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A Defense Technology Blog

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It's curtain call time for the French army's CL289 reconnaissance drone.

Pop



(credit: Armee de Terre)

After 17 years of service, including operational duties in Bosnia, Kosovo and Chad, the French army is ready to put the high-speed tactical reconnaissance drone system out to pasture. The system has probably enjoyed a longer life than first thought, since replacement systems took longer to field than expected.

The backbone of the French army's airborne tac-recce efforts are now the the EADS DRAC and Sagem Sperwer UAVs. There are plans for new systems, but nothing is moving quickly these days in the French procurement apparatus.

The CL289 served its purpose, but the system was designed for a different type of battle where mission changes didn't have to be performed quickly. The German army retired its CL289s last year.

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It's interesting to see how far UAVs have come since the CL289, and how the operational capabilities have changed. From low, fast, 'wet film' short-ranged rockets to counter IADS, to high alt loitering RPVs/UAVs/RPAs operated from half a world away.

Merci and bon voyage Piver.

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