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## **The Essex Foundation Helps Local Vets Finish Hall Expansion in Time for Memorial Day Ceremonies** *Additional \$30,000 Grant Awarded for Increased Equipment & Material Costs*

Essex, CT – On Thursday, March 27, members of Essex Veterans Memorial Hall (EVMH) gathered inside the newly expanded kitchen area and gave The Essex Foundation board members a preview of the near-complete building renovation before accepting an additional \$30,000 grant from the Foundation to finish the work before Memorial Day. The ambitious project, which broke ground in January 2024, included enlarging and renovating the kitchen; adding a new porch and outdoor dining area; installing a new roof and ADA accessible ramp; and updating the meeting room interior. It was made possible by the Foundation's original \$100,000 matching gift fundraising campaign to cover the purchase of equipment, materials, and specialized labor. Hall



members provided most of the extensive volunteer labor while local businesses and organizations also donated supplies and equipment. The \$30,000 deficit was caused by significant increases in material costs from the time the budget was first

The Essex Foundation President Strickland Hyde announced the Foundation was also gifting a wireless public address system to be used for Memorial Day ceremonies and other recognition events. He stated, "Memorial Day is one of the biggest times of pride and celebration in Essex and we are honored to help provide an enhanced facility for the

community to gather. There was no way we were going to sit back and let the project go unfinished." EVMH President Art Davies took a few moments to thank The Essex Foundation once again for their continued and generous support throughout the years, acknowledging that the organization has been there whenever the veterans' group has needed a helping hand.

Essex Veterans Memorial Hall is the last known stand-alone, 501(c)(19) nonprofit veterans' organization on the East Coast. After World War II the Town of Essex conveyed the Centerbrook Schoolhouse to the group for \$1 with the stipulation that the organization remain intact and take full responsibility for maintaining the building. The building serves as a resource for 180 members, their families, and the greater community. Located at 3 Westbrook Road, it is available for use free of charge to other nonprofit groups for meetings and activities. Non-members can rent the space for special events and celebrations.

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*Pictured above: The Essex Foundation board members present an additional grant award to Veterans Memorial Hall members in the newly expanded kitchen area of the renovated building.*