

Granduc Mine History

Stewart, B.C. 1899-1981 Compiled by Les Deacon-Rogers Copyright 2012 - Page 27.

The Granduc Mine was near the Alaskan Border, 600 miles north of Vancouver. From Stewart it is 24 miles inland, across mountains, glaciers and ice fields. Snow can pile up to 960 inches in a season.

*1948- Einar Kvale staked some claims in the Leduc area

*1952- Exploration was started by Granby Mining Company Ltd. They found high grade copper ore

*1964- Tunnel was started.... 16 feet wide and 15 feet high, 10.5 miles long. Passed under 4 mountains and 3 glaciers up to 7000 feet high. It even had a high-speed railway. Total cost was 17 million dollars.

*1965- February, the men at Leduc had driven 28 feet of tunnel. An avalanche came down and killed 26 men

*1966-68- site work

*1970- Surface facilities covered and complete

*1971- First shipment of concentrate off to Japan. The mine employed 995 men

*1978- closed with the drop in price of copper. Opened up for a little bit then closed again in the early 1980's because they were not producing enough for what the copper was worth at the time.

Not much is left of the Granduc Minesite. Just a shell of the mine that was built beside the Berendon Glacier and a few railway tracks. The tunnel is still there, blocked because of bad air circulation. It is not recommended that anyone go into the tunnel as it has dead air pockets. Four days before February 18, 1965, there was a huge sub-arctic storm. 14 feet of heavy wet snow had fallen on top of fine granular snow, which resulted in a huge snowfield hanging over the camp.

*February 18, 1965, 154 men at the Leduc camp, only contact was helicopters, tractor trains and radio. At 9:57 am, 3 minutes before coffee break, the snowfield lets loose 100 thousand tons of snow, a mile long and ½ a mile wide came down. The slide went into the Portal Camp, 200 miles an hour. It wheeled to the left and down the slope to the glacier, saving the office, bunkhouses, warehouse, and first aid shack. 14 buildings were demolished, including the steel beamed powerhouse and machine shop. The avalanche ripped railroad steel and ventilating pipe, wooden beams, plywood sheets and threw them like javelins. The helicopter was ripped to pieces.