Spring 2012

President’s Message

NAEVR Releases First-Ever Study of the Cost of Military Eye Injuries and Blindness

Early last month, NAEVR had a significant presence at the 2012 ARVO Annual Meeting. This included hosting National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Eye Institute (NEI) advocacy activities and Department of Defense (DOD) representatives in the NAEVR Central Office. NAEVR Executive Director James Frick, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) attended the meeting as well. To celebrate this occasion, he stated. At ARVO, NAEVR’s VA contacts noted that they plan to publish new data on TBI incidence, which would enable an update of the study in the next year or two.

I wish to thank the ophthalmic and optometric consultants to the various branches of the service who participated in NAEVR’s Working Group, as well as joint DOD/VA Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D. and Deputy Director Mary Lawrence, M.D., who provided invaluable context to the data. No sooner had the study issued, but NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky was participating in Project Gemini, a weeklong exchange of blinded veterans from the US and the United Kingdom that was developed by Alliance member Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) and Blind Veterans UK. I was most pleased that Peng Khaw, M.D., Ph.D., the recently elected ARVO President, hosted the delegation at Moorfields Eye Hospital, where he serves as the Director of Research and Development. Jim also participated the next day at an event at Moorfields in which the institution and its Bristol colleagues signed a collaborative agreement with the NEI for a Human Ocular Immunology Consortium to conduct basic and clinical research into inflammatory eye diseases.

I think Dr. Khaw summarized those events in a most insightful fashion when he stated that, “The past two days exemplify the power of our research to change the lives of patients,” adding that Life Changing Research is the theme of the 2013 ARVO Annual Meeting. Jim has also told me that spending time with the blinded soldiers was humbling and invigorating, reminding him of why he so passionately advocates for our community.

This is an especially robust edition of the Report that also includes highlights of NAEVR’s targeted efforts to increase NIH and NEI funding in FY2013 appropriations. NAEVR and AEVR have already had a very productive year thanks to the financial and manpower resources that members have provided. The Alliances will maintain that high level of engagement since the stakes are so high, in terms of funding challenges and the looming threat of budget cuts through sequestration.

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National Alliance For Eye And Vision Research

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