**It is time to recognize the journalists who gave their all**

An editorial by the National Newspaper Association

Washington D.C. — World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle died during the invasion of Okinawa in 1945. In his pocket was a draft of his last column, “On Victory in Europe.” He wrote, “...the companionship of two and a half years of death and misery is a spouse that tolerates no divorce. Such companionship finally becomes a part of one’s soul, and it cannot be obliterated.”

He had returned to his home after brushes with death while covering the war in Europe. But he was haunted by the untold stories on the Japanese warfront and so back he went.

He died from machine gun fire in an area that had been considered safe. No one could say he was ready to die. Indeed, he hated the fact that he had to go back. But the troops and the nation were counting on him. He knew and feared the danger, but duty propelled him back to the fight so he could tell America about the men and women at war.

That devotion to duty has been understood by journalists across America throughout our nation’s history. Like first responders, journalists run toward danger. Some lose their lives.

But the greatest recent loss of journalists on American soil was not during the heat of battle. It happened on June 28, 2018, when five newspaper employees were gunned down in their offices at the Capital-Gazette, in Annapolis, Maryland. The shooter was apprehended. Law enforcement officers said he held a grudge against the paper for its coverage.

That announcement was chilling. It strikes at every reporter, editor and publisher who has presented unpopular information to readers and viewers. Whether it is a story of public corruption, a drunk-driving arrest or even something as simple as a house foreclosure, someone often wants to keep that information out of the paper. That we have reached a point in our nation’s history where journalists at work are receiving training on surviving a shooter would surprise and dismay a hardened wartime correspondent like Pyle. He probably would say that is not the nation he went to war to protect and inform.

We agree. That is why it is time to recognize, with sadness and heavy hearts, those who lost their lives because they were trying to tell us the stories that make us a democracy: The five Capital-Gazette employees — Gerald Fischman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith and Wendi Winters; Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul; Mike McCormick and Philip Aaron Smeltzer, who died covering tropical storm Alberto for WYFF in North Carolina; and others deserve our thanks and our respect.

That is why it is time for the Fallen Journalists Memorial in Washington, D.C. to be built entirely without taxpayer dollars. The memorial requires Congressional authorization to be placed on federal land in Washington, D.C.

Legislation sponsored in the House by Reps. Tom Cole, R-OK and Grace Napolitano, D-CA; and in the Senate by Benjamin Cardin, D-MD, and Rob Portman, R-OH, will give the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation a green light to begin planning for the memorial. It would be a blessing if, by the time the memorial is built, there are no new names to add to it.

This newspaper believes it is time to recognize the sacrifice of journalists killed in the line of duty. We call upon our Members of Congress to add their names to the legislation introduced by Cole, Napolitano, Cardin and Portman and we urge you to ask them to sign onto this worthy effort.