Flight Path

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Busy Quilting, Queensland, Australia

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48” x 32” Finished Quilt

As the cold of winter fades, the birds take to their migratory Flights. Foundation pieced birds join with Flying Geese and Birds in the Air. The fresh colours of dark, medium, and light blue fabric against a white backdrop create a great space to play with your quilting skills. Though I chose blue fabric for my birds and geese, I’ve listed the fabric requirements only as colour values so you can make your birds any colour you want! Play with the values of your fabrics to achieve a gradated effect in the coloured pieces.

Materials Needed: ***(FQ = Fat Quarter measuring 18” x 22”)***

- 2 - FQ of Dark Colour
- 3 - FQ of Medium Colour
- 2 - FQ of Light Colour

Additional:

- 4 - 10” squares of assorted Dark Fabrics
- 4 - 10” squares of assorted Medium fabrics
- 4 - 10” squares of assorted Light fabrics
- 1 - 10” square of Highlight Fabric for beaks
- 1 -1/2 yards of Background Fabric
- 1/2 yd Binding Fabric
- 1-1/4 yards Backing Fabric
- Batting

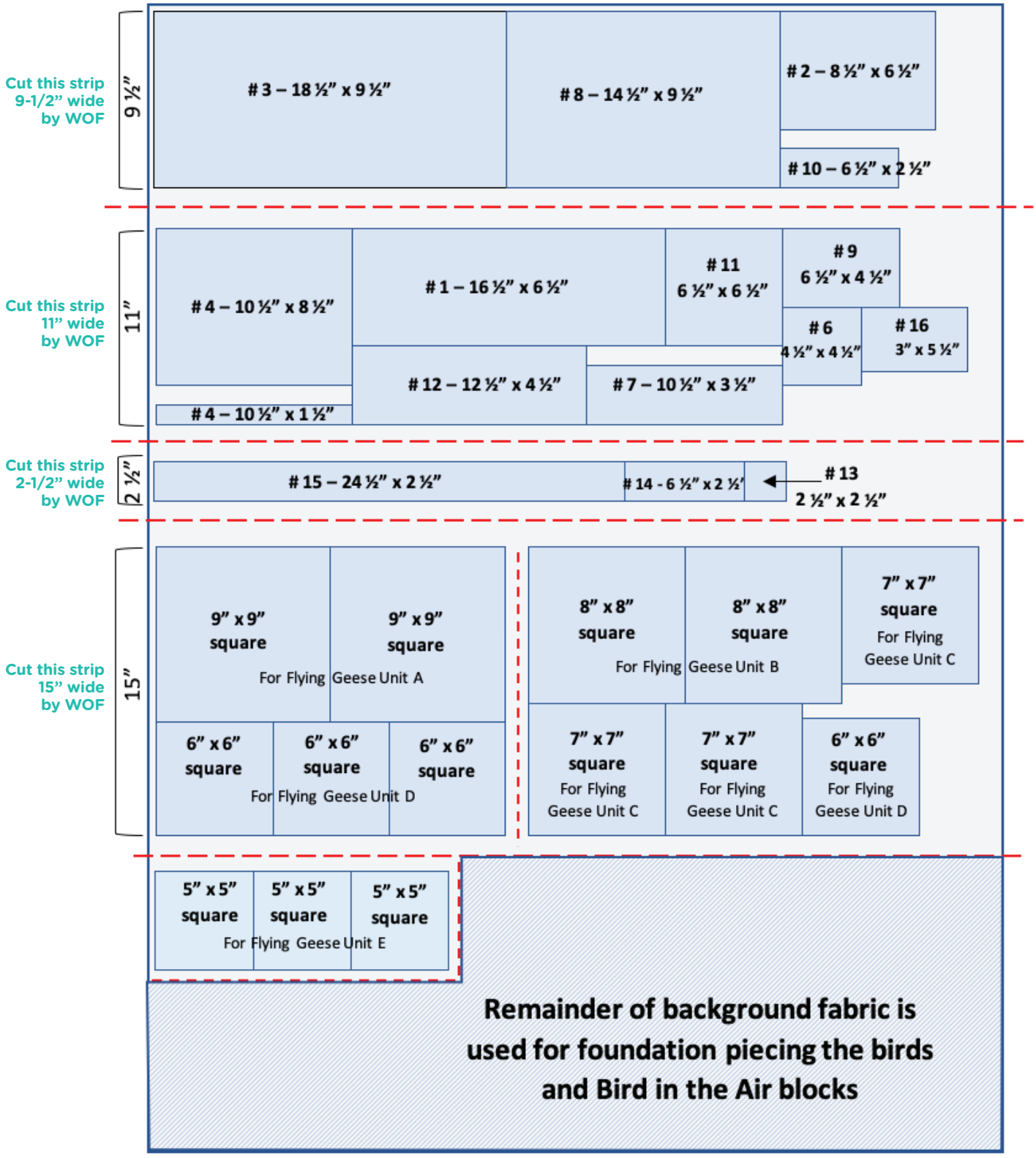
Helpful: 1/4-inch “Add-a-Quarter” Ruler

Cut the Background Fabric

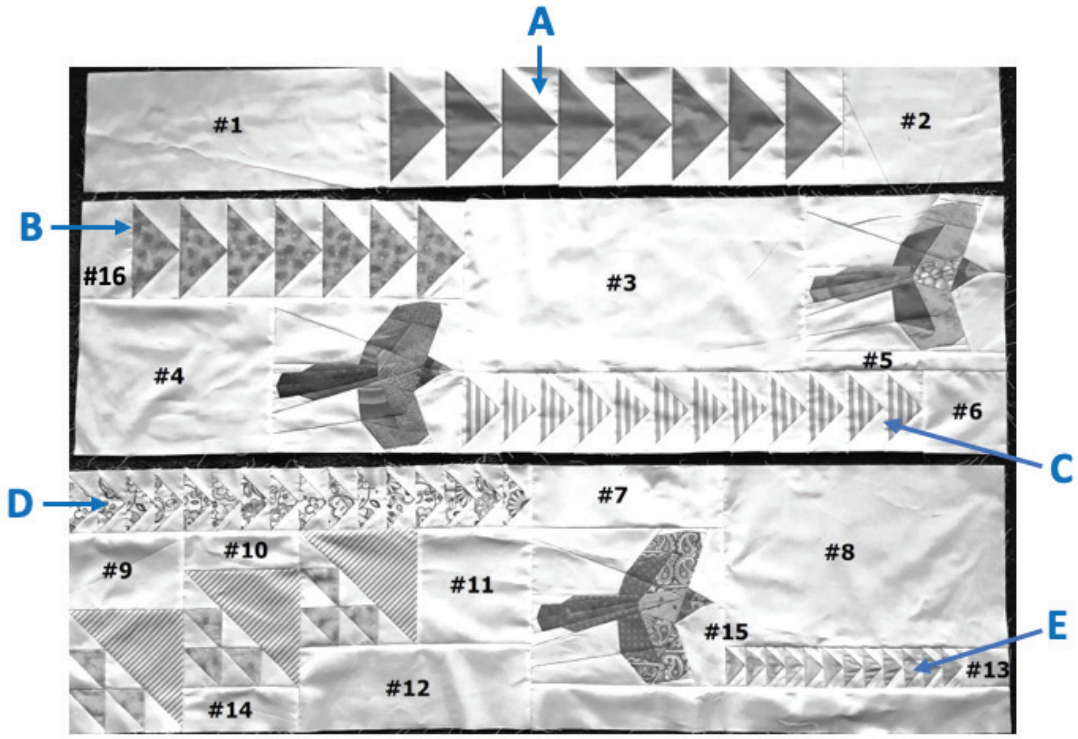
Using the background cutting diagram below as a guide, first make cross cuts as indicated across the entire width of the background fabric piece (WOF). Then sub-cut those strips into pieces as illustrated on the diagram. The red dotted line is used only to help define the width of each crosscut. When you crosscut each strip, do not put any space between the strips.

- Label the pieces with numbers as indicated on the cutting diagram.
- The squares will be used to construct the flying geese units in a later step.
- After cutting out the three 5” squares shown at the bottom of the diagram, set aside the remaining uncut background fabric. It will be used to foundation piece the three flying birds and to make the Bird in the Air blocks.

Background Cutting Diagram



The numbers in the Background Cutting Diagram correlate to the background parts of this picture. Use it as a guide to help assemble the quilt's rows. The letters correspond to the flying geese units.



Cut the Flying Geese Units

Unit A – From a *dark coloured fabric*, cut 2 squares measuring 7-1/2". Pair with 2 of the background squares that measure 9"; set aside.

Unit B – From a *dark coloured fabric*, cut 2 squares measuring 6-1/2". Pair with 2 background squares that measure 8"; set aside.

Unit C – From *medium coloured fabric*, cut 3 squares measuring 5-1/2". Pair with 3 background squares measuring 7"; set aside.

Unit D – From *light coloured fabric*, cut 4 squares measuring 4-1/2". Pair with 4 background squares measuring 6"; set aside.

Unit E – From *light coloured fabric*, cut 3 squares measuring 3-1/2". Pair with 3 background squares measuring 5"; set aside.

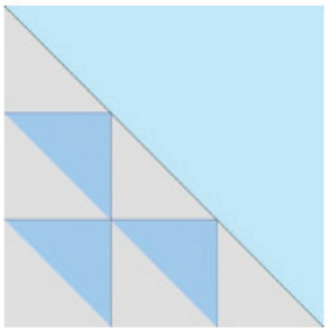
Cut the Bird in the Air Blocks

From *light colour fabric*, cut (2) 7" squares; cut in half on diagonal.

Cut 5 – 3" squares of *medium colour fabric*.

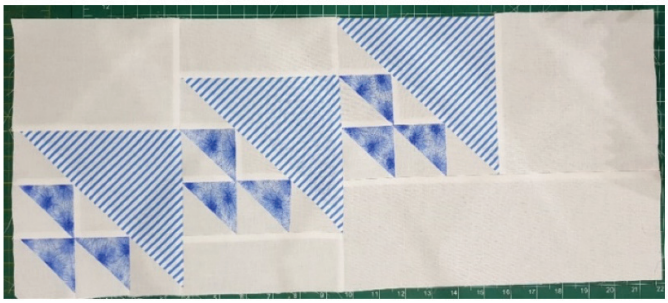
Cut 10 – 3" squares of *background fabric*.

- Set aside 5 of the 3" background fabric squares to construct the half-square triangle blocks. Cut the remaining 5 background squares in half diagonally to yield 10 triangles (you'll only use 9 for this project.)



Bird in the Air Block

Sew the Bird in Air Blocks (Make 3)

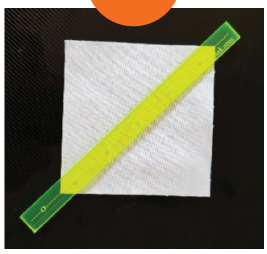


Though I prefer to use templates when I make Half Square triangles, for this pattern we'll use squares to construct the units and then the squares will be trimmed to the correct size once sewn.

Step 1: Place a coloured square and background square with right sides together. Before cutting, press them together (this helps them stay together as you take them to the machine.)

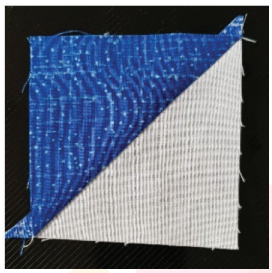
Step 2: Mark a diagonal line across the background fabric. Sew a 1/4" seam on both sides of the diagonal line.

TIP

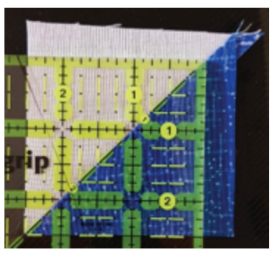


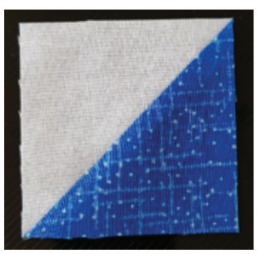
Use an "Add a Quarter" ruler to quickly mark the sewing lines.

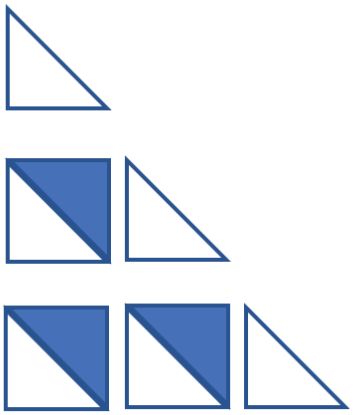
Cut on the centre diagonal line, then press seams toward the darker coloured fabric. You will have 10 half-square triangle units, but you'll only use 9 units for this quilt.



Using a small square ruler, line up the diagonal line of the ruler with the seam line and trim a small amount from two sides. Rotate the block and square it up so that it now measures 2-1/2" square as shown below. (A rotating cutting mat helps with this process.)

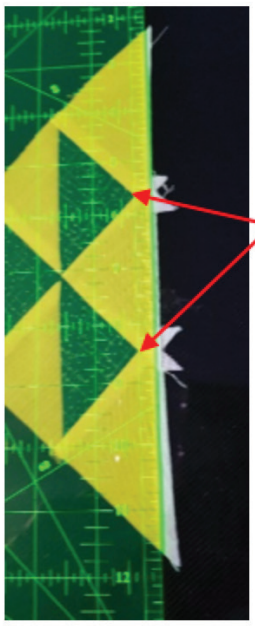






Step 3: Join the HST in rows as shown at right, using the background triangles to complete the rows. *NOTE: The background triangles will be slightly larger.*

Once you have joined all the rows of HST together, then you will need to trim the diagonal edge where the larger background triangles were sewn on. Line up the 1/4" mark of your ruler on the points of the HST. Then trim the extra fabric off. This will also remove the extra dog ears.



Align triangle tips with the 1/4" mark on your ruler.

Step 4: Place the long side of a triangle from the diagonally-cut light coloured 7" squares on top of each half-square triangle unit you made in Step 3, aligning the long edges. Since you will be attaching the long bias edge of the triangle to the unit, handle it carefully to avoid stretching. The blocks will be trimmed after sewing.

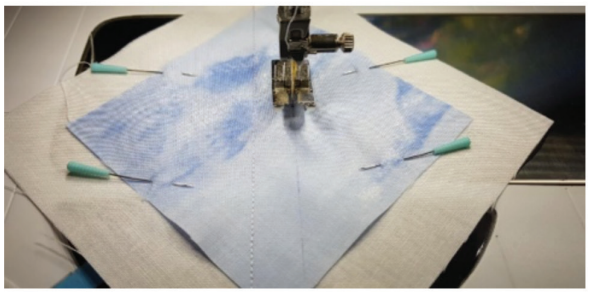
Sew the seam and press to the coloured fabric. Line up the diagonal line of your ruler with the seamline between smaller HST units and the large triangle. Trim the blocks to 6-1/2" square by trimming away the edges of the larger triangle.

Sew the Flying Geese

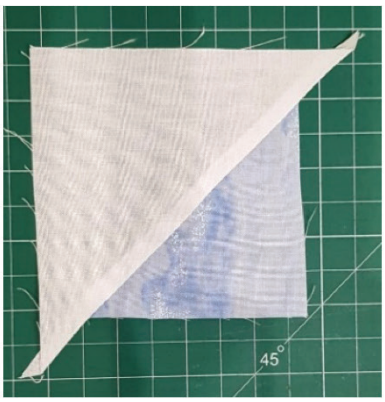
I used the Eleanor Burns technique for making flying geese as described below.

Step 1: Center the smaller coloured square on top of the matching background square with right sides together. Using a pencil, draw a diagonal line across the squares. *(TIP: I actually use a 1/4" seam ruler and draw the sewing line on both sides of the centre diagonal.)*

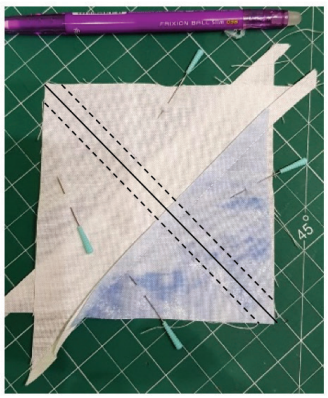
Pin the squares, then sew a 1/4" on either side of the drawn line.



Step 2: Press the seam to set, then cut apart on the drawn line. Press the cut seams toward background fabric.



Step 3: Take 2 of these cut squares, place them right sides together, and turn the top square 180 degrees so the outside edges match as shown below. You will have two different coloured fabrics on top of each other. Pin the squares together and draw a diagonal line so that it crosses the seams. Sew a 1/4" on either side of the drawn line. Press the seams to set, then cut apart on the diagonal line.

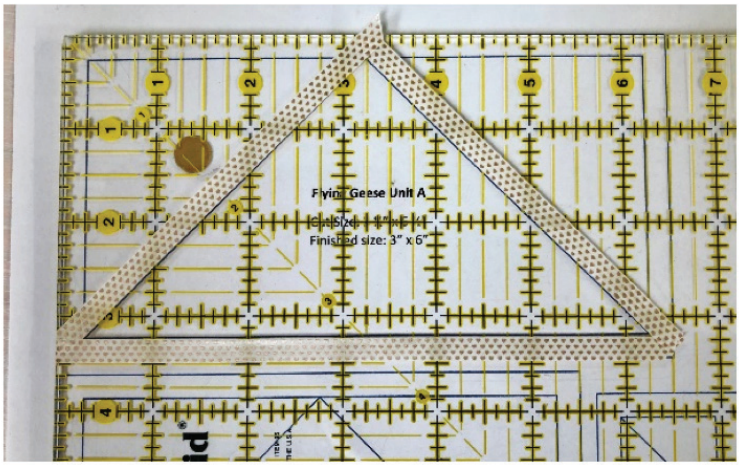


Cut a small slit on the wrong side between the sewn seams as shown below, taking care not to cut through the stitching. The seams will now press flat.

REMINDER: Your cut goose unit needs to be 1/2" larger than the finished size.

This method has some waste, but you need precision. Use square units previously set aside for the flying geese units.

I do not have a ruler template for cutting the Flying Geese, so I mark the finished size of the goose on a square ruler (Washi Tape or painter's tape works well), paying attention to the point which needs to be precisely at the 1/4" mark. *NOTE: Paper templates are included to help you mark your cutting ruler to aid in trimming the flying geese units correctly for the CUT sizes. When printing, verify that your printer is printing them at the correct scale by measuring one of the geese units (for example, the largest geese unit should measure 3-1/2" x 6-1/2" on the outer edge.)*

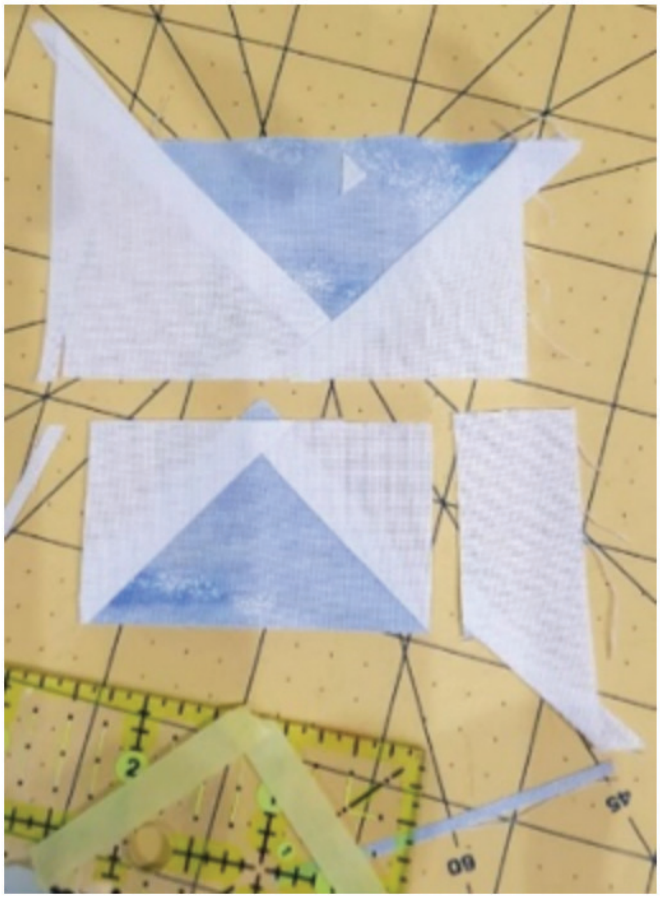


Line up the diagonal lines you marked on your ruler with the edges of the goose.

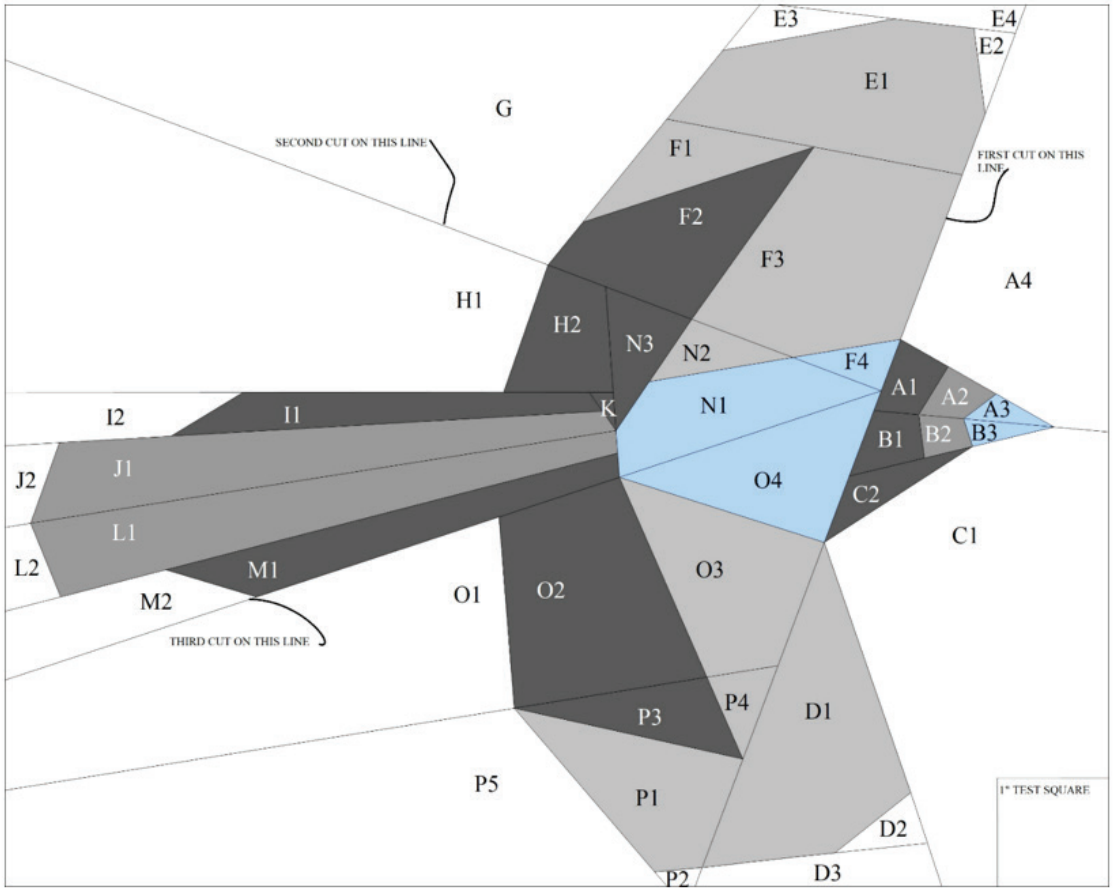
Trim the two outer edges of the goose; rotate the ruler and trim the final two edges. (A rotating cutting mat works well here.)

- From the squares set aside for flying geese **Unit A**, make 8 geese with a CUT size of 3-1/2" x 6-1/2"
- From **Unit B**, make 8 geese with a CUT size of 3" x 5-1/2" *(Note: you'll only use 7 in the final quilt construction)*
- From **Unit C**, make 12 geese with a CUT size of 2-1/2" x 4-1/2"
- From **Unit D**, make 16 geese with a CUT size of 2" x 3"
- From **Unit E**, make 12 geese with a CUT size of 1-1/2" x 2-1/2"

Place the Flying Geese, background pieces and Birds in the Air blocks on your design wall and join the relevant pieces in readiness for the fun of the Foundation Pieced Birds.



Foundation Pieced Birds (Makes 3)



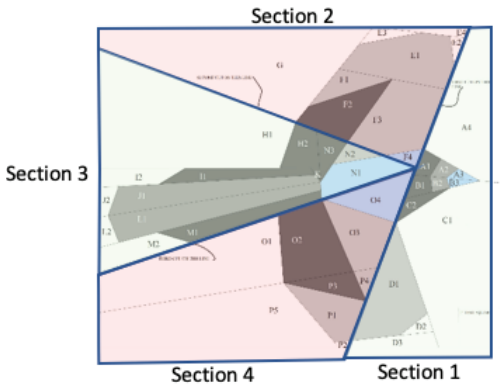
Foundation Piecing Map

NOTE: If you are not familiar with foundation piecing, visit the APQS Quilting Channel on YouTube for video instructions.

Make 3 copies of the 3 pages of foundation patterns for the birds. If possible, use a lighter weight paper that you can see through for easier piecing.

NOTE: Check that your printer is not scaling the pages before you print. A 1" test square is printed on the pattern. On your copies, that square should measure 1"; if necessary, adjust your printer's scaling to achieve the proper size.

Finished size of each bird is 10" x 8". The pieces are sewn in 4 different sections. For each Section, complete the individual Units first (for example, sew Unit A, then Unit B, Unit C, and Unit D.) Then follow the assembly instructions for each Section listed below as indicated later in the pattern.



Section 1: Units A, B, C, D

Section 2: Units E, F, G

Section 3: Units H, I, J, K, L, M, N

Section 4: Units O, P

HINT: If you are new to foundation piecing, start with Section 2 (Units E, F, G) as the piecing is less complex.

As listed earlier in the Materials Needed, 10" squares should be enough for the foundation pieces. If you have textural prints in your favourite bird colour, then use them! Use the chart below to select fabric for each foundation piece. NOTE: Since you will be making three birds, you may want to mix up the values or choose different fabric for each bird so that they are not identical.

	Lightest Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Very Dark Blue	Background	Highlight Fabric
Section 1		A2 B2 D1	A1 B1		A4 C1 D2 D3	A3 B3
Section 2	F4	E1 F1 F3	F2		E2 E3 E4 G	
Section 3	N1	N2	H2 I1 K M1 N3	J1 L1	H1 I2 J2 L2 M2	
Section 4	O4	O3 P1 P4	O2 P3		O1 P2 P5	

TIPS

Foundation Piecing Sewing Tips:

- Drop your stitch length to 1.5- 1.8. You do not need to reverse stitch the at beginning and end of each row. Start and end your line of stitching in the seam allowance.
- Fabric is placed with the wrong side of the fabric against the blank or back side of the foundation pattern.
- You may find it easier to colour the pattern or write the colour names on each piece on the printed side of the paper. Roughly cut the papers out approximately 1/8" outside the solid lines.

Foundation Piecing Instructions

Each individual "Unit" is constructed in sequence as labeled (for example, sub-units A1 and A2 are sewn together, then A3 is added, and finally A4 is attached to complete "Unit A".)

Complete each Unit, then join Units to form a Section by following the specific instructions for each Section as listed in the pattern.

For Each Unit:

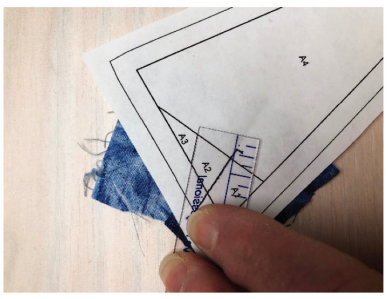
Cut a piece of fabric for the first section and make sure it is larger than the "#1" area defined on the paper pattern. It should extend past the edges of the area by at least 1/4" on all sides. Place it so the *wrong side of the fabric faces the unprinted side* of your paper pattern. If necessary, hold the pattern and fabric up to a light source and verify that the fabric does completely cover the #1 area. Align a cut straight edge of the fabric so that it extends 1/4" past the solid line between area #1 and the adjoining #2 section on the paper pattern. A small amount of glue in the seam allowance will hold it in place on the paper (or use a Wonder Clip.)

Take the cut straight edge of your #2 fabric piece and put it right sides together with the glued-in-place # 1 piece, aligning the straight edges that will eventually become a seam between #1 and #2. Lightly hold or temporarily clip the ends of the seam where #1 and #2 will join; flip fabric #2 up to make sure it covers all of the #2 area shown on the foundation paper. Sew these two pieces of fabric together through the paper, right on the solid line.

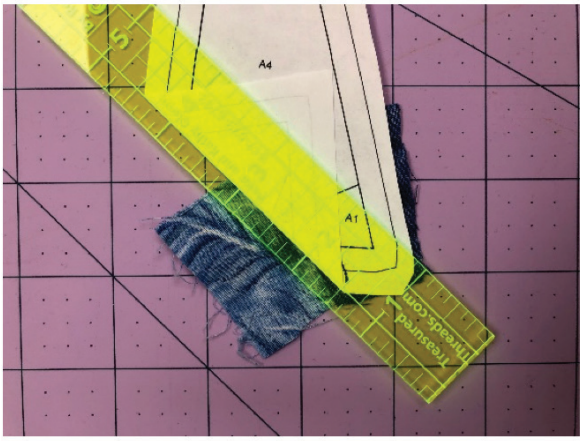
TIP **Cover your ironing surface with a scrap cloth as ink from your photocopy may stain your ironing board cover.**

Take the unit to your ironing surface. Open the #2 fabric and press it open along the seam line, making sure it completely covers the #2 area on the paper, along with surrounding seam allowances.

Align a business card or a clear straight edge on the *next solid line* between areas #2 and #3. Fold the paper template back towards the previous sewn line to expose the fabric from joined pieces #1 and #2.



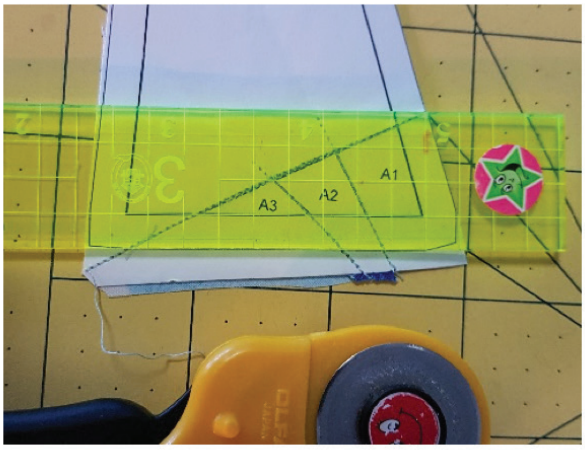
Using an Add-a-Quarter ruler butted up to business card (or another rotary cutting ruler), cut a *1/4" seam past the folded paper edge*. This keeps the back of your block neat and tidy, and helps you add the next fabric piece in the sequence. *(Note: I personally used a "1/8-inch Add-a-Quarter" ruler for the small pieces.)*



Align a straight edge of your #3 piece with the edge of the #2 piece that you just trimmed, placing right sides together. Lightly hold the ends of the seam allowance between pieces #2 and #3 and flip up the #3 piece over the paper pattern to make sure it covers all of the #3 area. Sew these two pieces of fabric together through the paper, on the solid line.

Take the unit back to the ironing surface and open fabric #3 over the pattern, making sure it completely covers the #3 section and any seam allowances. Continue as before, repeating these steps for each fabric piece you add to the unit:

- **Fold the paper pattern back on the dark line between the piece just added and the next one.**
- **Cut the exposed seam allowance 1/4" away from the pattern fold.**
- **Lift the newly added piece back in place and check placement before adding the next fabric.**



You might find it easier to remove some of the paper in the seam allowances if you feel the seam is going to be pressed over the paper.

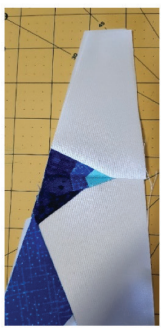
Once all pieces of a unit are sewn then trim around the outside edge 1/4" away from the dark solid line, leave the papers around the outside edges intact at this time.

Foundation Pieced Bird Assembly

Refer to the Foundation Piecing Map and Section Diagram on Page 9 for guidance.

Section 1:

- Join Unit B to the top of Unit C. I use a pin to make sure that intersections are meeting precisely.
- Join combined Unit B-C to the right-hand side of Unit D. Sew this to the bottom of Unit A.



Section 2:

- Join Unit E to the top of Unit F.
- Sew combined Unit E-F to the right-hand side of Unit G.

Section 3:

- Join Unit I to the top of Unit J.
- Sew Unit K to the right-hand side of combined Unit I-J.
- Sew Unit H to the top of combined Unit I-J-K.
- Join Unit L to the top of Unit M.
- Join combined Unit H-I-J-K to the top of combined Unit L-M.
- Sew Unit N to the right-hand side of combined Unit H-I-J-K-L-M.

Section 4:

- Join Unit O to the top of Unit P.

Assemble the Sections Together

- Sew Section 2 (Units E-F-G) to the top of Section 3 (Units H-I-J-K-L-M-N.)
- Sew Section 4 (Units O-P) to the bottom of newly joined Sections 2 and 3.
- Sew Section 1 (Units A-B-C-D) to the right-hand side of joined Sections 2, 3 and 4.

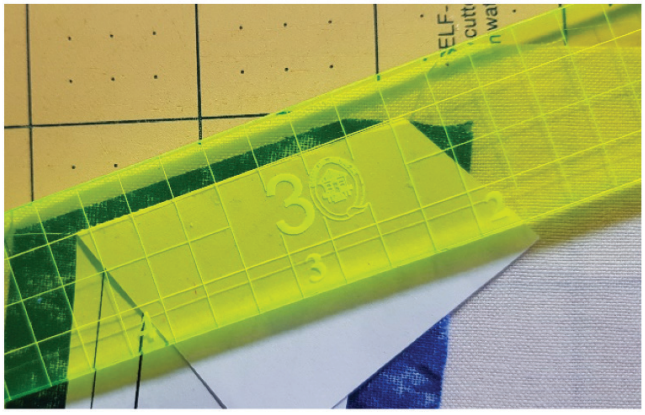
Carefully remove all the papers; a pair of tweezers helps. Then press carefully from the back of block, then press again from the front.

Final Assembly

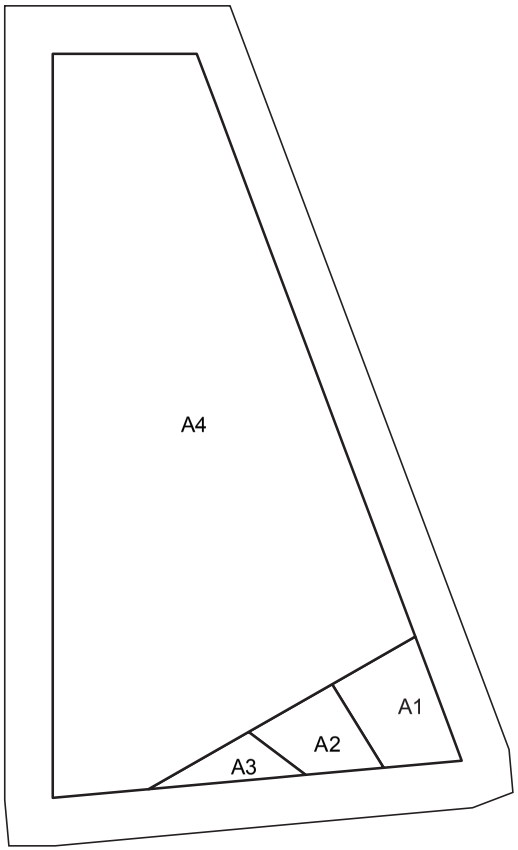
The quilt top is then sewn together in rows, with a 1/4" seam. Refer to the assembly diagram on Page 4 to help you place the background pieces, birds, flying geese and birds in the air blocks.

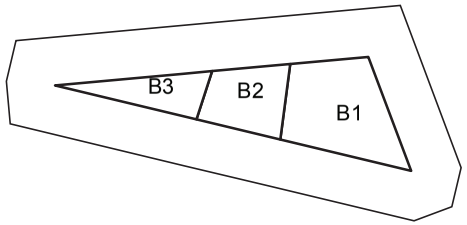
I had to grade the seams of my birds so that the dark blue fabrics did not shadow under the white. To do that, I cut the blue fabric with 1/8" seam and the white with 1/4" seam.

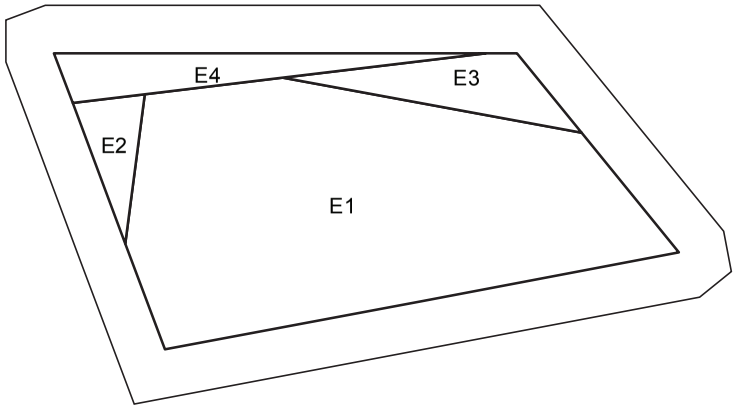
Now quilt as desired and soar!

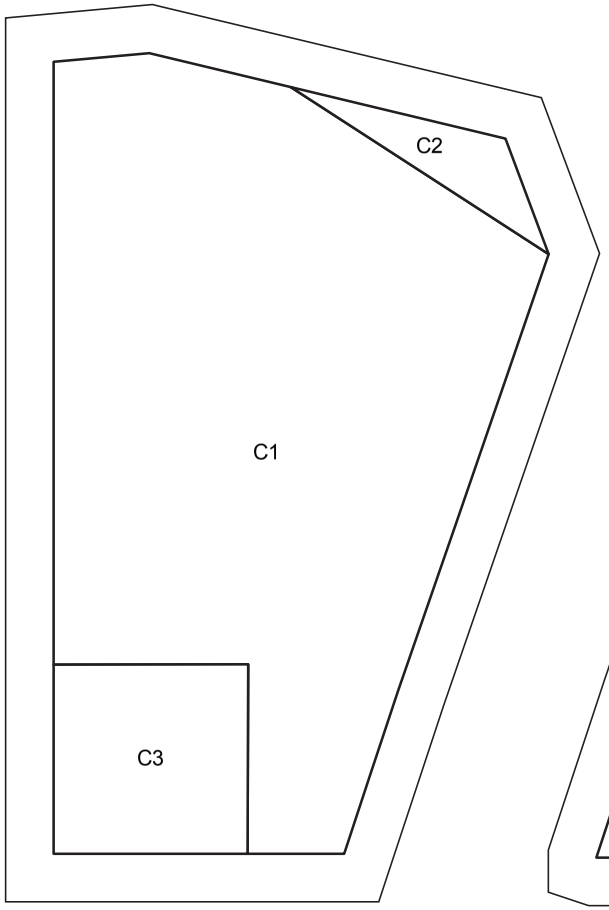


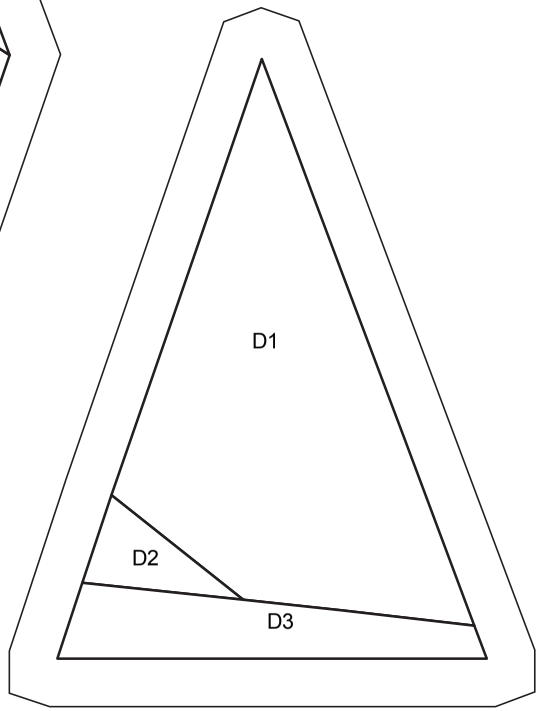
Flight Path Bird Foundations

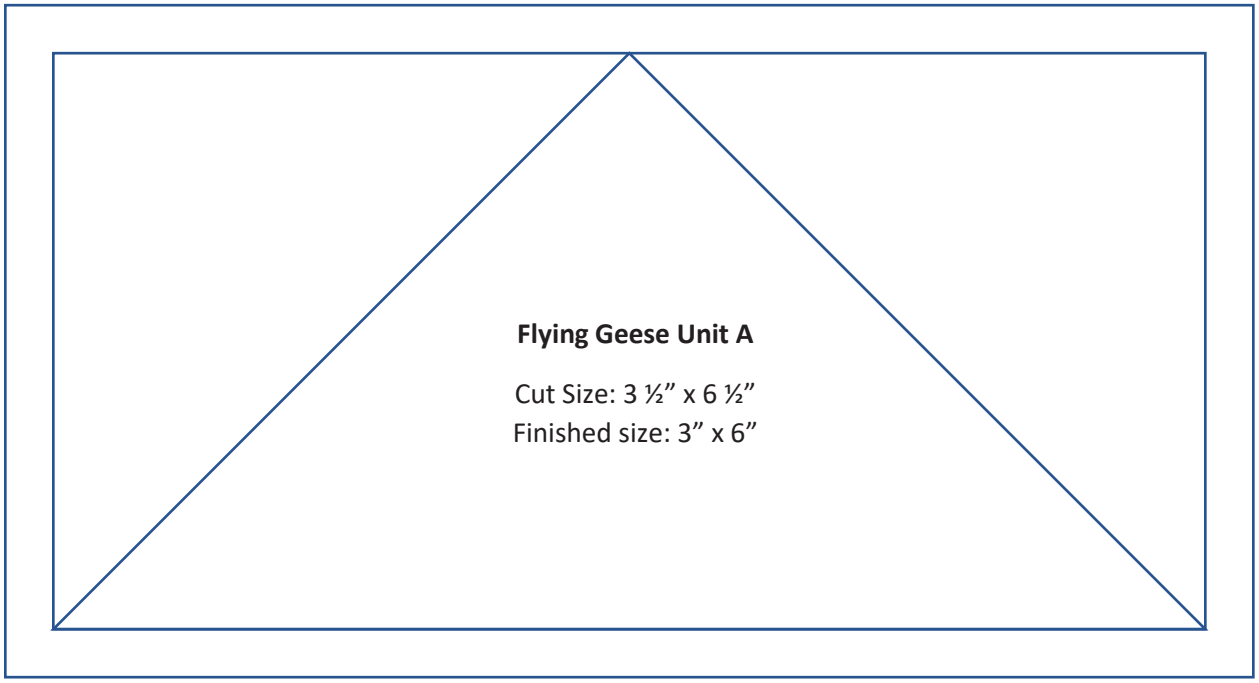


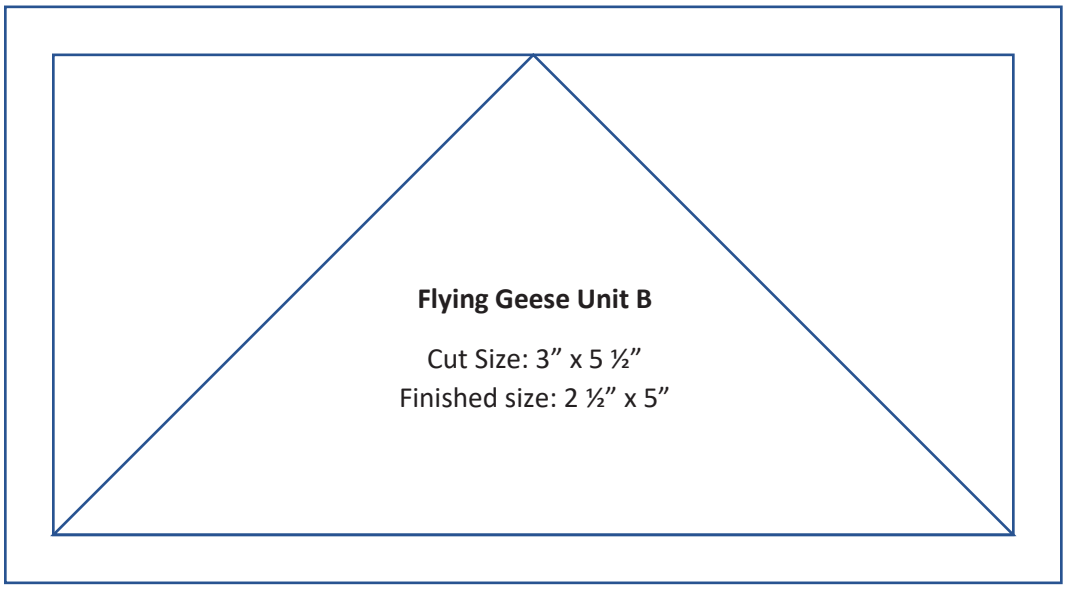


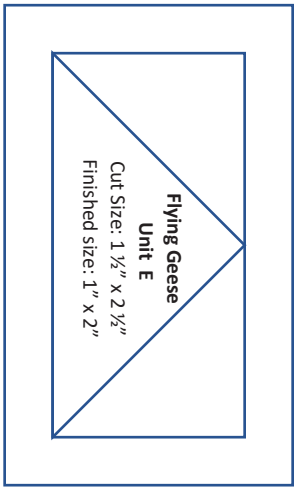


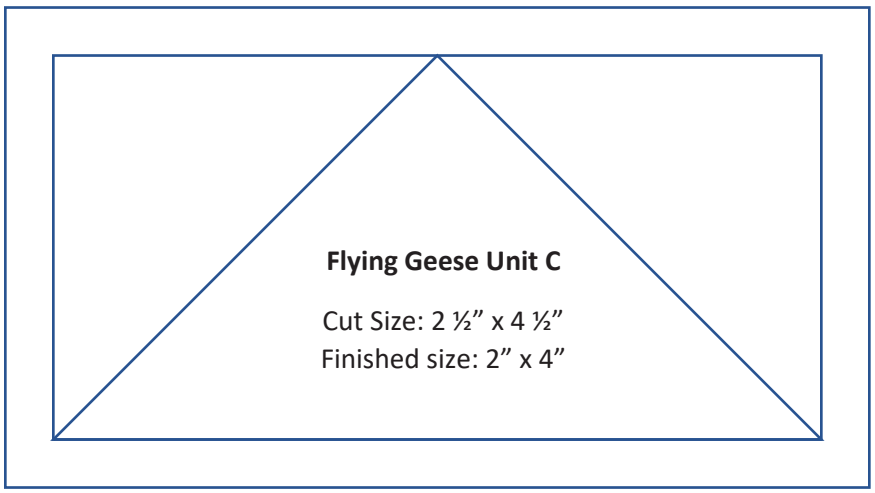


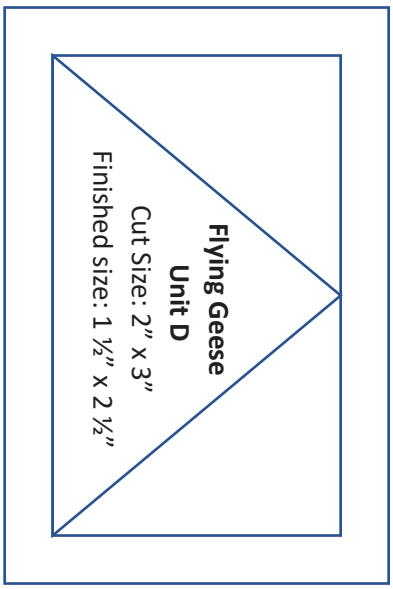



Flying Geese Unit A
Cut Size: 3 ½" x 6 ½"
Finished size: 3" x 6"


Flying Geese Unit B
Cut Size: 3" x 5 ½"
Finished size: 2 ½" x 5"


Flying Geese Unit E
Cut Size: 1 ½" x 2 ½"
Finished size: 1" x 2"


Flying Geese Unit C
Cut Size: 2 ½" x 4 ½"
Finished size: 2" x 4"


Flying Geese Unit D
Cut Size: 2" x 3"
Finished size: 1 ½" x 2 ½"