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**Weatogue, Suffield and Vernon Middle School Students Win  
Statewide Connecticut Veterans Day Parade Essay Contest  
Special Ceremony at State Capitol on Monday, October 29 at 4 p.m.**

HARTFORD, CONN., October 23, 2007 – **Elias Davenport, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader from Weatogue, Conn. is the First Place winner in a state-wide contest** which asked students to write about “why we should honor veterans”.

Elias, who is home-schooled, won the 2007 Connecticut Veterans Day Parade’s student essay contest, which is presented by The Navy League of the United States – Hartford Council and the State of Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs. **As the First Place winner, he will ride in a vehicle in the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade on Sunday, Nov. 4** in Hartford. In recognition of his achievement, he **also will receive an American flag that has flown over the State Capitol Building.**

**Two Runners-Up were selected** for this contest. They are **Ben Gee**, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at **Suffield Middle School**, and **Michael Adam Lee**, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at **Vernon Center Middle School**.

**All three winners will be honored at a ceremony on Monday, October 29 at 4 p.m. in the Connecticut State Capitol Building’s Hall of Flags. WDRC personality Brad Davis**, a champion of the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade since its establishment in 2000, will emcee the ceremony and be joined by **Commissioner Linda Schwartz of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs**. During the awards ceremony, Elias, Ben and Michael will read their essays on “Why We Should Honor Veterans.”

The Navy League of the United States – Hartford Council and the State of Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored this special project to encourage middle school students to learn more about the heroism and importance of American servicemen and women throughout our nation’s history. The contest was open to all Connecticut 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. A panel of judges selected the winner and the runners-up.

**It is not too late for veterans sign up to march in the Sunday, November 4 Connecticut Veterans Day Parade.** With close to two weeks to go until the **Sunday, November 4 “Connecticut Veterans Day Parade”**, organizers report that the **number of marchers is the greatest in its history! To date, there are close to 3,600 registered participants** for the eighth annual event to step off at 1 p.m. in Hartford. It will be the largest Veterans Day Parade in all of New England.

**All veterans who want to march** in the Sunday, November 4 “Connecticut Veterans Day Parade” should visit [www.ctveteransdayparade.org](http://www.ctveteransdayparade.org) or call (860) 724-2649 ext. 23. People who want to volunteer to help at the event can register there as well. **Gold Star Families** who want to participate in the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs’ Gold Star Finish should contact Cathy Cook at (860) 721-5826. -End-