

## Chimuzu, Tina (CAAPB)

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**From:** Dietrich, Randal <rdietrich@mnmilitarymuseum.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** Chimuzu, Tina (CAAPB); Musty, Peter (CAAPB); Dahl, Erik C (CAAPB)  
**Cc:** Mark Ritchie; Brooks Berg; Darryl Sannes; Gary Carlberg; Anna Long; Paul Storch; Stephen E. Osman; Roger J. Reinert; Isaac Schultz; Richard Nash; Bill Strusinski; Doug Thompson; Nancy Haas; Bill James  
**Subject:** Public Input: USS Ward Gun removal application

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Tina Chimuzu (CAAPB Planner-Fellow),

As this first phase of [public input draws to a close today at 4:30](#), I thought I'd offer a recap of what I heard leading up to and during the December 19<sup>th</sup> hearing. Please include this among the formal input to be shared with CAAP Board members.

"This crucial piece of Minnesota – and American – history deserves a place of prominence and honor," said Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Brad Lindsay in a written statement. "We are excited for this new chapter in the story of the USS Ward Gun #3. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has been a proud steward of the gun, and we believe now is the right time to remove, restore, and relocate this artifact to the new Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum at Camp Ripley. We will forever be grateful for the service of the Minnesota Naval Reservists who made history the morning of Dec. 7, 1941."

The Ward Gun has been exposed to Minnesota's harsh weather for decades and is now at risk of significant deterioration. The Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum has committed to professionally restore the artifact (in accordance with U.S. Naval History & Heritage Command standards), ensuring its long-term preservation and preparing it for prominent display in its forthcoming world-class facility. Scheduled to open in 2026, the museum will feature a dedicated World War II gallery where the Ward Gun will hold a place of prominence, preserving its story for future generations.

During the hearing a host of supporters, including veterans, historians and military preservation experts, advocated for moving the gun to a controlled indoor environment to ensure its preservation and display. Key testimonies, [both online and in person](#), highlighted the artifact's historical significance as a symbol of Minnesota's role in shaping history and its urgent need for professional restoration.

Paul Storch, a highly-regarded artifact preservation specialist, emphasized the gun's deteriorating condition, describing it as "actively deteriorating" and in need of immediate attention. Mr. Storch earlier provided complete conservation reports, via email, to the CAAP Board. Navy League Midwest President Bill James supported the relocation, calling the new museum "the perfect location" for the artifact, ensuring its protection and ongoing accessibility to the public.

I also heard a former Department of Administration official comment that funds had not been available for the Ward gun's proper care decades ago, and a proud Navy veteran described his grave concern about the gun's current disposition.

The relocation effort is part of a larger initiative to honor Minnesota's military legacy through the development of a 40,000-square-foot museum set to open in 2026. This museum will offer immersive exhibits, educational programming, and a fitting tribute to the more than 300,000 Minnesotan veterans who served in World War II.

While no decisions were made at the December 19<sup>th</sup> hearing, I hope the board heard the unanimous support for the proposal, signaling a shared commitment to preserving Minnesota's military history.

In partnership,

Randal Dietrich  
Executive Director  
MN Military & Veterans Museum