



TOWN OF HAMDEN

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Memorial Day Shared

History and Current Events Come Alive with Hamden Veterans Awareness Day at Quinnipiac University Thursday, May 21st

HAMDEN, CT – More than 400 high school and middle school students and 80 veterans with visual displays of their service experiences will share in the Hamden Veterans Awareness Day events at Quinnipiac University’s Athletic Center (main campus) on Thursday, May 21st starting at 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM. The annual event builds on the increased awareness of the Memorial Day weekend to enhance students’ understanding of the freedoms we often take for granted.

This year at the Veterans Awareness Day events, PFC Aaron Hawkins, United States Army, will speak to the students about his experiences with the 3rd Infantry Division during both OIF I and OEF III. “Hawk”, as he is fondly known as, is a security officer at Hamden Middle School where he coaches football and track as well as being a volunteer coach for Hamden Father’s Basketball.

A graduate from Hamden High in 1999, “Hawk” is also a motivational speaker. Other participants at this year’s event will be speaking on the importance of the holiday by remembering those who served and continue to defend the freedoms we share.

“Veterans Awareness Day is a great opportunity for students and veterans to discuss one-on-one, and learn what has made this nation great,” said Abner Oakes, Chairman of the Hamden Veterans Commission. “Veterans bring exhibits and memorabilia of their time in the service and the students really enjoy the interaction.” In addition to veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, O.E.F. and O.I.F., there will be exhibits from the Civil War and many other groups that support veterans, including a musical performing artist. The Hamden Veterans Awareness Day was conceived by Daniel Levy, a Coast Guard veteran and middle school Principal, and has always been about speaking WITH students, not at them.

If the displays don’t prompt interaction with the students, new ‘Scavenger Hunt’ booklets will get things started. Each student has a copy and the questions require an observant eye and thoughtful inquiries to fill out the pages. This year’s booklets include questions about current events in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as living history details from earlier conflicts. There are many new exhibits and surprises this year both inside the Athletic Center and outside in the nearby ball field. Now in its 15th year, Dan Levy noted “Quinnipiac University has been a great host and once again we look forward to filling the Athletic Center with a living example of the meaning of service.”

For more information, contact Abner Oakes at 203-215-4675 or Dan Levy at 203-407-7131. To see a video of a previous event posted on YouTube, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOIrPvk2IQ>.

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