

# Time Marches On

## Heber Valley Quilters

### 2011 Block of the Month

#### April--Battalion Drum and Pacific Railroad

The Mexican–American War was an armed conflict between the United States and Mexico from 1846 to 1848. The major consequence of the war was the forced Mexican Cession of the territories of Alta California and New Mexico to the U.S. in exchange for \$18 million. Mexico accepted the Rio Grande as its national border, and the loss of Texas.

The Mormon Battalion was the only religiously based unit in United States military history, and it served from July 1846 to July 1847 during the Mexican-American War. The battalion was a volunteer unit of between 534 and 559 Latter-day Saints men led by Mormon company officers, commanded by regular US army officers. During its service, the battalion made a grueling march, at nearly 2,000 miles in length from Council Bluffs, Iowa to San Diego, California. The battalion's march and service was instrumental in helping the US secure much of the American Southwest, including new lands in several Western states, and much of southern Arizona. The march also opened a southern wagon route to California.

Some 22 Mormon men died from disease or other natural causes during their service, mostly in the San Diego and Los Angeles area where they worked for 5 months while honoring their one year enlistment contracts. A few discharged veterans worked in the Sacramento area for James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill. This gold find started the California Gold Rush the next year. \$17,000 in gold was contributed to the economy of the Latter-day Saints' new home by members of the Mormon Battalion returning from California.

One of this month's blocks is **Battalion Drum**. The drum was an important part of any regiment; it was the regiment's voice. The drum beat out marching orders, eating orders, sleeping and rising orders, along with many tactical orders while in battle. The block this month represents the Mexican War in general and also those who volunteered to join the Mormon Battalion during the Mexican War.

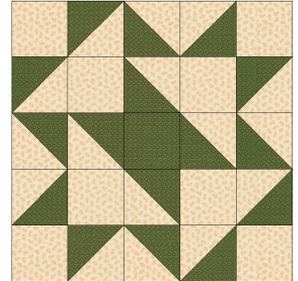
## Battalion Drum

Make 1 – 12” finished (12 ½” unfinished) size block.

### Cutting

Fabric A (green)—1 – 2 7/8” squares, 8 – 3 ¼” squares

Background fabric—8 – 2 7/8” squares, 8 – 3 ¼” squares



### Block Construction

1. Draw a diagonal line, corner to corner, on the wrong side of 8 Background 3 ¼” squares. Layer each square, right sides together, with 8 Fabric A 3 ¼” squares. Stitch a ¼” seam on each side of drawn line. Cut on drawn line. Press towards Fabric A. Yield: 16 – 2 7/8” unfinished size half square triangles.
2. Refer to picture of block. Layout cut squares and half square triangles. Pay close attention to placement of half square triangles.
3. Working across each row, stitch the five pieces together. Press all seams to the left on the odd rows and to the right on the even rows. This will cause seams to nest when sewing rows together. As each row is stitched and pressed, return to its placement in the block layout.
4. Stitch rows together and press.

James Knox Polk was the 11th President of the United States (1845–1849.) While Polk's legacy takes many forms, the most outstanding is the map of the continental United States, whose landmass he increased by a third. He believed in "Manifest Destiny" to a much greater extent than most.

Manifest Destiny was the 19th century American belief that the United States was destined to expand across the North American continent, from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Pacific Ocean. It was used by Democrats in the 1840s to justify the war with Mexico. Although the concept of American expansion is much older, it was primarily used by Democrats to support the expansion plans of the Polk Administration.

Polk is now recognized, not only as the strongest president between Jackson and Lincoln, but the president who made the United States a coast-to-coast nation. He threatened war with Britain over the issue of which country owned the Oregon Territory, and ended up splitting the ownership of the region with Britain on the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, giving the US the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming. When Mexico rejected American annexation of Texas, Polk led the nation to a sweeping victory in the Mexican–American War, which gave the United States most of its present Southwest. The Mexican-American War helped set off economic booms (such as mining in California and Nevada) and massive migrations, which in turn fueled rapid industrialization (such as transcontinental railroad development) and widespread conflict with western American Indian nations.

With the massive migrations West by pioneers, the Pacific Railroad was in its infancy. The great riddle of the Pacific Railroad was solved when Donner Pass (named for the ill-fated emigrants of 1846) was reevaluated and became recognized as an ideal location for constructing a rail line through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. With this discovery, the Central Pacific Railroad Company was born. One of our blocks this month is **Pacific Railroad**. It celebrates all those who headed West for new opportunities and a new life.

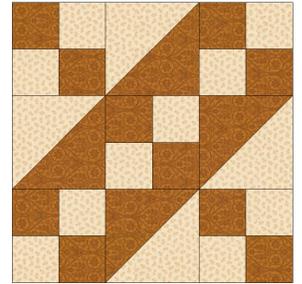
## Pacific Railroad

Make 1 – 12” finished (12 ½” unfinished) size block.

### Cutting

Fabric A (gold)—1 – 2 ½” x 27” strip, 2 – 4 7/8” squares

Background—1 – 2 ½” x 27” strip, 2 – 4 7/8” squares



### Block Construction

1. Draw a diagonal line, corner to corner, on the wrong side of 2 Background 4 7/8” squares. Layer each square, right sides together, with 2 Fabric A 4 7/8” squares. Stitch a ¼” seam on each side of drawn line. Cut on drawn line. Press towards Fabric A. Yield: 4 – 4 1/2” unfinished size half square triangles.
2. Layer Background 2 ½” x 27” strip right sides together with Fabric A 2 ½” x 27” strip. Stitch a ¼” seam down the length. Press seam towards Fabric A. Be careful not to distort seam. Strip set should measure 4 ½” wide. Cut 10 – 2 ½” wide segments from strip set. Yield: 10 – 2 ½” x 4 ½” segments.
3. Using 2 segments from step 2, place segments side by side with colors alternating to create a 4 patch. Stitch. Press. Repeat with remaining 8 segments to yield 5 – 4 ½” unfinished size 4 patch blocks.
4. Refer to picture, layout 4 patch and half square triangle blocks to create Pacific Railroad block. Stitch together as you would a 9 patch block. Press.