

DEN SORTE ENGEL THE BLACK ANGEL

Keld Jensen

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Den Sorte Engel

Vi var lige ankommet med helikopter til Uummannaq i Nordvestgrønland. Nu stod helikopteren allerede og ventede på os igen. Vi skulle på et kort visit i Maamorilik tres kilometer nordvest for Uummannaq. Stednavnet Maamorilik siger måske ikke mange så meget. Selve minen fik den folkelige betegnelse Den sorte Engel. På bjerget ved indgangen til minen, tegner der sig i klipperne noget, der kan ligne en sort engel.

Ved vores besøg i minen i juni 2007 var Den sorte Engel en nedlagt minelejr, men nye investorer forberedte en genåbning af minen.

Maamorilik-området har en lang historie bag sig som mineaktivitet. Allerede i 1933 startede kommerciel marmorbrydning i området. I 1939 fandt geologerne mineralforekomsten ved Den sorte Engel. I 1970'erne blev marmorbrydningen indstillet, men samtidigt blev mi-

nen med udnyttelse af zink- og blyforekomsten startet. Denne mine blev lukket i 1990. I 2007 havde nye investorer planer om at genopstarte minen, og dette var baggrunden for vores rejse til Uummannaq og nu flyveturen ud til mineområdet.

Det blev en begivenhedsrig færd. Først fløj vi i den lille helikopter over den smukkeste ødemark ud til vores bestemmelsessted. Ved den nedlagte minelejr var der indrettet en plads til at lande en helikopter. Selve stedet var et mistrøstigt syn: Ældre bygninger, hvor der fortsat stod materiel fra dengang minen var aktiv. Nogle få håndværkere var i gang med at sætte nogle beboelsesrum i stand, så ny arbejdskraft vil kunne flytte ind, når indretningen af minelejren for alvor skulle startes.

Minen var ret specielt indrettet. Fra minelejren førte dengang en svævebane over til åbningerne i minen. Åbningerne ligger på

den anden side af fjorden og oppe i cirka 500 meters højde på den stejle klippe. Dengang minen var aktiv skulle både materiel, malmen og mandskab transporteres via svævebanen mellem minelejren og minens åbninger i bjerget.

Vores visit ud til Maamorilik omfattede en inspektion af mineindgangen og de interimistiske stiger, som arbejdere nu anvendte for at komme ind i minegangene. Helikopteren lettede fra lejren, og næsten lodret steg vi under voldsom motorlarm op til åbningerne til minen. Her blev vi så hængende, mens ingeniører betragtede mineindgangen og tog billeder.

I den lille, trange helikopter sad jeg ude på siden af helikopteren. Under mine fødder var der kun en plexiglasrude. Jeg kunne se direkte fem hundrede meter nede på havoverfladen. Larmen var øredøvende, fordi rotorens larm ramte den klippevæg, som

vi hang meget tæt på, og støjen blev kastet tilbage.

Efter nogle minutter, der føltes som meget lang tid, fortsatte helikopteren ind i bugten ved minelejren. Vi fløj helt ind til Indlandsisen, hvor vi landede på en lille isdækket sø.

Det var et bemærkelsesværdigt sted. I løbet af en ganske kort periode havde Indlandsisen trukket sig tilbage. For første gang i årtusinder blottedes geologien under isen, og her havde geologer fundet en smal forekomst af zink. Da minen var aktiv i 1970'erne havde der ikke været kendskab til forekomsten og heller ikke adgang til at undersøge stedet på grund af det tykke lag is, der dækkede området. Nu, hvor isen havde trukket sig tilbage, kunne vi se zinkforekomsten i det helt bare, golde landskab.

The Black Angel

We had just arrived by helicopter to Uummannaq in Northwest Greenland. Now, the helicopter was waiting for us again. The plan was a short visit to Maamorilik sixty kilometres northwest of Uummannaq. The place name Maamorilik may not be known to many. The mine itself was popularly known as Black Angel. On the mountain at the entrance to the mine, something like a black angel appears in the rocks.

On our visit to the mine in June 2007, the Black Angel was a disused mining camp, but new investors were preparing to reopen the mine.

The Maamorilik area has a long history as a mining activity. Already in 1933, commercial marble quarrying started in the area. In 1939, geologists found the mineral deposit at the Black Angel. In the 1970s, the marble quarrying was ended, but at the same time a mine with

the exploitation of the zinc and lead deposits was started. This mine was closed in 1990. In 2007, new investors had plans to restart the mine, and this was the background for our trip to Uummannaq and now the flight to the mining area.

It was an eventful journey. First, we flew in the small helicopter above the most beautiful wasteland to our destination. At the disused mining camp, an open space was set up to land a helicopter. The site itself was a despondent sight: older buildings, where there still was equipment from when the mine was active. A few craftsmen were in the process of renovating some living spaces so that new workers will be able to move in when the establishing of the mining camp was to be started for real.

The mine was quite specially organized. From the mine camp, a cable car led above the fjord to the openings of the mine. The

openings are located at an altitude of about 500 meters on the steep cliff. When the mine was active, both equipment, ore and personnel had to be transported via the cable car between the mine camp and the openings of the mine in the mountain.

Our visit to Maamorilik included an inspection of the mine entrance and the ladders that workers now used to enter the mine. The helicopter took off from the camp, and almost vertically, under loud engine noise, we gain height to the openings of the mine. Here we stayed while engineers inspected the entrance of the mine and took photographs.

In the small, tight helicopter, I sat on the side of the helicopter. Under my feet there was only a plexiglass window. I could see directly five hundred meters down to sea level. The noise was deafening because the noise of the rotor hit the rock wall,

which were very close to the helicopter, and the noise was reflected.

After a few minutes, which felt like a very long time, the helicopter continued into the bay. We flew all the way to the ice sheet, where we landed on a small ice-covered lake.

It was a remarkable place. Within a very short period, the ice sheet had receded. For the first time in millennia, the geology under the ice was exposed, and here the geologists had found a narrow deposit of zinc. When the mine was active in the 1970s, there had been no knowledge of this deposit, nor access to monitor the site, due to the thick ice that covered the area. Now that the ice had receded, we could see the zinc deposit in the completely bare, barren landscape.



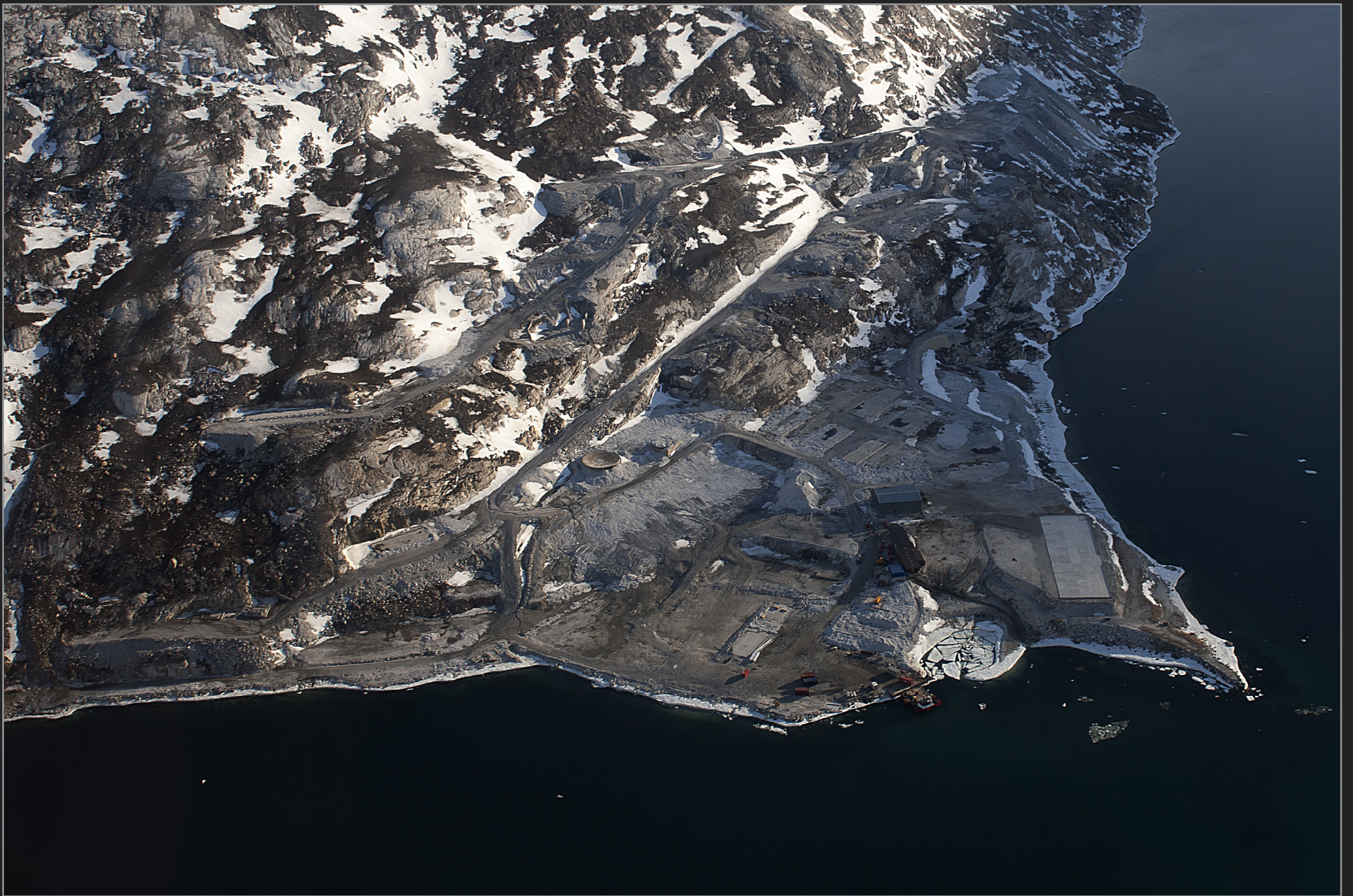
Maamorilik, Nordvest Grønland, juni 2007

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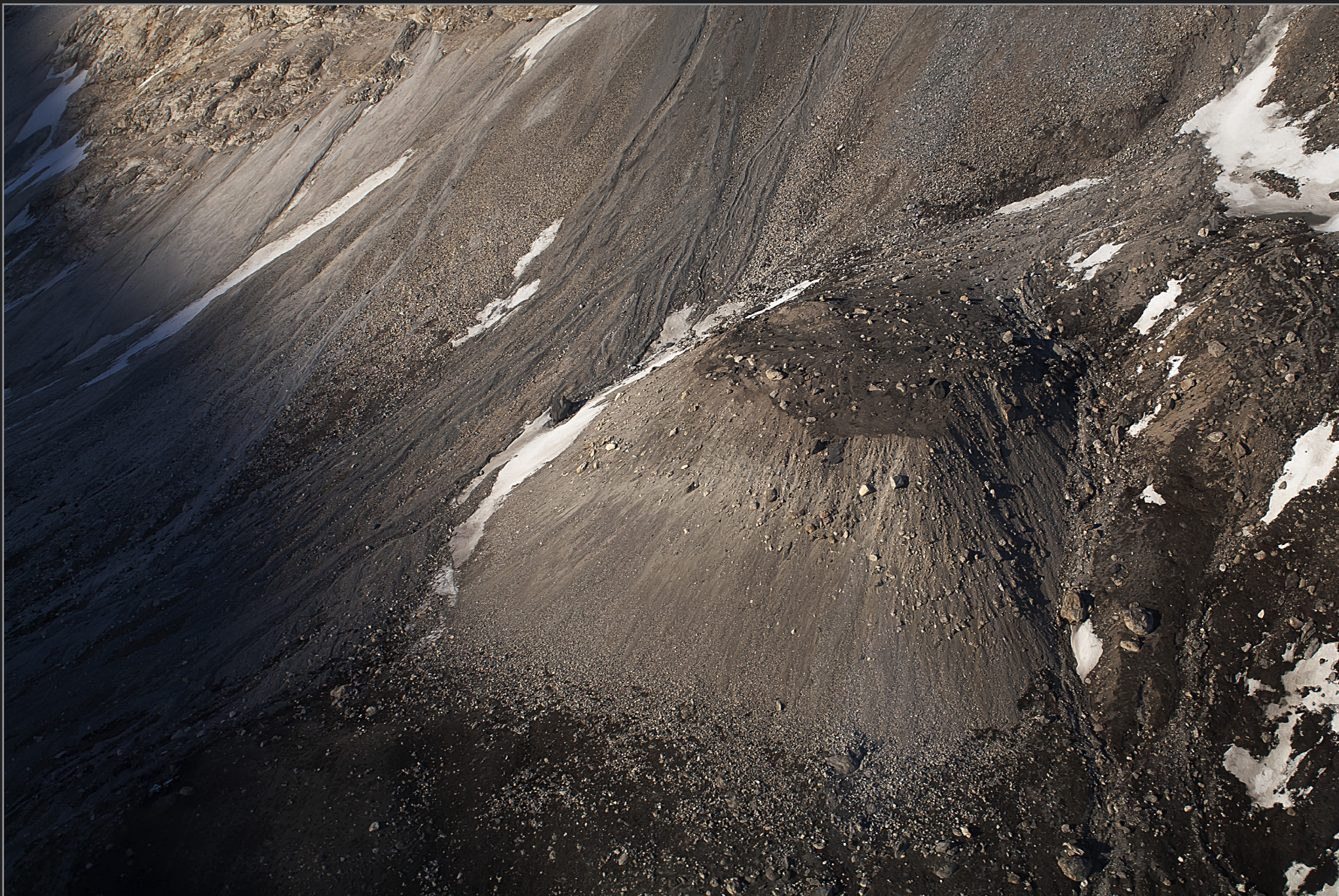
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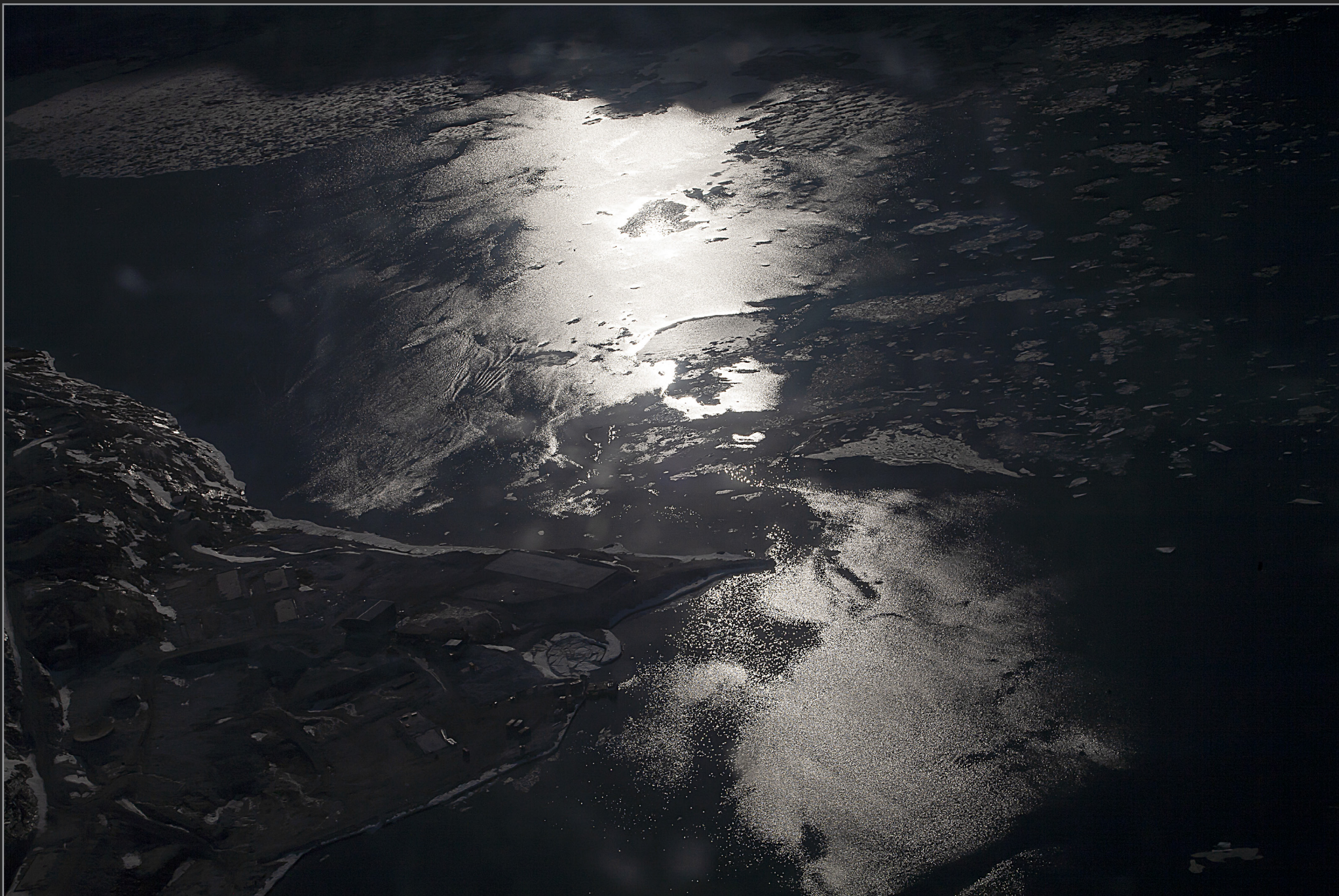
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KOLOFON

*Ugens foto: Den Sorte Engel
Af Keld Jensen*

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COLOPHON

*Photo of the week: The Black Angel
By Keld Jensen*

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