

## DEFENSE-RELATED VISION FUNDING

Since it was created by Congress in FY2009 Defense appropriations by NAEVR advocacy and through FY2021, the Vision Research Program (VRP) within the Department of Defense's (DOD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) has been funded by Congress at \$144 million and has made 118 awards for a total of \$116 million, with decisions pending on the FY2020 awards (see below).

### FY2020: VRP Program Committee Evaluating Proposals

On March 16, the VRP Program Committee met virtually to review the FY2020 proposals and make final funding decisions for the \$20 million in funding, using three mechanisms:

- Investigator-Initiated Research Awards (IIRA, with two funding levels), with a maximum funding of \$260,000 over two years/\$750,000 over three years.
- Translational Research Awards (TRA), with a maximum funding of \$1 million over three years.
- Focused Translational Team Science Awards (FTTSA), with a maximum funding of \$5 million over four years.

The Committee recommended 17 proposals for funding. NAEVR will post abstracts of the FY2020 awards on its Web site when they are finalized and posted by the CDMRP.

### FY2021: VRP Funding, Pending Program Announcement

*The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* (H.R. 133) signed into law by the President on December 27 included final FY2021 Defense Appropriations among the twelve spending bills. For FY2021, the VRP is funded at \$20 million—the same level as in each FY2019 and FY2020.

On March 19, the VRP Program Committee held a virtual Vision Setting meeting in which NAEVR participated as a guest and

during which the Committee established research goals and chose funding mechanisms for the FY2021 funding cycle. The CDMRP plans to release the FY2021 Program Announcement in the late-May timeframe, and NAEVR and ARVO are partnering to host a late-May/early-June Defense Research Webinar featuring CDMRP/VRP Program Manager Tian Wang, PhD, who will explain the FY2021 Program Announcement.

Researchers who would like to be informed about potential DOD funding opportunities should contact NAEVR's David Epstein at [depstein@eyerresearch.org](mailto:depstein@eyerresearch.org) to be added to NAEVR's Defense Research Interest List.

### FY2022: NAEVR Requests VRP Funding of \$30 Million

For FY2022, NAEVR and its advocacy allies, including Blinded Veterans Association, ARVO, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the American Optometric Association, are requesting that Congress fund the VRP at \$30 million, a \$10 million increase over the \$20 million funding level in each FY2019, 2020, and 2021. NAEVR justifies this increase by citing the results from AEVR's 2018 update of the *Cost of Military Eye Injury* study, published in the May/June 2019 edition of the journal *Military Medicine*, that estimated total cost from in 2000-2017 timeframe at \$41.5 billion, with \$40.2 billion of that cost reflecting the present value of a lifetime of long-term benefits, lost wages, and family care. NAEVR has begun submitting Programmatic Requests to its Congressional champions to support VRP funding at \$30 million.



## 7th Military Vision Symposium

Ocular Readiness for Military Conflicts and Civilian Casualties

Visit the Defense-related Vision Research section of NAEVR's Web site at [www.eyerresearch.org](http://www.eyerresearch.org) for details



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### NAEVR Presents at Harvard Military Vision Symposium

On March 5, the Harvard Department of Ophthalmology hosted the 7th *Military Vision Symposium*, with NAEVR serving as a co-sponsor. Held virtually for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event featured a range of researchers who discussed the latest in the diagnosis and treatment of ocular trauma, as well as a discussion on future threats to vision resulting from combat operations. NAEVR's James Jorkasky presented at the symposium, providing a snapshot of eye and vision funding from federal and private sources.

Harvard plans an in-person Symposium on March 3-4, 2022.