

# FOREWORD




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Mining and aviation are old allies in the development of Canada's north. Some of the first corporate aircraft flying in the Yukon were owned and operated by mining companies and many Canadian airlines were born and built supplying prospectors and mine development before the roads and railroads were built to haul the supplies. Aircraft were the vehicles of choice by miners as the prospects were remote, the working season short and the investors were hungry for results. Some mines were so rich that the ore concentrate was flown out to the nearest ground transport to smelters. The rich aviation history of Whitehorse and other towns along the Air Route to The Klondike began with service to these prospectors and their discoveries, and the investors and tourists alike that ventured north.

The first Whitehorse airfield was built in 1920 by Mike Cyr at the request of the US military to serve as a fuel stop for aircraft of the first Alaska Flying Expedition from New York to Nome. Whitehorse was an established supply center by then being the inland terminus of The Whitepass and Yukon Route Railway. Fuel was transported by rail from Skagway, the historic staging point for the overland route to the Klondike. Whitehorse became a major aviation hub and a wealth of flying heritage was recorded before the wartime construction of the Northwest Air Staging Route to Alaska

Chris Weicht's focus in this book of aviation history is on the supply route that enabled the development of gold mining in the interior of northern B.C. at Dease Lake and Atlin and the Yukon mining camps of Mayo and the World famous Klondike. Equipment, supplies and personnel were flown in from Ft. St. James, Skagway, Carcross and Whitehorse and from as far away as Seattle. These were the pioneer days of Yukon bush flying legends Clyde Wann and Andrew Cruickshank.

Mining exploration to this day has been an economic bellweather of aviation activity. Alkan Air in 1977 during a period of major mining and exploration throughout the Yukon, bought its licences from Yukon Airways owned then by Rene Leduc and Chuck Ford, a helicopter pilot for United Keno Hill Mines. We have not traced the historic origin of the licences but we believe we carry on the spirit of Yukon Airways & Exploration Co. and have recently acquired bush aircraft, a Turbine Single Otter and Cessna Caravan, in response to the latest revival in the mining exploration activities. The Rush is on again and we at Alkan Air are proud and fortunate to be a part of it.

  
Barrie Watson, President.