

OTC celebrates Ugly Christmas Sweater theme

BY HEATHER GRAHAM-ASHLEY

Sentinel News Editor

The competition got a little ugly at Operational Test Command Dec. 13 during the organization's Christmas celebration

Actually, really ugly. As in Christmas sweater ugly.

Soldiers and civilians at OTC donned their Christmas worst for the first Ugly Christmas Sweater contest, which plans to be an annual event.

The event was created to boost morale and enhance team building during the stressful holiday season, Capt. Romeo De Los Santos said.

"It was something we hadn't tried before," he said. "We typically have the door and

workspace decorating contest during our

annual Christmas celebration."

The ugly sweater contest was the icing on the cake, though.

"This just added sparkle and glitter to what we already have," OTC Chief of Staff Col. Jeffery Harris said.

The event added not only sparkle and glitter, but Christmas lights, stuffed animals, ribbons and bows as OTC personnel did their best to look their worst.

De Los Santos, who did not compete, got in on the fun with a cardigan that sported a plethora of Christmas-related characters, compete with faux jewel-encrusted buttons and shoulder pads. It was a sweater deemed "gender questionable" by Harris, who helped judge the contest.

As he was preparing to oversee the competition, the OTC chief of staff had his judging criteria in mind.

"The obvious thing is a high degree of ugliness," Harris said. "It helps if they wear something not made for their gender."

Although he did not compete, De Los Santos joined in the fun by wearing his ugly sweater, which he called



Photos by Heather Graham-Ashley, Sentinel News Editor

Soldiers and civilians with OTC line up for the Ugly Christmas Sweater competition during the unit's annual Christmas celebration Dec. 13 at West Fort Hood. Initial judging was completed by applause.

"Christmas chaos," all day.

He admitted that he stayed in the office all day that day.

"I stayed in the building," he said.

Seven Soldiers and civilians put themselves up for the competition. The top three were awarded gift cards.

Civilian employee Sheila

Miller, whose entry included a string of lit-up Christmas lights over a red sweater, was named the winner and received a gift certificate to the Courses of Clear Creek.

Runners-up Staff Sgt. Robert Guillory and Amparo Flores were awarded iTunes cards for their efforts.

1st Sgt. Rhonda McDonald, whose sweater included geese in its Christmas motif, said

the sweater contest was a fun, morale-building event.

"Something like this really encourages participation," she said. "I hope its an annual event."

After the contest, the winners of an OTC annual event, door/workspace decorating, were announced. The OTC Support Branch took top honors with their recycled snowmen and winter wonderland.



ABOVE, Capt. Romelo De Los Santos and Col. Jeffery Harris discuss the Ugly Christmas Sweater and door decorating contests before the sweater competition Dec. 13. De Los Santos did not compete. RIGHT, OTC's Editing Division's entry for the door decorating contest included a huge Santa and soda can tree.

