

## Military Reporters & Editors Conference

**Date:** Friday, November 7, 2025  
**Location:** Medill School of Journalism's Washington Newsroom  
*In the Washington Post Building*  
1301 K Street, NW, Suite 200 West  
Washington, DC 20005

### [Register for the Conference](#)

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### Agenda 2025 MRE Conference

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**8:30 – 9:00** Socialize and network. Complimentary coffee and pastries available.

**9:00 – 9:10** Welcome remarks from MRE President Jen Judson.

**9:10 – 9:55 Press Freedom Post Pentagon Walkout**

- [Tom Bowman](#), Pentagon Correspondent, NPR
- [Tony Capaccio](#), Pentagon Correspondent, Bloomberg News
- [Aaron Mehta](#), Editor in Chief, Breaking Defense
- [Mallory Shelbourne](#), Pentagon Correspondent, USNI News

*Moderated by Steve Beynon*

**10:00 – 10:45 A Reporter's Guide to Untangling the Freedom of Information Act (Off the Record)**

- [Nate Jones](#), FOIA director, The Washington Post
- [Geoff Ziegulewicz](#), Axios

*Moderated by Haley Britzky*

**10:50 – 11:35 Afghans Who Worked with U.S. Face an Increasingly Uncertain Future**

- [Shawn VanDiver](#), founder and President of [#AfghanEvac](#), a coalition of 250 groups who advocate on behalf of Afghans who worked with U.S. troops.
- [Hadeia Amiry](#), [Center for a New American Security](#), former Special Advisor to the National Security Advisor to the President of Afghanistan from 2018 to 2020.
- Zia Ghafoori, [Interpreting Freedom Foundation](#). He is an Afghanistan-born former interpreter for U.S. Special Forces.
- Sweeta Azimi, Program Coordinator for the Afghan Legal Services Project at the California Immigration Project.

*Moderated by Steve Walsh*

**11:45 – 12:30 KEYNOTE: The Way Forward for Ukraine, the U.S., and Their NATO Allies**

- Current Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States [Olga Stefanishyna](#)

*Moderated by Carla Babb*

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**12:30 – 1:00 LUNCH**

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**1:05 – 1:50 Reporting Overseas Amidst Authoritarian Regimes**

- [Pete Cobus](#), *Voice of America*
- [Fadi Mansour](#), *Al Jazeera*
- [Jason Rezian](#), *The Washington Post*

*Moderated by Carla Babb*

**2:00 – 2:45 Former Air Force Secretaries Discuss the Current Challenges of U.S. Military**

- [Frank Kendall](#), Former Air Force Secretary from July 2021–January 2025
- [F. Whitten Peters](#), Former Air Force Secretary from 1997 to 1999 and Deputy General Counsel of DoD

*Moderated by Sigurd Christenson*

**3:00 – 3:45 A conversation with Barbara Starr**

- [Barbara Starr](#) is an outspoken advocate for press freedom. She was CNN Pentagon correspondent for 21 years and is now a senior fellow at the USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership & Policy.

*Moderated by Steve Walsh*

**4:00 – 4:45 The Frontline of Information: Lessons from Pentagon Spokespeople**

- A conversation with panelists

*Moderated by Carla Babb*

**5:00 – 5:30 Military Reporters & Editors Awards Ceremony**

- Presentation of awards to winners of the [2025 MRE Journalism Contest](#).

**5:30 – 6:00 Social Mixer - *Join us for light snacks and wine or beer.***

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**After Conference Option**

**7:00 p.m. The Combat Correspondent's Dinner**

The dinner will be at the National Press Club, 529 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20045. Prix Fixe Dinner \$45 (not including drinks, taxes, tip).

[RSVP for Dinner](#)

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