

## Defense Related Vision Research

### DOD Announces Plans to Issue an FY2011 Funding Program Announcement

At press time, the DOD's Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) was finalizing a Program Announcement seeking grant proposals for its FY2011 Vision Research Program (VRP), which it announced on May 2 at NAEVR's *Defense-Related Vision Research Opportunities* session at the ARVO Annual meeting (see inside cover page). The VRP is funded by the dedicated Peer Reviewed Medical Research-Vision (PRMR-Vision) line item in defense appropriations. In the final CR that funded the government through the end of FY2011, PRMR-Vision was funded at \$4 million.

TATRC Vision Portfolio Manager Robert Read has noted that the amount of funding available for researchers could be greater than the appropriated \$4 million, as it was in the FY2009/2010 cycle. Although Congress appropriated \$4 million and \$3.75 million in FY2009 and FY2010, respectively, for PRMR-Vision, it was increased by another \$4.1 million transferred over from TATRC's "sister" agency within the U.S. Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC), the Clinical and Rehabilitative

#### NAEVR Recognizes FY2012 PRMR-Vision Champions

Congressional supporters for NAEVR's request that FY2012 Defense Appropriations fund PRMR-Vision at \$10 million include Cong. James Moran (D-VA), Cong. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Cong. Pete Visclosky (D-IN) and Cong. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), which combined represent about one-quarter of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee membership. Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee member Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) also supports the funding.

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TATRC Vision Portfolio Manager Robert Read describes the anticipated FY2011 Program Announcement

Medical Research Program (CRMRP). As a result, a total of \$11 million was awarded to twelve researchers—many of whom were in the audience—in the FY2009/2010 cycle.

Mr. Read identified current DOD-identified vision research gaps, some or all of which may appear in the Program Announcement. These include:

- diagnosis, treatment, and mitigation of TBI-related visual dysfunction
- treatments for traumatic injuries (e.g., blasts, burns)
- vision restoration
- epidemiological studies on sight-injured patients
- ocular diagnostics
- vision rehabilitation strategies
- inadequate computational models of battlefield injuries
- vision care education/training

The joint DOD/Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) Director Donald Gagliano, M.D., who serves as the co-chair of the TATRC Programmatic Panel, emphasized how the quality of the past submissions from vision researchers has caught the attention of various funding entities within the DOD. "Vision researchers have certainly raised awareness among DOD agencies for both the quality and responsiveness of their grant submissions to the current needs of our military." The VCE, which does not have extramural research funding, is coordinating military vision care from diagnosis through rehabilitation, including development of a Congressionally-mandated Defense and Veterans Eye Injury Registry (DVEIR). The latter may identify the most significant future research needs.

Contact NAEVR's David Epstein at [depstein@eyeresearch.org](mailto:depstein@eyeresearch.org) to be added to the "DOD Interest Email List" and notified when the TATRC/VRP Program Announcement issues.

Visit the *Defense-related Vision Research* section of NAEVR's Web site for more details



Joint DOD/VA VCE Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D., informs attendees about the Center's activities to coordinate military vision care from diagnosis through rehabilitation



Center: Tonia Rex, Ph.D. (University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center), a VRP awardee who is researching the impact of blast injuries



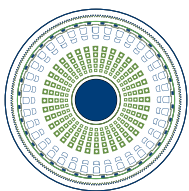
Right: Thomas Yorio, Ph.D. (University of North Texas Health Science Center), a VRP awardee researching traumatic injury to the retina, optic nerve, and visual centers of the brain



Center: Felix Barker, II, O.D., FAAO, the VCE's Acting Assistant Director for Research



Left to right: Robert Read, Joan Stelmack, O.D. (Hines VA Hospital) and Randy Kardon, M.D., Ph.D., FARVO (University of Iowa). Dr. Kardon is a VRP awardee who is researching the diagnosis of visual dysfunction associated with TBI, which he described in a February 2011 AEVR Congressional briefing.



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