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Estimation of Aluminum Contributions of U.S. Navy Flight Training Operations in the Chesapeake Bay

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Abstract: This document reports the results from an investigation of the impact of aluminized glass **chaff** countermeasures on environmental aluminum levels in the Chesapeake Bay. This study was conducted by the Naval Health Research Detachment (Toxicology) in response to concerns expressed over the potential environmental hazards that might be associated with the release of aluminized glass **chaff** fibers during training exercises by Naval aviators. **Chaff** used to provide protection against radar based attack on aircraft and other military vehicles is composed of aluminum coated glass fibers. Concern has been expressed as to the environmental hazard and potential for human health risk associated with routine release of this material during training exercises. The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of U.S. Navy flight training operations on aluminum content in the Chesapeake Beach region of the Chesapeake Bay, an area over which **chaff** countermeasure flight training operations have been conducted for nearly a quarter century. Exchangeable and monomeric aluminum content in sediment from the flight path within the Bay is not significantly different from nearby background levels within the Bay. Background residential exchangeable aluminum levels were not significantly different from soil samples obtained from a residential area adjacent to the NRL-CBD complex at Chesapeake Beach.

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