



## Squadron expands test-support capability of T-39B

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by Capt. Scott Wallace  
418th Flight Test Squadron

**EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AFPN) --** Aircraft testers with the 418th Flight Test Squadron here proved the T-39B transport aircraft's capability to dispense chaff and flares by releasing both types of expendables in China Lake airspace recently.

T-39Bs can now provide test support for other systems that react to chaff or flares dispensed in flight. The Army, for example, tests the reaction of ground-based radar systems to chaff.

Chaff and flares are a part of the defensive systems of many military aircraft. Chaff generally consists of small metallic strips with high radar reflectivity. Chaff is used to interfere with radar systems -- preventing enemy radar-guided missiles from hitting their targets. Flares are used to interfere with the ability of heat-seeking missiles to lock on a target.



A T-39B ejects a flare during testing by the 418th Flight Test Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., recently. The testing proved the T-39B transport aircraft's capability to dispense chaff and flares by releasing both types of expendables. T-39Bs can now provide test support for other systems that react to chaff or flares dispensed in flight. The Army, for example, tests the reaction of ground-based radar systems to chaff. (Courtesy photo)

"The T-39 chaff/flare capability was created in direct response to a customer's need for low-cost test support," said Capt. Tom Willis, chief of operations for the T-39 program for the 418th Flight Test Squadron. "We'll help the Army develop its radar systems at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., by providing airborne chaff release at half the cost they were paying before."

The T-39B was built in the early 1960s and is operated at Edwards for a variety of test-support missions.

Testers added the chaff/flare capability by attaching a pod capable of carrying and ejecting the expendables under the middle of the aircraft. During two days of testing, the T-39 test team verified safe flare separation from one pod and chaff separation from two different pods.

The testing went as planned and the system is already scheduled to support customers in mid-April, Willis said.

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