Welcome to the Trees for Troops Ornament Smock-Along! Below is a list of materials and preparation instructions. Gather your materials, pleat your fabric and get set to go! On August 24th and each Monday thereafter, a clue will be posted to our website and Facebook page. Follow along and by the end of September, you will have an ornament finished for the troops. Bring your ornament to the Valley Forge Retreat, or mail it to Lisa Hawkes by October 15th. It will be going to our bases overseas to help spread some Christmas cheer.

The choice of fabric, thread and color is up to you, so everyone's ornament will be different! The ornament design is not difficult, plus there will be step by step photos to help you along. If you are an advanced smocker, please join us and take this opportunity to try your hand at an unusual fabric, perhaps velvet or corduroy. Try a new thread, metallic or silk. Finally, please join our facebook group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1554532568114047/ and post pictures as you go! I will be monitoring the facebook group page and will answer questions and post my progress as we go along. So gather up your materials, join the facebook group and post a picture of what you will be using! If you are not on facebook, you can still participate - the clues will all be posted on our website each Monday starting August 17th.

Materials Needed:

Ornament Fabric - 5 ½” x 44”
3 inch Styrofoam ball
Floss
Beads (optional)
Ribbon or lace to finish ends
Preferred Smocking Needle such as a 7 Darner or 8 Crewel.

Preparation:

Pleat fabric with 11 full space rows. Rows 1 and 11 will be used to assist with construction. The thread will remain in the ornament so it should match the fabric, and preferably be quilting cotton. If your pleater has ½ space rows, you can pleat
row 1 \( \frac{1}{2} \) and row 10 \( \frac{1}{2} \) as well to assist you in forming the smocking around the ball. Pull up your threads and count your pleats. I am using 144 pleats. If you are using a thicker fabric, you can have 128 pleats or 112 pleats, but it needs to be a multiple of 16 as our design has a repeat of 16. Block your pleats to 9 inches, not including seam allowances. Check back on August 24th for your first clue!

**Clue Number One:**

Beginning on Row 4, with the first pleat, and keeping your stitches just above the pleating thread, stitch an up cable. Continue to cable across the row.

Beginning on Row 7, with the first pleat, and keeping your stitches just below the pleating thread, stitch a down cable. Continue to cable across the row. Row 7 is a mirror image of Row 4.

**Clue Number Two:**

Stitch a row of Cretan Stitch between rows 3 and 4 and rows 7 and 8.

Come out on Row 4, with the first pleat, just above the cable stitch, move up to row 3, and take a stitch through the second pleat. Move down to Row 4 and take a stitch through the third pleat. Continue across the row alternating between Row 4 and 3.

Beginning on Row 7, with the first pleat, stitch a mirror image alternating between Rows 7 and 8.

I placed a bead on every other stitch beginning with the second stitch, on my Cretan Stitch between rows 3 and 4.

**Clue Number Three:**

Let’s add some hearts and diamonds!
We are going to stitch a Trellis with Two interval steps, Trellis with Two interval Steps, and Quarter Wave Pattern. Beginning on Row 5, with the first pleat, (stitch a Down Cable stitch, step up to Row 4 \( \frac{1}{2} \) stitch, step up to Row 4 \( \frac{3}{2} \) stitch, stitch an Up Cable, step down to Row 4 \( \frac{3}{2} \) stitch, step down to Row 5 stitch) (this is your
Trellis), repeat sequence once more, now stitch a Down Cable, step up to Row 4 ¼ stitch, stitch an Up Cable, step down to Row 5 stitch (Quarter Wave). This is your 16 step sequence. Repeat it across the row.

To form the Hearts and Diamonds, the second row is a Trellis with 5 interval steps, followed by a Quarter Wave. Beginning on Row 5 stitch an up cable, wave down to Row 5 ¼ stitch, 5 ½ stitch, 5 ¾ stitch, 6 stitch, 6 ¼ stitch, stitch a Down Cable, step up to row 6, stitch, 5 ¾ stitch, 5 ½ stitch, 5 ¼ stitch, 5 stitch, Up Cable, step down to 5 ¼ stitch, Down Cable, step back up to row 5 stitch. This is your second 16 step sequence. Repeat across the row.

**Clue Number Four:**
Let's add some bling to our hearts! I have added a flowerette to each of my hearts and a bead to the center of my diamonds. To stitch a flowerette, beginning on Row 5 ½, in the center of each heart, stitch a down cable, up cable, down cable. Take your thread to the back, come up beneath the up cable and stitch another up cable to complete the flowerette. You can bead the entire flowerette if you like, or you can stitch a double flowerette. To stitch a double flowerette, after stitching the down cable, up cable, down cable, stitch a mirror image immediately below: up cable, down cable, up cable.

To add the bead to the center of the diamonds, just stitch a straight stitch. I did not tie off behind each flowerette, but carried my thread across the back from flowerette, up to bead, and down to flowerette. You wouldn't want to do this with an outfit that is going to be laundered repeatedly or something that needs that
elasticity, but for an ornament, I think it is fine! Remember, there are no smocking police!

**Clue Number Five:**
Time for some Crossover Waves!
Begin on Row 1 ½ with an up cable, step down to Row 2 ½ and stitch a down cable, continue across the row stitching full space waves between Rows 1 ½ and 2 ½.

On Row 2 ¼ stitch a down cable, step up to Row 1 ¾ and stitch an up cable. Continue across the row stitching waves between Rows 1 ¾ and 2 ¾.

Do you recognize this pattern? You have just practiced a row of the Artisan Level I smocking sampler! Why not start stitching your sampler and see if you can pass the Apprentice Level of Smocking? You can read all about the Artisan program on the [SAGA website](https://www.saga.org).

**Clue Number Six:**
This is our last stitching clue! Time to finish up your ornament, bring it to Valley Forge or get it into the mail! Beginning on Row 8, come up in the valley between the 2nd and 3rd pleats, insert your needle through pleat 2 from right to left, to get into starting position, and stitch an up cable. Step down a ¼ step and take a stitch in the next pleat. Continue stepping down a ¼ step all the way down to Row 10. Tie off on Row 10. I put a bead on every other stitch beginning with the second stitch. Continue across the Row.

A few things to note: there are 9 stitches total in each diagonal. The first stitch of the new diagonal and the last stitch of the previous diagonal cross over the same pleat. I have 144 pleats in my ornament, and have 18 diagonals. The first up stitch lines up with the bottom of the Cretan stitch. See pictures below. The reflection from the beads makes it difficult to get a sharp photo. I still think you can see the spacing.