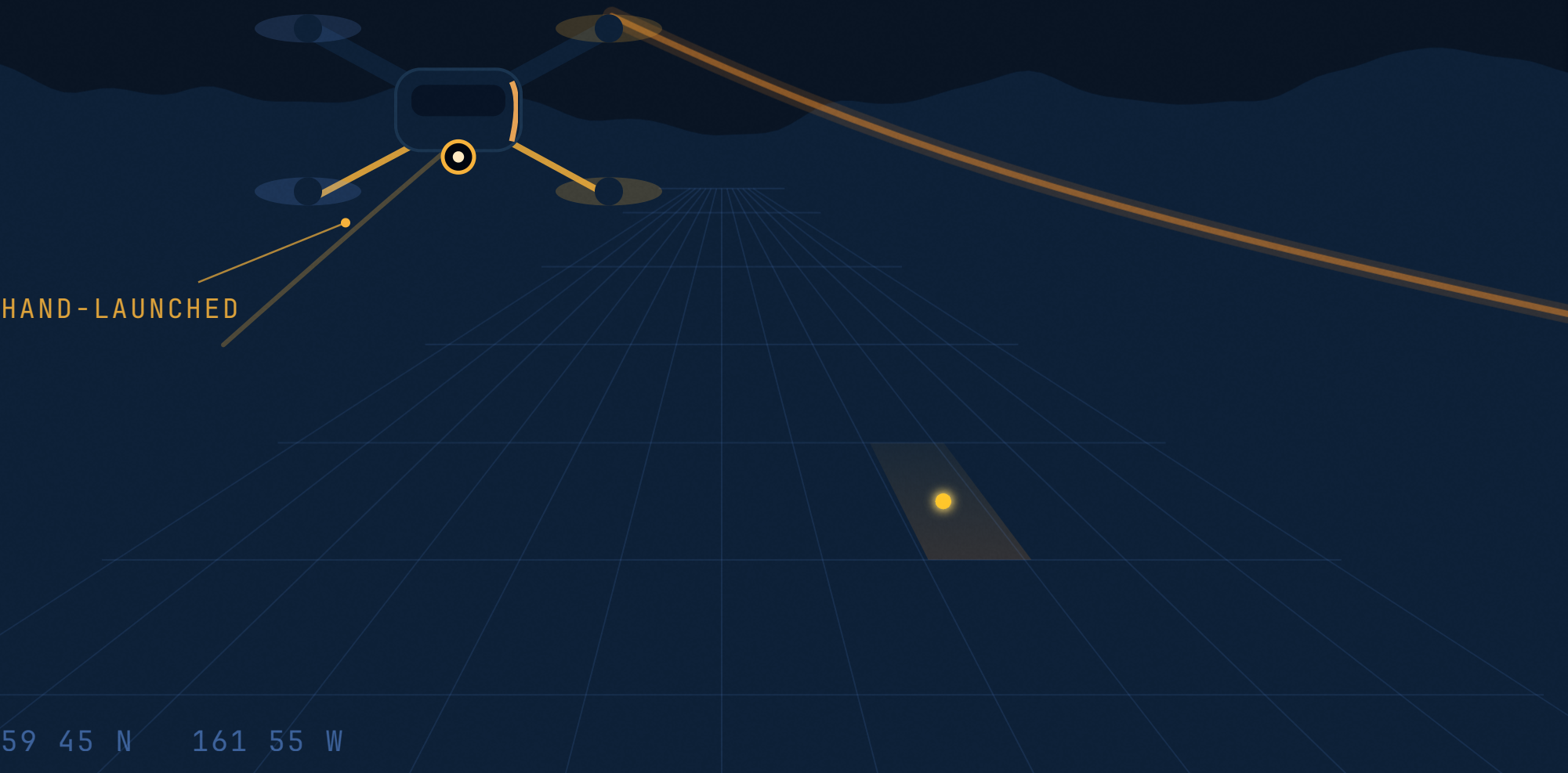


No road out. So Quinhagak learned to fly its own **drones.**





"We get weekly calls for search and rescue. Sometimes daily."

BYRON PETLUSKA, QUINHAGAK

In a roadless stretch of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, a lost boat or an overdue traveler is a life-and-death search. Quinhagak's drone team answers those calls from the air, week after week.

SEARCH GRID

59 45 N 161 55 W

The sky is **the only road**.

No roads reach Quinhagak or its neighbors on the Kuskokwim coast. Rivers and airspace are the only ways through. A local pilot, instructor Sean Gleason says, knows the traffic patterns better than anyone from outside.

BETHEL

EEK

QUINHAGAK

GOODNEWS BAY

PLATINUM

NO ROADS

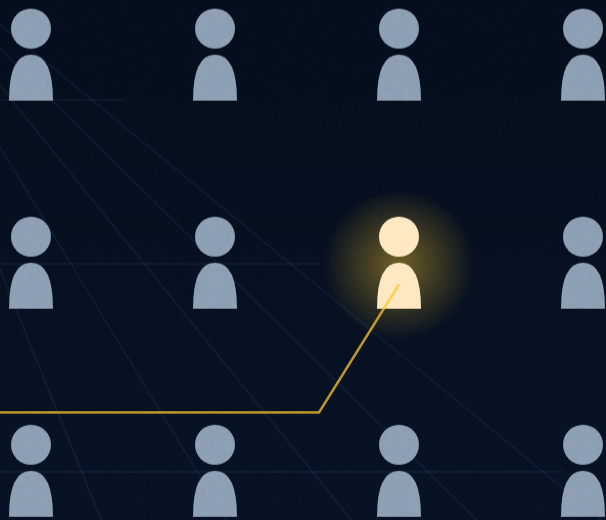


They are training **their own**.

On June 9, a dozen trainees from across rural Alaska came to Quinhagak to learn to fly. The local course runs 14 weeks toward an FAA Part 107 license on an Alaska DOT grant, one seat each for Quinhagak, Eek, Goodnews, and Platinum.

ANGELINA OLRUN, 19, MEKORYUK
WANTS TO COUNT REINDEER BY THERMAL DRONE

NOV COHORT / 4 VILLAGES
QUINHAGAK EEK GOODNEWS PLATINUM



14 WEEKS TO FAA PART 107

DOZEN TRAINEES JUNE 9



NUNALLEQ

It began at the dig.

The drones first came to map Nunalleq, an ancestral Yup'ik village eroding into the Bering Sea. The pilots stayed, and turned the same eyes on the living delta.

Nalaquq built its own eyes.

Nalaquq, the village-owned company, wrote its own machine vision. A neural network spots a small aluminum boat on a search grid. A polarized-lens rig counts salmon in the river. The name means it has been found.



Most of the eyes **are human.**



Be exact about the machine. A neural network finds boats. A lens rig counts salmon. But people fly every drone, and the thermal reindeer counts and the archaeology are human eyes reading pictures, not algorithms.

MACHINE (AI)

Finds boats

SAR CNN [c14]

Counts salmon

POLARIZED LENS [c15]

HUMAN EYES

Flies the drone

FAA PART 107 PILOT

Counts reindeer

THERMAL, HUMAN-READ [c9]

Reads the dig

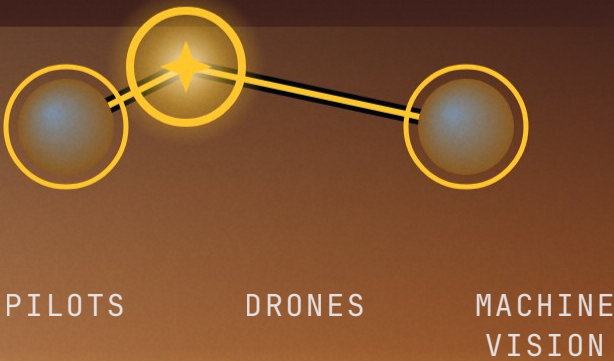
ARCHAEOLOGY [c13]

Own the eye, don't rent it.

Elsewhere the sensor, the model, and the data belong to outside companies. In Quinhagak the pilots, the drones, and the machine vision belong to the village that flies over its own land, water, and people.

RENTED

OWNED





Who should own the machine that watches your community?

SOURCES IN COMMENTS