



AIRMULE 'DRONE AMBULANCE' MAKES FIRST UNTETHERED FLIGHT

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An unmanned air ambulance has been filmed taking off, untethered, for the first time.

The AirMule, developed by Tactical Robotics and long proposed as a means of extracting soldiers from a battlefield without risking further loss of life, has been in development for close to a decade.

In theory the robotic craft would be able to take off and land vertically, in terrain where helicopters are impractical, with space for two human passengers or 450kg in weight. Powered by an internal engine, the AirMule could operate in mountainous areas, woods and cities, travel up to 31 miles, and "help combatants reclaim an essential edge by enabling precise point to point logistic support".

Until now, however, the craft has not been seen flying on camera. Meanwhile similar ideas, such as the Ehang 184 autonomous personal drone car, have been proposed -- though with a similar lack of proof as to their practical viability, and no regulatory approval.

But now the Israeli company behind the Air Mule appears to have made a breakthrough. On its website, the company reports that the craft successfully made its first untethered autonomous flight, at the Megiddo airfield in northern Israel, just before the end of 2015, following months of delays.

SOURCE: WIRED

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