

Preston Sharp

The Patriot Kid

By April Sharp

On Veterans Day 2015, Young Preston Sharp visited the grave of his grandfather at Redding, CA, cemetery to place on it a flag and some flowers in memorial to his grandfather's service in the US Navy. Preston, then ten years old, noticed the lack of flags or flowers on the graves of other local veterans. He became very upset that veterans weren't being honored on the very day set aside to honor them, Veterans Day.

Being a normal ten-year-old he continued to verbalize his irritation throughout the day, so I told Preston, "You can't complain about something unless you are willing to fix it." Preston looked up at me and with a very strong voice said, "I am going to do something about it, Mom!"

He started raising money for the flags and flowers immediately by asking how much money he could get if he vacuumed the floors. That night, Preston set a goal to place a flag and flower

on the graves of each of those veterans at McDonald's Chapel and Redding Memorial Park. Using social media, word of Preston's effort and goal spread, and the Sunday visits to Redding Memorial Park began to draw other community members, some from more than 60 miles away. As Preston began to realize his goal of

"I am going to do something about it, Mom!"

honoring all veterans at his grandfather's cemetery, he extended his goal to include veterans at other Redding cemeteries; then it expanded to Shasta and neighboring counties. After achieving those goals, Preston decided



Preston honoring veterans in Redding, California, May 2016.



to honor veterans in every township along Interstate 5 between Redding and Sacramento, a 160-mile stretch of highway! This goal was accomplished last summer. Preston has now expanded his goal to honor veterans in every state. He has completed California, Nevada, Oregon, Virginia, and Florida.

As of January 2018, Preston has organized the placement of more than 40,000 flags and red carnations on veterans headstones. He has accomplished this with the assistance of many in the communities who come out to meet him and to clean headstones, replace weathered flags and flowers, and say "Thank You" to those that have provided their services to our country. If you come out and help Preston Sharp, you have to say the veteran's name out loud and then, "Thank you for your service," as you place the flag and an imitation red carnation. He says that you

have to say the veteran's name out loud because a veteran's name not said out loud is a veteran forgotten.

Preston does not just honor the fallen veterans. He goes to the local veterans' home and listens to their stories. It was during one of



Preston in Washington, D.C., Jan 2018.

these visits that Preston met a veteran who had to give up his dog when he moved into the veterans' home. The dog was in Oregon, so the owner

"We need to honor veterans EVERYDAY and not just on a Holiday."

wasn't even able to visit him. For Christmas 2016, Preston asked if he could please adopt Rusty, the veteran's dog, rather than getting the laptop he had originally requested. That way, the veteran could still see his dog



Preston Sharp with First Lady Melania Trump, at the State of the Union Address.

whenever he wanted.

Preston says that he won't stop honoring veterans until he can't bend down anymore to place the flags on their graves. His motto is: "We need to honor veterans EVERYDAY and not just on a holiday." 🇺🇸

An advertisement for FlagandBanner.com. The background is a photograph of a cemetery with many white grave markers. In the foreground, a single white grave marker is shown with a small American flag on a pole and a circular logo for the Department of Defense. The text is overlaid on the image.

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