Sept. 17, 2019

Mr. Peter May
Chairman
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission
1100 Ohio Drive, SW., Room 220
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Mr. May:

I am writing you in my capacity as president of Military Reporters & Editors, or MRE, an association of journalists who cover national security, to express our support for the proposed Fallen Journalists Memorial.

MRE is a membership group dedicated to improving public awareness of military affairs and advocating for transparency and press freedom, among other goals. We are based in Washington, D.C., but have scores of members across the United States.

A Fallen Journalists Memorial would be a fitting way to commemorate the many journalists who have died while reporting, including those who have died while covering wars around the world.

Since 1992, 1,352 journalists were killed while doing their jobs, mostly because they were in a dangerous place, were caught in crossfire or were murdered for what they wrote, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Many more were injured.

A considerable portion of these deceased journalists met their fate while covering wars and other conflicts. The victims include many reporters from numerous countries, most of whom are not household names.

Many noteworthy journalists from around the world have vanished or been injured or killed while covering wars. During World War II, Ernie Pyle, the famous chronicler of ordinary soldiers, was felled by enemy fire in the Battle of Okinawa. More recently, we have lost many others, including:
• Daniel Pearl, a Wall Street Journal journalist who was beheaded in 2002 by terrorists in Pakistan.
• Michael Kelly, a National Journal editor who died in Iraq in 2003 when a Humvee he was riding in careened off the road after taking gunfire.
• Marie Colvin, an American who worked for Britain’s the Sunday Times. Colvin was killed in Syria in 2012 when government forces bombed the building in which she was working.
• James Foley, an American freelancer whom Islamic State terrorists in Syria beheaded in 2014.

These journalists and too many more paid the ultimate price while they sought to inform the world’s citizens. We need a memorial that commemorates this fact and draws attention to the critical role that journalists, despite their flaws, play in enabling our democracy to effectively function in both wartime and peacetime.

MRE includes journalists who have covered and will cover war zones. So it is especially important for us to know that the sacrifices our brothers and sisters have made will be remembered.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John M. Donnelly
President, Military Reporters & Editors