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Aviation » Aircraft

Off-Board Expendables: An Aid to Aircraft Survivability

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Abstract: During World War II, off-board expendables in the form of **chaff**, significantly reduced Allied bomber losses to radar guided anti-aircraft artillery. From World War II on, the United States has employed Electronic Counter-Measure (ECM) techniques on various bomber, fighter, cargo and special mission aircraft to enhance their survivability. The primary threats to aircraft today are the highly sophisticated radar and infrared guided air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles. Advances in computer hardware and data/signal processing techniques have enabled these missiles to increasingly distinguish between a target aircraft and current generation self-protection on-board ECM and off-board expendables. One potential counter to these smart missiles is a new self-protection ECM technique called the towed decoy. The towed decoy acts much like a target towed behind an aircraft in that it presents a threat missile with a better target than the intended target aircraft. The same technology advances that have made smart missiles possible, have also made small, relatively inexpensive towed radio frequency and infrared decoys practical.

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