



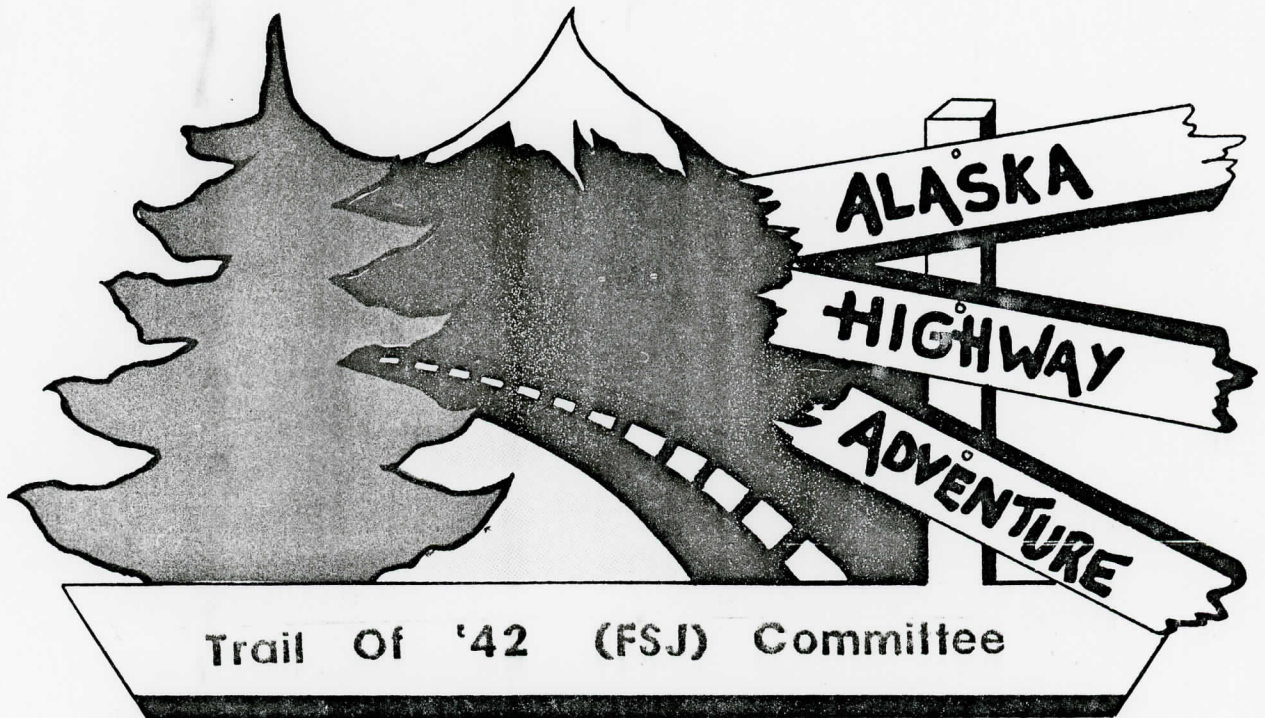
Trail Of '42 (FSJ) Committee

Box 6067, Fort St. John, B. C. V1J 4H6. (604) 785-6037

Welcome

to the

Alaska Highway Adventure



Trademark Pending

The first Alaska Highway Adventure started in February, 1942 when President Roosevelt gave the directive to start building the Alaska Highway!

The bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 7th, 1941 was to produce one of the greatest engineering feats of the century. The west coast of the United States and Canada and all of Alaska lay open to possible Japanese invasion and the defense of the coastline was of paramount importance in the early years of war.

Arrangements had to be made with the Canadian Government, as most of the road would be built through British Columbia and the Yukon Territory, using American troops and equipment. The Canadians agreed to furnish the right of way, to waive import duties, sales taxes, income taxes and immigration regulations and to permit the taking of timber, gravel and rock from crownlands along the route. The Americans agreed to pay for the construction and to turn over the Canadian portion of the road to the Canadian Government six months after the war ended.

Thus began the first Alaska Highway Adventure.....

Forty years later, the communities all along the Highway unite to commemorate the men and women who played a part in the building of the Alaska Highway.

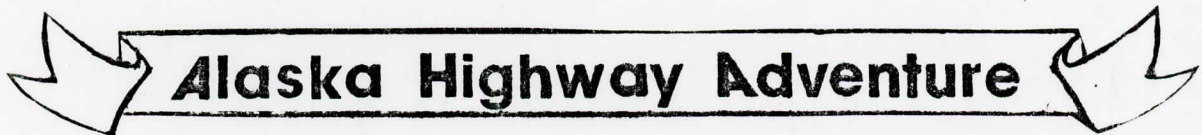
Representatives from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope, Watson Lake and Whitehorse have been meeting since last October to begin the planning of twenty months of celebrations.

Today in each of those communities, committees meet to plan activities and events to celebrate their involvement in the building of the Highway. Fort St. John was the southern terminus for construction. The road was to follow the winter trail from Fort St. John past Charlie Lake through thick forests and along ridgetops on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, crossing several large rivers and continuing to Fort Nelson.

We plan to give recognition not only to the military but also to the contractors, truckers, trappers, natives, prospectors, surveyors, bush pilots, ferry pilots - all pioneers to this historical event. We want all the civilians who were involved to come forward and help make the celebrations a true historic event!

The ideas and suggestions that have been given at past meetings are superb! BUT... we still need sponsors and assistance.

So, let's get on with the 2ND



Alaska Highway Adventure

AGENDA

March 2, 1982

1. Meeting to order
2. Introduction of Committee members and audience
3. Background of "Alaska Highway Adventure"
4. Up-date of confirmed events and dates
5. Major events requiring Service Club Sponsorship
6. Suggestions and ideas for future events
7. Committee assistance
8. Adjourn

TRAIL OF '42 COMMITTEE "IDEAS"

Projects being worked on by the Steering Committee and will include entire Region H:

1. Passports
2. Air Show
3. Car Rally
4. Military Reunions
5. Logo franchises
6. International media coverage

Local Fort St. John ideas and suggestion:

Beef Pit Barbeque	Bonfire
Fireworks	Dances - Adult, teen, old-time
Canteens	Regimental Reunions
Snowmobile Trips	Local Auto Rally
Local Air Show	Tours: Dam, etc.
Construction: Memorial at Charlie Lake	
Advt. in Hotel Rooms	Plane with banner
Ethnic Dinners & Activities	Barn Dances
Hay Rides	Original Window Designs
Minature Old Fort St. John	Photo Contest
Interviews	Large Sign at town entrance with names of people who worked on the Highway, Canadian and American flags
Signs & Pictures on Power Poles	AlCan Follies Reunion
Pot Luch Suppers	Recreate Keystone Cops idea with BC Police uniforms
War Brides Reunion	Original CP Air Pilots
School Reunions: Class of '42	Float that may be entered in PNE Parade with Adventure theme
Airforce Bands	Scout/Girl Guide Jamboree or Event
Military Tattoo	Showing of movies made in 1942
Contact Author of "Bush Pilot with a Briefcase"	Taylor's 25th anniversary - 1983
Rifle Shoot - for Reunion	
Van Run	
Movie "Class of '42"	
Lion's Club 25th anniversary '82	
Conventions	Dignitaries

.....
YOUR IDEAS:

Legends and Folklore put longest gravel road on the map in the North.

For 40 years the tall tales have risen as fast as the dust along the road they call the Alaska Highway.

Story tellers have written books, sung songs and just plain lied about its construction.

It is the longest gravel road in the world and after 40 years negotiations only a few hundred kilometers have been paved. It has remained a thin crooked line, wandering for more than 2,400 kilometers over muskeg and mud, from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks, Alaska.

Local legends tell of both German and Japanese invasion plots. Even the Americans, who built the highway, are accused of planning to occupy the area for its rich mineral wealth.

Northerners had talked about a road to Alaska for years, beginning as far back as the 1890's when the Klondike Gold Rush first lured men to the area. But it took a world war and the threat of an invasion to get the Alaska Highway built.

One legend says a man named Charles Bedaux tried to survey a road well before the Second World War, because Germany saw it as necessary for her conquest of Russia and America.

When the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, the Americans finally decided it was time.

In February of the following year, U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt shocked Canadians and Americans by saying that a foothold in Alaska or the Aleutian Islands would be more important to the Japanese than capturing the port of Singapore.

He said a road to link Alaska with the rest of North America was necessary to properly defend against an invasion and the U.S. would foot the bill.

At the time, the only ground protection of the Alaskan coast was reported to be a cannon that sat on the lawn of the capitol building in Juneau, which was normally used as a flower plot.

But, beginning on March 1, 1942, the troops began pouring into the north. More than 10,000 American soldiers and another 6,000 volunteers were put to work constructing the road.

continued...

Most of the Americans were blacks, segregated from fighting in the war overseas, and few had experience in operating the heavy equipment used to do the job.

Several hundred thousand dollars worth of equipment was lost, abandoned or stolen during the building of the road. Oldtimers claim small construction companies were founded on the spoils the American army left behind.

Recruitment posters told men " this is no picnic " and warned of mud, muskeg, mosquitoes and 70 degrees below freezing temperatures. People drowned and succumbed to mosquito bites or freezing cold.

A typical story of how men died needlessly due to simple lack of experience was when three soldiers whose truck stopped when the gas-lone froze up while they were hauling a load of used tires four miles out of Whitehorse, froze to death.

The men were found the next morning huddled together frozen stiff even though the gas tank on their truck was almost full and they had enough used tires in the back to burn for several days.

A soldier working on the section of the road between Whitehorse and the Alaska border - the section that was most difficult because the supply lines were so long - described the work this way. " We built and bulldozed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We lived dirty. We struck camp and moved and pitched camp in one day, were at work again the next."

Food sometimes became so short for the crews on that section that the men had to be sent out in hunting details to get moose meat so the camp would have something to eat.

But nine months and \$130 million later, on November 20, 1942, the highway was officially opened.

" One of the wonders of the modern world ", that is how a 1942 American documentary film describes the Alaska Highway. 1982 marks the 40th year of the construction of the highway the door for tremendous tourist potential.

* Our thanks to the VANCOUVER SUN and the ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS for the above article from whose papers excerpts were taken.

Alcan G. 9's



As drawn by
Pfc. Boris Mukovoschik

