to hold a mobile blood drive, but didn't have the necessary resources to implement it. These tents are mostly used as medical stations during deployment and at field exercises as they are easy to set up and easily transported on a small trailer. This tent was outfitted with a generator to power lighting, heaters, and electrical outlets which met all safety regulations

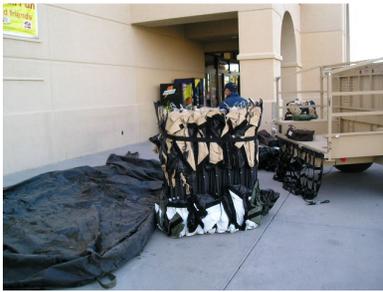
so safe blood donations could be made. All Carmen had to provide were the donors!

Carmen explains the significance of this particular blood drive: it is the first-ever blood drive held in a DRASH tent and the first-ever blood drive held on PX property at Ft. Bliss, TX. Since the DRASH team provided all the logistical support needed for operation, set-up was fast and required less manpower than using the traditional Army tents. In addition to the DRASH team offering their time and resources, they encouraged their own team members to donate blood. "This event was successful due to the actions and leadership of the DRASH team. Their contributions are invaluable to troops wounded in action and sick and injured military members and their families at home" commends Carmen.

Another important team player was the PX. Not only did the PX staff at Ft. Bliss permit the ASBP to hold a blood drive on their busy property, they encouraged customers to donate blood by providing food vouchers to those who donated blood.

“The commitment of all involved in this life-saving program resulted in collecting over 30 units of whole blood, which in turn, after blood was separated into various particles, might have provided blood products for 90 transfusion recipients” explains Carmen. All who came to visit the tent, whether it was to get pre-screened, donate blood, or simply check out the tent’s features, received ASBP goodies which included a lunch box filled with playing cards, a pint glass, mug, baseball cap, and a holiday ornament. “This was our way of sharing the holiday spirit and to show our appreciation to our donors during the busy holiday season” adds Carmen.

As we move away from the holiday season, blood donations continue to remain low during this time of the year. If an additional one percent of all Americans would give blood, blood shortages would disappear for the foreseeable future. Therefore, we urge you to find a blood drive near you by visiting www.militaryblood.dod.mil and signing up to be a donor. Every blood type is needed, after all, the rarest blood type is the one not on the shelf when it’s needed by a patient.



Step 1. Unload the tent from the truck



Step 2. Unfold and set the tent



Step 3. Pull and stabilize the tent



Step 4. Collect blood!