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David H. Titterton
Mark A. Richardson
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Introduction

The purpose of this conference was to provide a technical forum for the discussion and dissemination of information on optical, electro-optical, and infrared technologies as applied to the countermeasure role in security and defence.

Since the polished shields of antiquity that were used to reflect the sun into the enemy's eyes, optics and optical systems have been used on the battlefield as a cost-effective countermeasure: a classical force multiplier. The simplest modern optical countermeasure techniques can still be extremely inexpensive in comparison with the platform/weapon system that they protect. Take for example the humble infrared flare ejected from the multi-million dollar aircraft, and the smoke screen deployed to protect an armoured fighting vehicle or column of vehicles. More sophisticated defensive aid systems are being developed that can encompass sensor systems, tracking systems, active and passive countermeasures, and sophisticated control and processing systems. It was all of these techniques and their underlying technologies, from the simple to the complex, which this conference aimed to discuss.

The conference content was even better than last year, with nearly 30 quality papers being presented over the first two days of the symposium. Interest and attendance were high throughout; the conference room was usually full, with some people having to stand for some of the sessions. The importance of the laser in countermeasure technologies was evident by the fact that a number of the sessions were focused on laser systems. Additionally, there were sessions on supporting technology and a general session on modeling and simulation.

The conference kicked off with an excellent keynote address on the recent successes of high-energy laser projects from the U.S. Department of Defense, High-Energy Laser Joint Technology Office, and each session typically started off with an invited paper. All of the papers were well received and created significant interest and subsequent questioning.

We therefore commend the following papers to your attention and invite you to advance the topic of Technologies for Optical Countermeasures even further, by submitting your research and development work for consideration in next year's conference in Toulouse.

David H. Titterton
Mark A. Richardson