

Making Voltigeur Epaulettes

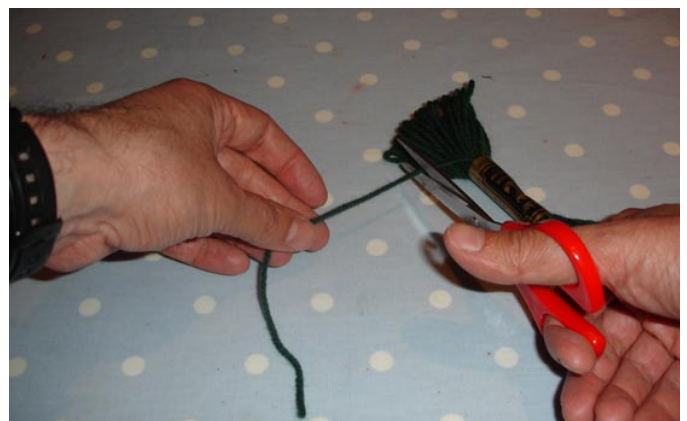
The key to a good pair of epaulettes is individually hand twisting the strands that make up the tassley bits. Simply cutting lengths of wool doesn't work and the ends fray and go fluffy. This is not a good look. Hand twisting lengths of wool is a time-consuming process and there are 320 of them in pair of epaulettes.

To make a pair of epaulettes you will need:

- About 6.5m of double-knit, 100% wool in the perfect colour of green (see notes) cut into 20cm lengths.
- About 5m of the same in pale yellow.
- A small piece (15cm x 20cm) of melton (military grade felt) in the perfect green, the same in black or dark blue, and several offcut pieces of any colour for the insides.
- A small piece (15cm x 20cm) of buckram (stiffened calico)
- A small amount of calico
- A pritt stick
- Scissors
- A ruler
- A wooden board with nail in it (but one you can easily unhook a thread from, so smooth)
- A tube of copdex
- Off-white cotton thread.
- Needles
- Pliers (for sewing through the buckram).



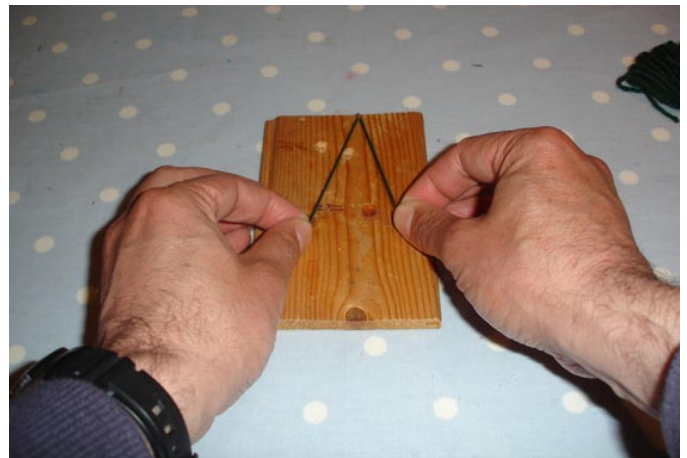
For the first stage you will just need the green wool, the board, scissors and the pritt.



Cut the wool into 20cm lengths



Take your individual strand twist it. You might find it easier to tie a small knot in the end and hook it over your nail. Just twist the strand in the same direction as the existing twist, until you feel the thread can take no more.



When you have twisted all you can remove the anchored end carefully from the nail, and being careful not to let go of either end, make as if to wrap the strand around the nail, with the nail touching the centre of the strand.



Bring the ends around to meet each other and pinch them together with two fingers.



With your other hand unhook the end that is around the nail. Now release the end you have just unhooked, but keep hold of the open end.



The strands will immediately wrap around each other.



Now wipe the open strands over your pritt stick, give it a twist for security to make sure it doesn't unravel.



You have your first strand! Repeat 319 times.

In the next session I'll take you through how to assemble the fringes and start preparing the body of the epaulette.