

## **Q&A with the OEA Director, Mr. Kirk Phillips**

Mr. Kirk A. Phillips assumed the role of the [Office of Energy Assurance](#) (OEA) director in March 2021 in Arlington, Va.

OEA serves as the integrator of energy resilience efforts by ensuring projects align with installation needs and with the three goals of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Installation Energy Strategic Plan — identify enabling system vulnerabilities, improve resilience planning and ensure resilience results.

We asked Mr. Phillips about his life, career and thoughts about the future of OEA.

### **Where is your hometown?**

This is one of those difficult questions for me. I was born into a military family and I have lived in 26 places, so length of time at a location and birth location was chosen by Uncle Sam. My most formative years were in Thailand when my father was doing work for the U.S. State Department. Thailand feels like a second home to me after the U.S. Since my home is the U.S. and I have had the most homes in the D.C. metro area (7), I would settle on D.C. as my best answer. Clear as mud right?

### **Can you please tell us about your time in service and career leading up to this point?**

I graduated from a ROTC scholarship with an Aerospace Engineering Degree and wanted to use my education to help protect the environment and the workforce, so I transitioned from Maintenance to Bioenvironmental Engineering. I held positions at every level with extensive Headquarters staff work, an AF fellowship and the Civil Engineer's AFIT program, MS in Engineering and Environmental Management. I was the career field manager for my AFSC for four years and retired as a Colonel. After retirement I went into private practice as a vice president of a Civil Engineering company for three years. Some highlights were working with Directed Energy Weapons such as the Airborne Laser and the RF Active Denial System, working in A3 in the Airspace and Range Office, mentoring the engineers and medical architects' careers throughout.

### **For those who may be unfamiliar with your office, can you please describe what OEA does?**

OEA serves as the primary contact and integrator for energy resilience solutions across the Air Force by connecting enterprise and installation stakeholders with resilience solutions that align with installation needs and with enterprise goals. The office's vision is to secure DAF warfighter superiority with the world's most resilient infrastructure.

### **What excites you most about your new role?**

The team at OEA is top notch as well as the teams across AFCEC and IMSC that we work with so that is very exciting. Secondly, making a difference in society is what really gives me a positive charge and assisting in making bases more resilient has the opportunity to make a big difference. Finally, I am excited about the program because energy is a dynamic area to be working in today with every segment of our society looking to address long-standing challenges in energy with new and innovative solutions.

### **How does OEA serve the DAF Installation Energy vision of *mission assurance through energy assurance*?**

OEA is achieving mission assurance through energy assurance by identifying energy resilience gaps and opportunities for which it then develops impactful resilience solutions.

The team works collaboratively with installations around the world to develop an **Installation Energy Plan** and shares industry best practices that help ensure resilience results. Installation Energy Plans provide an important decision-making structure for installations to define mission energy requirements, incorporate long-term plans for energy resilience capabilities, and ensure reliable and available utilities for key missions.

OEA generates **Resilience Solution Reports** to quantify how different resilience projects would impact the installation's or mission's energy resilience posture. The reports outline a **specific, executable solution** that addresses a resilience need at the installation and includes information on recommended resilience technologies, acquisition methods, financial streams and what office will lead the execution of the effort.

### **Who does OEA work with, and how can interested parties connect with OEA?**

Understanding Air Force energy needs comes from OEA's regular engagement with installations across the enterprise. OEA makes connections between the energy industry, academia, and DoD and federal stakeholders to help identify and develop energy and water resilience solutions.

OEA serves as the **Air Force Energy Storefront** and gateway to collaboration for installation and industry partners to send energy solutions, ideas or questions. The OEA team uses its market, policy, financial and engineering knowledge to match industry solutions with an identified installation energy resilience need. To access this storefront, interested parties can simply reach out via our website [Work with OEA](#) page.

OEA issued an ongoing Request for Information, solicitation number [W912DY-19-U-OEA1](#), to gather technical and financial data as well as innovative project development

concepts from industry. I'd also suggest subscribing to the [OEA Updates](#) newsletter to remain up to date on any relevant OEA news.

**OEA was established by the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff five years ago in 2016. How do you see OEA's impact over the next five years?**

OEA in the next few years will complete Installation Energy Plans for every location and those plans will be kept current and will be a guide to infrastructure solutions and decisions which will assure we continually improve resilience at our installations. Our resiliency scores for each installation will guide basing decisions and assist the Air Force in knowing how to make the best choices for new basing and where investment will be needed. All of these decisions will put the mission first, where improvements in energy will stand on their own feet and compete with other projects on their benefit to the mission. Finally, our office will serve the Air Force as experts in energy across the full spectrum of power and water and continually identify emerging technologies and take the actions needed to bring those technology to Air Force benefit.