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"Mother Drone, Mother Nature: The Griffon Vulture and Israel's Military"

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Israeli soldiers exercise in a desert. © Pavel Bernshtam on Adobe Stock. All rights reserved.

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In July 2020, Israeli television reported on an endangered griffon vulture (Gyps fulvus) chick who had lost his mother to electricity wires. As would soon become clear, the chick's father was unable to provide enough food to ensure his son's survival. The Israeli army, referred to by most Israelis as the Israel Defense Forces (IDF for short, or Tsahal in Hebrew), readily stepped in, using a state-of-the-art drone technology to drop daily offerings of rat food for the chick by deftly managing the intense cliffs. "Mother drone," as the army referred to this technology, was blurred in the video that documented the operation. It had to be, the reporter explained, because it "belongs to the Israeli army and is classified as top secret." Standing with his back to the camera, the military general in command told the reporter about the countless hours spent practicing the delivery on a mock-up of the ledge and nest before the military started food drops for real. The report ended

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with the following statement: “The collaboration between a tech company, the military, and conservationists got the ultimate endorsement this week when the chick flew for the first time. Job [well] done!” (Figure 2). (From the article)

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