



# LOGAN FROM ABOVE

Anatomy of an aerial shoot over Yukon's  
Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak

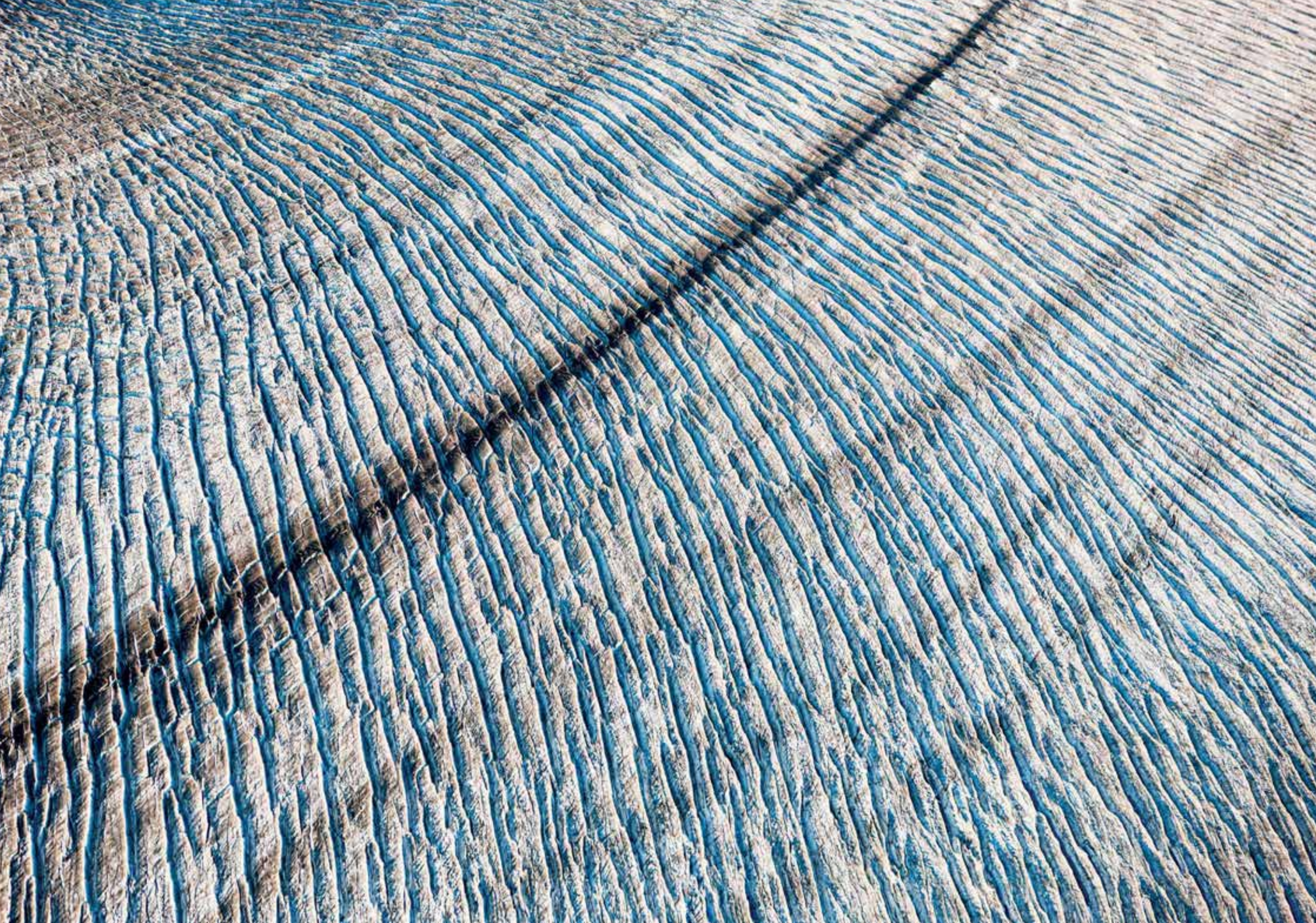
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRITZ MUELLER WITH TEXT BY TERESA EARLE

REIGNING OVER THE EXPANSE OF ROCK AND ICE in Yukon's southwestern corner is Mount Logan, whose girth gives it the distinction of being the world's most massive mountain and, at 5,959 metres, Canada's highest peak. Long the quarry of the world's mountaineering elite, Logan awes even the most accomplished climbers. It towers over Kluane National Park, eight-tenths of which is entombed in ice. The remainder is a mountainous fringe penetrated by glaciers and littered with moraines and braided, milky rivers.

For many years, my husband, photographer Fritz Mueller, has wanted to take aerial photos of Mount Logan and the St. Elias Mountains. His inspiration for this project lay  
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PRECEDING PAGES: Dwarfed by the northeast face of Mount Logan, a nunatak peeks through swirling fog. THIS PAGE: 4,300-metre Mount Kennedy rises beyond 70-kilometre-long Lowell Glacier, a surging mass of ice that last year advanced almost two kilometres across the Alsek River.







Mueller used gyroscopes to stabilize his camera to better capture details from the air, such as the crevasses and medial moraines that criss-cross the upper Kaskawulsh Glacier (PRECEDING PAGES) and the braided channels of the silt-laden Slims River (THIS PAGE), which hint at the dynamic environment in Kluane National Park.



The midnight sun rakes across Kluane Lake on the approach to the airstrip at Kluane Lake Research Station. Kluane National Park's reservoir of ice feeds Yukon waterways and cold air blasts down glacial valleys, depositing fertile sediment across interior forests.



Mount Vancouver (ABOVE), a 4,800-metre peak straddling the Yukon-Alaska border, is one of 20 summits higher than 4,200 metres in the St. Elias Mountains, one of the planet's most extreme environments. Parks Canada assistant Marty Samis (BELOW, at left) and pilot Bill Karman look for a landing site near Lowell Glacier during a trip to monitor movement of the surging ice.



in the carefully composed aerial photography of Henry Bradford Washburn, Jr., the American explorer who, 75 years ago, explored this poorly charted corner of the territory. Washburn photographed the St. Elias Mountains and climbed a number of peaks, including the first ascent of Mount Lucania. A decade ago, when Mueller met Washburn at a photography convention in the United States, where Washburn was receiving an award, this aerial photography project was born. After two years of false starts, the project came together in the summer of 2010.

On their third flight, as pilot Donjek Upton circled around, banking to keep the wing from obstructing Mueller's lens, the light was gorgeous with layers of fog swirling around. Mount Logan is so big, they weren't even a quarter-way across the massif before time ran out, and Upton started fussing about fuel. "I kept ignoring him, lining up new shots," says Mueller. "Eventually, he had to swing away from the mountain to head home. In the end, I had less than 20 minutes with Logan."

*Images and text from the book Yukon: A Wilder Place, ©Fritz Mueller and Teresa Earle, to be published by Greystone Books, an imprint of D&M Publishers Inc., in October 2011. Adapted with permission from the publisher and authors.*



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