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Distinguished Speaker

Dr. Christopher Vergien

OUSW (R&E) SCADE

Senior Official for Scaled Directed Energy (SCADE)

Dr. Christopher Vergien serves as the Senior Official for Scaled Directed Energy (SCADE) within the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (OUSW(R&E)). As the Department's foremost authority on directed energy technologies, he provides enterprise-wide strategic oversight to accelerate the development and fielding of High Energy Laser (HEL) and High-Power Microwave (HPM) systems. Under his leadership, the Department is rapidly delivering scalable, cost-effective, and high-impact solutions to counter emerging threats.

Prior to his current role, he served as the Directed Energy Subject Matter Expert for OUSW(R&E), advising senior leadership on critical technology investments. A former consultant for DARPA and the Defense Science Board, Dr. Vergien's background is rooted in a career with the U.S. Air Force.

Dr. Vergien's distinguished military career includes leading critical initiatives at DTRA to develop nuclear forensics and non-kinetic systems for counter-weapons of mass destruction operations. Earlier, as a researcher at AFRL and in academia, he conducted seminal work in laser physics—including high-power fiber lasers and coherent beam combining that provided the technical pillars for today's scaled directed energy systems.

Dr. Vergien holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Optical Sciences and Engineering from the University of New Mexico and a B.S. in Physics from California State University, Northridge. He is a senior member of the International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE), an accomplished author, speaker, and peer reviewer for leading scientific journals.