



An HJS Studio Pattern: World War Two Socks



Introduction

Sharon Earley of the American Red Cross in San Antonio, Texas, bought on eBay an old Bucilla Yarn booklet, entitled "Practical, Warm Hand Knits for Service Men," full of instructions for knitting items for military men during World War II. The booklet is Volume 318, dated 1940, and is marked 10 cents!

Sharon sent me scans of each page of the booklet so I could put them on my website as companions to the WWI knit patterns. Since the instructions are relatively modern, I've simply retyped them verbatim. Please read the [World War II Pattern FAQ](#) if you have any questions.

Abbreviations used: st - stitch, sts - stitches, k - knit, p - purl, tog – together

Plain Socks



The picture at left shows the original photo for these socks. The picture on the right is the pair I made for an exhibit Sharon was putting together. The color is way off—the real socks are a very nice 'OD' green, an olive drab green just like the US Army used to use for fatigue uniforms. I don't know about the other services, but today's wool Army socks are black, and don't last nearly as long as the green ones used to.



I used Nature Spun Sport Weight yarn, 4.5 ounces or 125 grams approximately. My gauge, on size 1 US needles, ended up being 8 stitches to the inch, rather than the 7 called for in the pattern. I never seem to do a gauge swatch I can rely on! The socks fit my husband, with a fairly small leg and foot, very snugly.

I wouldn't recommend this yarn for socks that will be worn (these won't be), as this yarn isn't designed as sock yarn. The socks were beginning to pill before I had finished knitting them, and there's no mohair, nylon, or other material added to strengthen the wool. We wanted to



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use 100% wool because that's what most likely would have been used during the war, but they must have used stronger wools for sock yarns back then!

An interesting feature of this pattern is that the heel flap is plain stockinette stitch. I also felt the flap was a little shallow, but perhaps that's just in comparison to legs and feet today—Americans are longer today than they were nearly 70 years ago.

Plain Socks No. 206

Medium Size

MATERIALS: Bear Brand or Bucilla Cassimere Sport Yarn, 2 balls, or Bear Brand or Bucilla Ladyfair Sweater and Stocking Yarn, 2 skeins.

1 set (5) Bucilla Steel Knitting Needles, Sock Size No. 11, Article 3494.

Editor's note: *On needle size, please see my [WW II Pattern FAQ](#), or simply use the size needles you need to achieve the gauge.*

Gauge: 7 sts=1 inch, 10 rows=1 inch

CUFF— Cast on 64 sts, divide on 3 (or 4) needles, join and work ribbing of k 2, p 2 for 4 inches.

LEG— K plain until leg measures 6 inches from cuff. Next round k 1, k 2 tog, k to within 3 sts of end of round, slip 1, k 1, pass the slipped st over the knitted ("slip, k and pass,") k the last st of round. K 6 rounds even. Next round, k 1, k 2 tog, k to the last 3 sts of round, slip, k and pass, k the last st. Work even (60 sts) until leg measures 8 inches from cuff, ending st at center of back (between the decreases).

HEEL— Slip 15 sts on each side of back to 1 needle, for heel, leave remaining 30 sts on the 2 instep needles. Turn, working from wrong side slip first st as if to p, p across the heel needle, turn, slip first st as if to k, k to end of heel sts. Repeat these 2 rows until there are 24 rows from beginning of heel (12 slipped sts at each side edge). Begin to turn the heel on wrong side: slip first st, p 16, p 2 tog, turn, slip 1, k 4, slip, k and pass; turn, slip 1, p 5, p 2 tog, turn; slip 1, k 6, slip, k and pass; turn, slip 1, p 7, p 2 tog, turn; slip 1, k 8, slip, k and pass; turn. Continue in this way to work toward sides of heel, having 1 more st between decreases in every row, until 1 st is left at each side; in next 2 rows work this st together with the one just before it; there will then be 16 sts left on needle.

GUSSETS AND FOOT— Pick up and k 12 sts on left side edge of heel, k the 2 instep needles, pick up and k 12 sts on right side edge of heel, k 8 of the heel sts to the same needle. There will be 20 sts on each of the 2 sole needles, and 30 sts across instep. K 1 round even. Counting from center of heel, k to within 3 sts of end of first needle, k 2 tog, k1; k across instep; on last needle k 1, slip, k and pass, k to end of needle. Repeat the last 2 rounds until 13 sts are left on each sole needle (56 sts in round). Work even until foot measures 7 1/2 inches from heel (k more, or less, for different sizes).

TOE— Place 14 sts on 1st needle (counting from center of sole), 28 sts on 2nd needle, and 14 sts on 3rd needle. K to within 3 sts of end of 1st needle, k 2 tog, k last st; on 2nd needle,



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k 1, slip, k and pass, k to the last 3 sts, k 2 tog, k the last st; on 3rd needle, k 1, slip, k and pass, k to end. K 1 round even. Repeat the last 2 rounds, 5 times, then decrease in every round until 16 sts are left. K the next needle, break off. Weave the 8 sole sts together with the 8 upper sts and darn in end.

Spiral Socks No. 214

MATERIALS-- Bear Brand or Bucilla Cassimere Sport Yarn, 3 balls, or Bear Brand or Bucilla Ladyfair Sweater and Stocking Yarn, 3 skeins.

1 set (5) Bucilla Steel Knitting Needles, Sock Size No. 11, Article 3494.

On needle size, please see my [WW II Pattern FAQ](#), or simply use the modern-sized needles to achieve the proper gauge.

GAUGE: 11 rows=1 inch

Cast on 72 sts, divide them on 3 (or 4) needles, join and work in ribbing of k 2, p 2, for 4 inches.



SPIRAL PATTERN— K 4, p 4, alternately, for 4 rounds. * At beginning of next round k 5 just once, then p 4, k 4, alternately, to end of round, ending with p 3; p 1 st from next needle, then k 4, p 4, alternately, for 3 more rounds. Repeat from *, thus moving the pattern 1 st to the left every 4 rounds, until the sock measures 22 inches. At this point try sock on foot, to determine the exact length required before toe; work more if a longer sock is required.

TOE— K 1 round plain.

1st decreasing round: * k 6, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round (9 decreases). K 3 rounds even.

2nd decreasing round: * k 5, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round. K 3 rounds even.

3rd decreasing round: * k 4, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round. K 3 rounds even.

4th decreasing round: * k 3, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round. K 2 rounds even.

5th decreasing round: * k 2, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round. K 1 round even.

6th decreasing round: * k 1, k 2 tog, repeat from * to end of round. K 2 sts tog, continually, until 8 sts remain. Break off, leaving an end. Draw end through all 8 sts, twice, tighten and darn in end.



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