Legislative *Scorecard* ISSUES

House Investigates Incidence and Care for TBI-Related Vision Disorders

On April 2, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to investigate the incidence of combat-related eye injuries, particularly those associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Testimony was provided by two veterans–Bryan Pearce (U.S. Army Staff Sergeant, retired), accompanied by his wife Angela, and Glen Minney (U.S. Navy Petty Officer, retired)–coordinated by NAEVR contributor Blinded Veterans Association (BVA, which also testified), as well as by representatives of the Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

After dramatic testimony by the veterans, who detailed their injuries, the aftermath of DOD and VA care, and the ongoing impact on their families, BVA's Tom Zampieri summarized concerns that include:

- **Seamless transition from DOD to VA care, especially the current lack of portability of medical records**
- **Lack of accurate numbers on combat-related eye injuries, especially visual disorders associated with TBI that can be short- and long-term**
- **The need for Congress to fund the Military Eye Trauma Center of Excellence and Eye Trauma Registry, which were provisions of the *Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act* authorized in the FY2008 Defense Authorization Act but not funded**

The VA representatives described the creation of four national Polytrauma Treatment Centers, in which research is being conducted to improve the diagnosis and treatment of TBI-related visual disorders. DOD representatives stated that work had begun on the Eye Trauma Registry, and that future DOD research would focus increasingly on TBI-related visual disorders and not just on eye disease.

Left to right: Cong. Eric Cantor (R-VA), who introduced constituent witnesses Angela and Bryan Pearce, Tom Zampieri (Blinded Veterans Association), and Glen Minney. In addition to significant visual impairment from TBI, both Mr. Pearce and Mr. Minney experience cognitive disorders

NAEVR's James Jorkasky and Cong. David Hobson (R-OH), who introduced constituent Mr. Minney, who now serves as an advocate for veterans issues

NAEVR at ARVO Annual Meeting 2008:

NAEVR Advocacy Breakfast, Monday, April 28, in Room 301-302 of the Ft. Lauderdale Convention Center, 7:30-8:30 am

Contact Congress Booth in Hall B/C (next to ARVO Booth) Sunday-Wednesday

DOD Issues PRMRP Funding Opportunities Notice and Deadlines

On March 28, the DOD released a notice on its Web site for FY2008 Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP) funding opportunities in the 21 areas of eligible research, which includes eye and vision research, for a funding total of $50 million in the program. The pre-application submission deadline is June 4, 2008, and the proposal deadline is July 2, 2008. The award mechanisms include a combination of basic and translational research.

Details appear in the NAEVR Web site section on Defense-related Vision Research

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