

Building an Airstrip

How does it happen? How does an airplane get into an area in mountains as high as the Rockies?

The Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) would use their small planes to fly people and supplies in and out—as long as the other missionaries could

build the strips. Most airstrips took several months to build. Some have taken as much as several years.



Here are the steps to building an airstrip. Number them in correct order from 1 to 7, in order to show how missionaries prepared an area for the pilots to land the airplanes.

___ The Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot comes in. (Nowadays he uses a helicopter, but long ago he would trek in like the land missionary.) Then *he* inspects the whole airstrip. He measures it to be sure it's long enough for an airplane to have room to land.

___ The missionary pays the people to help him begin chopping down trees and moving large rocks out of the way. Sometimes they use dynamite to blast the rocks into smaller pieces. Sometimes they have to blast away part of the mountain.

___ The missionary walks around the airstrip to make sure he thinks it's finished. Then he uses his two-way radio to contact the mission station and give the news to the MAF.

___ They carry away the rocks and dirt that aren't needed. They use shovels and axes to help hack at the hard dirt to make it smooth.

___ The people use the pieces of rock and loose dirt to fill in ruts and ditches.

___ The missionary men trek over the mountains to find a tribe. They make peace with the tribe and then scout out the area to find a good place to build an airstrip.

___ When the first airplane lands, the entire tribe celebrates with a big party!