

# when drones **ATTACK!!**

Amazon's  
Experimental  
New Airforce



By John Barker

Amazon is really turning heads and stirring up controversy over a recent statement made by their CEO Jeff Bezos. What's not fascinating about a near future in which fleets of whirring sky robots can drop our every impulse buy on our doorstep faster than we can get Chinese delivered? We reached out to Amazon, where official details are still scarce, and chatted with drone expert Missy Cummings, an associate professor at MIT and one of the Navy's first female fighter pilots. Here's some of what we've been able to piece together on a project that Amazon says is, at the very least, a couple of years away from takeoff.

Could drones really be delivering packages by 2015? That's what Bezos said is the best possible scenario. But Cummings, a longtime advocate for the commercial use of drones, thinks that's optimistic.

The Federal Aviation Administration needs to sign off on Amazon's flight plans, and Cummings says the agency hasn't been quick to move on the domestic use of drones. "I think they (Amazon) are stepping out in a typically naive way, (but) maybe they have some secret insight to the FAA that I don't have," she said. Cummings predicts the company will get approval to start

Prime Air in other countries before the United States, but she says that having a retail and technology giant like Amazon pushing for it could speed things up for everyone. "I don't want anybody to think this is right around the corner,"

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