

# Tom Ruck to Deliver Memorial Day Keynote at South Florida National Cemetery: A Call to Honor America's Fallen

*Veterans Advocate and Author Shares a Personal Memorial Day Reflection: "What We Owe Our Heroes"*

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Nationally recognized author and veteran advocate Tom Ruck will serve as the keynote speaker at the 2025 Memorial Day ceremony at South Florida National Cemetery. The event, which begins at 10:00 a.m. on Memorial Day, will honor the sacrifices of fallen U.S. service members and their families. In advance of the ceremony, Ruck shares a deeply personal op-ed, reminding Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day and the sacred duty of remembrance.



**What We Owe Our Heroes: The Sacred Promise of Memorial Day**  
By Tom Ruck

Today, under the open sky and before the silent witness of countless headstones, we gather as one people—Americans—bound together by remembrance. Memorial Day is not just a date on the calendar. It is a sacred occasion, a national pause, and a moral obligation to honor the men and women who wore our nation's uniform and paid freedom's ultimate price.

We also remember the families—the spouses, the children, the parents—who bore the weight of absence and loss. They are the unseen heroes, the backbone behind the brave.

America is a beacon of hope, but that light has always come at a steep cost. The freedoms we enjoy—speech, faith, assembly, opportunity—have been bought with blood. And on this day, we must never forget that liberty is not inherited. It is earned. And it is defended, again and again, by those who raise their right hand and say, "I will."

From Bunker Hill to Baghdad, from Gettysburg to Kandahar, American patriots have stood watch over the ideals enshrined in our Constitution. They didn't fight for glory or riches—they fought for each other, for their children, and for a country worth believing in. Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day, was born of this reverence. It is not just about death—it is about the legacy of service and the enduring values those lives represent.

Let me be clear: patriotism is not a partisan virtue. It is the soul of our republic. It is the glue that binds generations of Americans to one another. And it is a right—fought for by so few, so that so many might live free. To give your life for your country, for your fellow citizen—that is the highest calling. I believe any God who blesses us with life surely welcomes those who defend His divine gift. That spirit of selfless service is what makes America truly great. It is the spirit of the American veteran.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: our veterans kept their promise. Now, we must keep ours. And that starts by remembering. I want to share something deeply personal. I had three incredible parents. My biological father passed away when I was in seventh grade. Years later, my mother remarried, and I gained another father. Both of these men served our nation in World War II—one as a machinist's mate in the Atlantic, the other as a radio operator in the South Pacific.

But here's the heartbreaking truth: I never asked them about their service. Not once. I don't know what they saw. I don't know what they feared. I don't know what they felt when they came home. And now, there is no one left to tell those stories—not to me, not to my children, not to their great-grandchildren. Shame on me.

So I ask you: What's your story? And more importantly—who have you told it to? Did you fight through fear on a night patrol in Korea? Did you watch fireworks over Baghdad? Did you land at Inchon? What did you write home? What song played on the radio the day you shipped out?

If we don't tell these stories—if we don't pass them down—they will vanish. And with them, the living memory of sacrifice and courage will fade into history's shadows.

President Calvin Coolidge once said: "The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten." Let us pledge, here and now, never to let that happen.

So whether you're visiting Arlington, walking through a quiet national cemetery, standing before an ABMC headstone overseas, or simply reflecting in your backyard—know this: every name carved into granite is a reason to stand tall. Every folded flag is a symbol of honor. And every story shared is a victory over silence.

America is not perfect, but it is still the greatest experiment in freedom the world has ever known. And I believe in it with all my heart.

So this Memorial Day, I ask just one thing: Remember. Reflect. And rise. Because our flag still flies—because they did not fall in vain. And that is why I will always—always—stand for the Star-Spangled Banner.

About Tom Ruck:

Tom Ruck is a nationally recognized author, speaker, and veteran advocate. He is the author of *Sacred Ground: A Tribute to America's Veterans*, an award-winning book honoring the men and women who have worn the U.S. military uniform. All proceeds from the book benefit families of fallen heroes. He serves as a senior engagement manager for the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign and has appeared on over 100 broadcast outlets championing the cause of remembrance and veteran support.

Event Details:

What: Memorial Day Ceremony at South Florida National Cemetery

Who: Keynote Speaker Tom Ruck

When: Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Where: South Florida National Cemetery, 6501 FL-7, Lake Worth, FL 33449

Open to the Public: Yes

Admission: Free

Media are encouraged to attend. Interview opportunities with Mr. Ruck are available.

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