

THE 3RD BRIGADE, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION AND THE 1ST BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION OUT OF FORT LEWIS, WASHINGTON ARE THE FIRST TWO ACTIVE STRYKER COMBAT BRIGADE TEAMS. FOR THE FOLKS IN CHARGE OF CARING FOR THE LAND AT FORT LEWIS AND YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER THE NEW VEHICLES BRING NEW CHALLENGES, ONLY NOBODY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE YET. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ EXPLAINS.

AS THE ARMY'S FIRST COMBAT STRYKER BRIGADE TEAMS LEARNED TO FIGHT WITH THEIR NEW VEHICLE, LAND MANAGERS AT YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER BEGAN STUDYING HOW THE VEHICLES IMPACT THE LAND.

“WE STARTED THIS FALL WITH INSTALLING ROVER G-P-S UNITS ON THE STRYKERS THAT GO TO THE FIELD TO TRACK THEIR MOVEMENT PATTERNS WHILE THEY'RE DOING COLLECTIVE TRAINING IN THE RANGE AREA.” Pete Nisson . Natural Resource Manager, Yakima Training Center

NISSEN'S TEAM IS DOCUMENTING THE DEGREE OF WEAR AND TEAR THE STRYKERS INCUR ON YAKIMA'S TRAINING AREAS. IF THE TEAM CAN IDENTIFY USAGE TRENDS THEY CAN THEN ANTICIPATE WHEN AND WHERE PROBLEMS LIKE DEEP GULLIES OR SUBMERGED TRAILS MAY HAPPEN. NISSEN WOULD RATHER FIX A PROBLEM EARLY THAN HAVE TO SHUT DOWN TRAINING.

“IS IT TO A POINT WHERE WE HAVE TO PULL TRAINING BACK AND ACTUALLY GO IN THERE AND REPAIR DAMAGES OR DO WE JUST NEED TO SHIFT ACTIVITY SO THEY’RE NOT HITTING THE SAME PIECE OF GROUND EVERY TIME.” – Pete Nissen

NISSEN’S BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS THE UNKNOWN. FORT LEWIS AND ITS SUB-INSTALLATION YAKIMA ARE THE ONLY POSTS WITH THE STRYKERS. IN SOME RESPECTS THE YAKIMA TEAM IS WRITING DOCTRINE AS THEY GO.

“THAT INFORMATION WILL BE INVALUABLE (CUT) TO OTHER INSTALLATIONS DOWN THE ROAD AS S-B-C-T-‘S ARE MOVED OVER TO THOSE UNITS.” – Pete Nissen

FOR NOW THE YAKIMA TEAM IS EXCITED TO HELP LEAD THE WAY IN THE ARMY’S TRANSFORMATION, BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR HOW INSTALLATIONS WILL SUSTAIN TRAINING LANDS ARMY WIDE, JAVIER HERNANDEZ, YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER, WASHINGTON.