

Significant Developments in Defense-Related Vision Research Funding DOD's TATRC Managing \$4 Million in FY2009 Peer Reviewed Research-Vision

The Department of Defense's (DOD) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), which has extensive experience with vision research, is managing the \$4 million Peer Reviewed Research-Vision line item included in FY2009 Defense appropriations, which was advocated by NAEVR.

From FY2006-2008, eye and vision research competed against 20 other areas of research for a \$50 million pool of peer reviewed funds within the Peer Reviewed Vision Research Program (PRMRP) in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). TATRC and CDMRP are 'sister' agencies within the U.S. Army Medical Research and

House to DOD:

"Fully Implement the Vision Center of Excellence"

On March 17, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss the status of implementation of the VCE and Military Eye Trauma Registry, which were authorized in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The VCE/Injury Registry, a DOD program that coordinates with the VA, is a provision of the *Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act* sponsored by Cong. John Boozman (R-AR) that was included in the NDAA and supported by NAEVR. Although the VCE/Injury Registry was authorized, it was essentially unfunded. DOD announced VCE funding of \$3 million in its FY2009 Defense Health Program Operation and Maintenance Budget, which is much less than the \$5 million requested by the



Left to right: Cong. John Boozman (R-AR) speaks with Vision Center of Excellence Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D.

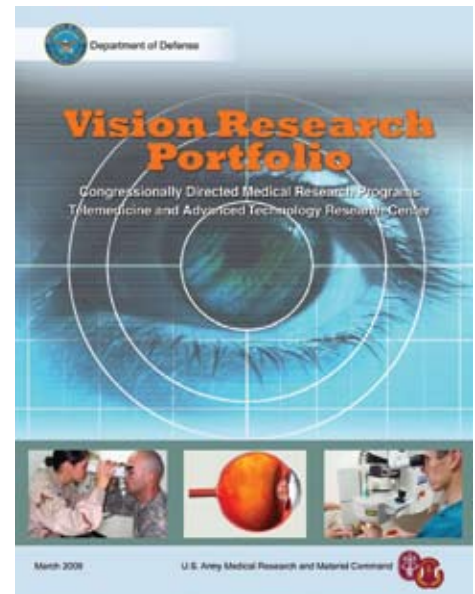
Matériel Command (USMRMC). NAEVR (Executive Director James Jorkasky and Advocacy Manager David Epstein) and ARVO (Executive Director Joanne Angle) served as Consumer Advocates at a March 12 meeting of the TATRC panel developing the program's grant mechanisms and research topics, which are scheduled to be announced in late April. NAEVR and ARVO will also participate in the Programmatic Review portion of the awards process. The panel has representatives from TATRC, CDMRP, the DOD Vision Center of Excellence (VCE), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as well as military ophthalmology and optometry consultants.

vision community in FY2009 defense appropriations. NAEVR, in conjunction with Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), has requested FY2010 VCE funding at \$6.8 million and defense-related vision research at \$10 million.

In response to testimony by sight-impaired veterans about lack of a coordination of care between the DOD and VA, VCE Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D., stated that the VCE could serve as a trailblazer in coordinating a seamless transition, especially with respect to medical records, since the Injury Registry would track records longitudinally and bi-directionally. He added that the Registry will also drive appropriate research, especially that funded by the DOD's Peer Reviewed Research-Vision program.



Left to right: The veteran witness panel included Cong. Harold Rogers (R-KY) with constituent Specialist Travis Fugate, USA (ret.), Sergeant David Kinney III, USA (ret.), Sherry Magallanes and husband Sergeant Gil Magallanes, USA (ret.) and the BVA's Tom Zampieri, Ph.D.



DOD recently released a summary of its *Vision Research Portfolio* managed by TATRC and CDMRP. A PDF copy is available on NAEVR's Web site.

Defense Vision Session at ARVO

NAEVR will host a Monday, May 4, Defense-related Vision Research Briefing at the ARVO Annual Meeting, 7:30-8:30 am in Room 301 of the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center. Every academic institution should attend to hear about the FY2009 TATRC Program Announcement and other funding opportunities.

CDMRP and DRMRP Announce Initial Awards

In January, the CDMRP announced its FY2008 awards, which include 6 grants to vision researchers, valued at \$10-12 million, in Advanced Technology/Therapeutic Development, Clinical Trials, and Translational Research. At press time, the Deployment Related Medical Research Program (DRMRP), a new mechanism created by the mid-year FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, had just issued an announcement, also including vision awards. NAEVR has posted these awards on its Web site.