BriteCloud Decoy Upgraded for Smart Dispense

By Richard Scott

The UK-based EW business of Leonardo (Luton, UK) has modified the large aircraft version of its BriteCloud expendable active decoy to meet the latest NATO STANAG-4871 self-protection standard, and offer compatibility with “smart” countermeasure dispenser systems.

As well as Smart Stores Communication Interface (SSCI) compatibility, the latest standard BriteCloud 55-T variant will also be able to exchange data with host aircraft on-board self-protection systems.

Leonardo’s BriteCloud is a compact DRFM-based H-J band expendable jammer designed to provide aircraft with effective “end game” protection against radar-guided missile threats and/or tracking radars. After ejection, the BriteCloud decoy searches and locks onto the highest priority threat; the DRFM’s coherent response prevents the threat from detecting the deception as the decoy separates, so generating large miss distances and breaking the target lock.

The BriteCloud 55-T round shares the same form factor as a standard 55-mm flare cartridge, and can be launched from a range of dispensing systems. Whereas the original BriteCloud 55 was designed specifically for fast jets, the 55-T features increased power output to mask the larger radar cross sections of airlifters and special mission aircraft.

According to Leonardo, the BriteCloud 55-T decoy is now fully compatible with the SSCI interface standard incorporated as part of STANAG 4781. SSCI enables in-flight communication and optimal use of smarts expendables as part of a mixed countermeasures outload; it also enables automatic expendable

type recognition and automatically logs payload logistic information, including air carriage life and “use by” date.

Alongside BriteCloud 55-T, Leonardo is also investing to bring STANAG-4871 compatibility to the BriteCloud 218 variant (a 2 x 1 x 8-in form factor expendable designed for compatibility with AN/ALE-40, AN/ALE-47 and similar dispensers). The company says it is in talks with stores dispenser manufacturers for test and evaluation to take place later in 2024.