



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

Freeman Building
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<https://mn.gov/caapb/>

Date: May 23, 2025
To: Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board members
From: Tina Chimuzu, Planner Fellow, Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
CC: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Executive Secretary, CAAPB
Peter Musty, Principal Planner & Zoning Administrator, CAAPB
RE: **AGENDA ITEM #6 - USS Ward Gun**



The USS Ward Number Three Gun Historical Background

The USS Ward World War I-era Navy Destroyer became an important part of American history on December 7th, 1941. One and a half hours prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor,

during her patrol of Hawaiian waters, the Ward encountered a Japanese submarine attempting to infiltrate Pearl Harbor. The crew, which was composed of Naval Reservists from Minnesota, fired on and sunk the enemy vessel using the USS Ward Number Three Gun, therefore attaining the first American caused casualty of the second world war.

The entire crew of the Ward survived the war and returned home, eventually helping to petition the Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and through it, the United States Navy, to loan the USS Ward Number Three Gun to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs with the assurance that the State properly maintain it.

This Minnesota VFW group, naming themselves the “First Shot Naval Vets,” were a prominent feature of the city of Saint Paul. The last surviving member of the USS Ward’s crew from Pearl Harbor, Alan Sanford, passed away in January of 2015.

The Gun, which is owned by the United States Navy, was installed on the State Capitol grounds in 1958 and currently sits on the south edge of the lower Capitol Mall, west of the Veterans Service Building near 25 12th Street West. – *Photo and History from application by Randall Dietrich, Executive Director, Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum and The Minnesota Historical Society.*



Figure 1 The USS Ward Number Three Gun and its crew. “NH 97446” *Naval History and Heritage Command*

Staff Acceptance of Application, Review, and Preliminary Findings

On August 18, 2024, CAAPB Staff received an application from Randal Dietrich, Executive Director of the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum (MMVM), for removal of the Commemorative Work USS Ward Number Three Gun from the Capitol Mall to the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum.

Per M.R.2400.2703, upon receipt of the application, CAAPB staff immediately conducted a completeness check, followed by an assessment on whether the addition request meets one of the conditions in M.R. 2400.2703., Subpart 6.

Conditions for modification or removal of an existing artwork. *The board must consider requests for the modification or removal of an existing commemorative artwork if one or more of the following conditions apply:*

- A. there has been sustained, broad-based, and documented public objection to the artwork;*
- B. the artwork conflicts with the guiding principles in subpart 1, item A;*
- C. the artwork has faults in construction or requires maintenance such that the Department of Administration is unable to properly care for or store the artwork;***
- D. the site for the artwork is no longer safely accessible to the public or is due to be demolished; or*
- E. significant changes in the use, character, or design of the site require a re-evaluation of the relationship of the artwork to the site.*

CAAPB staff together with MNHS, and in consultation with the Department of Administration, established that though the Agency had over the years done an outstanding job of maintaining and restoring the important artifact, unfortunately there are currently no dedicated funds for future maintenance works. However, considering the Gun's steel material and continued outdoor exposure, a lack of dedicated maintenance funds would lead to its continued degradation.

These findings led to CAAPB staff determining that the application for removal meets the conditions for M.R. 2400.2703, Subpart 6, Item C., therefore recommending to the Board that the application be moved forward in the review process.

On March 24, 2025, the Board voted to accept that the removal request meets the condition in M.R.2400.2703., Subp.6., Item C, and subsequently convened a Commemorative Artwork Review Committee (CARC) which would

- Review the artwork identified in the removal request and the applicant's proposed plan for removal, disposition and restoration plans of the removal site by the Department of Administration.

- Vote and make a written recommendation to the CAAPB on whether the Board should grant or deny the removal request based on the criteria in Minnesota Rules 2400.2703, Subpart 9.

Additionally, the Board also opened a 35-day public comment period on behalf of the CARC to gather input on the request to remove the USS Ward Gun from the State Capitol Mall, the disposition plans for the artwork, and restoration plan of the removal site by the Department of Administration.

Commemorative Artwork Review Committee

Per M.R. 2400.2703., Subpart 7., Item I., the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee included:

- 1) one board member;
- 2) one architectural adviser;
- 3) one person appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Administration to represent the agency;
- 4) a representative from the Minnesota Historical Society;
- 5) two professionals appointed by the board experienced in the fields of visual art, public art, art history, architecture, or history. One of the professionals must have knowledge of artwork conservation;
- 6) two members of the public appointed by the board;
- 7) up to five additional committee members appointed by the board as needed for professional expertise; and
- 8) board staff that oversee and support the committee's work.

Commemorative Artwork Review Committee Member List

DESIGNATION	NOMINEE
<i>(1) one board member;</i>	Rep. Isaac Schultz
<i>(2) one architectural adviser.</i>	Joseph Favour
<i>(3) one person appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Administration to represent the agency;</i>	Kari Suchy, Administration Facilities Director

<i>(4) a representative from the Minnesota Historical Society;</i>	Lindsey Rulon Miller, Capitol & MNHS Sites Art Program Specialist
<i>(5) two professionals appointed by the board experienced in the fields of visual art, public art, art history, architecture, or history. One of the professionals must have knowledge of artwork conservation;</i>	Dr. Kate Beane Tom Braun, Senior Objects Conservator, MNHS
<i>(6) two members of the public appointed by the board;</i>	Paul Mandell, Former CAAPB Executive Secretary Roger Brown, Immediate Past President, USS St Paul
<i>(7) up to five additional committee members appointed by the board as needed for professional expertise; and</i>	Dan Tengwall, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Greg Donofrio, Associate Dean of Faculty, University of Minnesota - College of Design Chad Roberts President & CEO, Ramsey County Historical Society
<i>(8) board staff that oversee and support the committee's work.</i>	Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Executive Secretary Tina Chimuzu, Planner - Fellow

Table 1 A listing of the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee Members

Public Comment and Public Hearing

On behalf of the CARC, CAAPB staff received a total of 40 public comments submitted during the public comment period that was conducted between March 31, 2025, to May 5, 2025,

requesting for input on the request to remove the USS Ward Gun from the State Capitol Mall, the disposition plans for the artwork, and restoration of the removal site by the Department of Administration.

Of the 40 comments received,

- 39 comments affirmed the moving of the USS Ward Gun to the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum,
- 1 comment opposed the moving of the USS Ward Gun from the State Capitol Grounds.

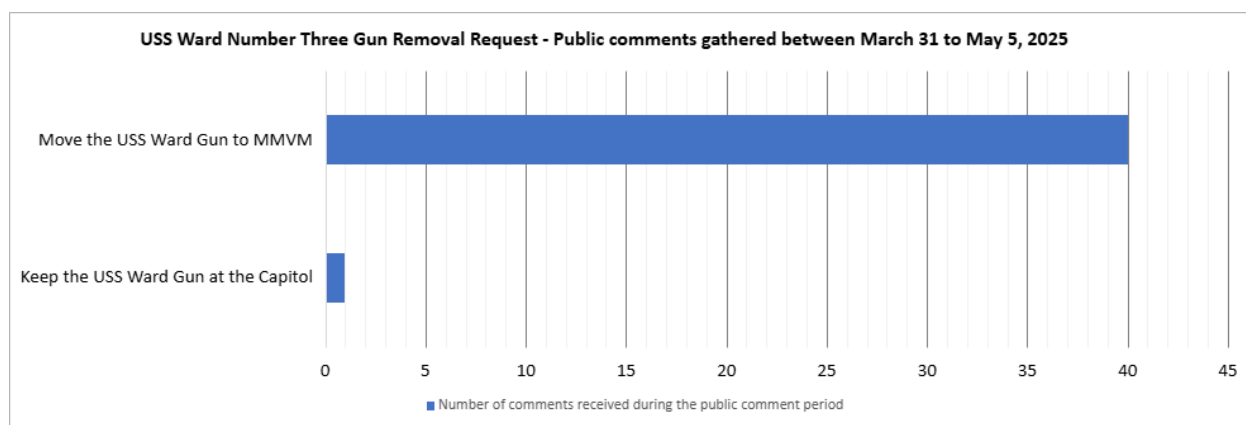


Figure 2 A pictogram of the public comments submitted between March 31 to May 5, 2025.

A public hearing was held on May 22, 2025, during the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee, however there were no additional comments submitted.

Commemorative Artwork Review Committee Meeting and Recommendation

The CARC met for a public meeting on May 22, 2025, at Rondo Community Public Library at 3pm. The meeting included committee member discussion and provided an opportunity for public input via public hearing.

After reviewing the application to remove the USS Ward Gun, the disposition plans and site restoration plans by the Department of Administration, the CARC voted on the following recommendation to the Board.

“To this end, the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee, convened by the Executive Secretary of the CAAPB, suggests the Board consider taking action on the following statement;

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, having previously accepted the recommendation of CAAPB staff that the condition in M.R.2400.2703, Subpart 6., Item C., for removal of the commemorative work are met, now further accepts the recommendation by the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee (CARC), formed for the USS Ward Number Three Gun, that the proposal outlined in the application from Executive Director Randal Dietrich to remove the USS Ward Gun from the State Capitol Mall to the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Camp Ripley, meets necessary criteria in M.R.2400.2703., Subpart 9.

To that end, the CARC further recommends, as proposed in the application and further stipulation in the CAAPB staff report dated May 22, 2025;

- removal of the work from its location in the Lower Mall of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall in the Capitol Area of Minnesota;
- transfer of the gun to prominent interior placement in the new Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Fort Ripley, Minnesota;
- removal of the stone sign with the engraved names of the Minnesota soldiers associated with the USS Ward (DD139) and the historic use of the gun at the very beginning of WWII, with disposition of the sign to be determined by the Minnesota Historical Society, (as required by Statute 15B);
- demolition of the concrete bases of the stone sign and the gun and restoration of the site as outlined in the report from the Department of Administration report dated January 27, 2025."

Representative Isaac Schultz motioned to accept the suggested CARC recommendation to the Board, Paul Mandell seconded the motion, and all members present unanimously approved, and therefore passed the recommendation.

A full transcription of committee member discussions and opinions will be forthcoming.

Next Steps After Commemorative Artwork Review Committee Meeting

After the CARC meeting is conducted, the CAAPB's Executive Secretary is to prepare for the Board and post to the CAAPB website a report which will include:

- The CARC's recommendation to the Board;
- a summary of the public comments received at the CARC public meeting and hearing, and any additional information obtained during the application review process;
- opinions gathered from committee experts or other independent professionals;
- a detailed budget for all aspects of the modification or removal request, and the applicant's stated options for funding the request.

Therefore, this memo serves as the required report from the CAAPB Executive Secretary.

A detailed budget for all aspects of the removal request, and the applicant's stated options for funding the request.

In May 2024, The Legacy Committee of the Minnesota State Legislature provided a \$275,000 grant to the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum at Camp Ripley for the restoration, relocation, and interpretation of the USS Ward Gun and World War II display. The funding is also applicable to site reclamation and improvements at the proposed removal site.

Preparations for a detailed budget for all aspects of the removal request are currently ongoing, therefore an update on the final budget will be forthcoming.

Next Steps in the Commemorative Rules Process

After reviewing the report from the Executive Secretary, the Board will determine if an additional 30-day public comment period or public hearing to gather additional input is necessary.

- If the Board determines that no additional comment period or hearing is needed, the board shall proceed to reach a decision by holding a public meeting at which the Board shall vote to grant or deny the request for removal.
- If the Board grants the request for removal, the applicant must deposit funds with the Department of Administration.
- If the Board grants the request, the removal will proceed in accordance with the proposed disposition plan. The Minnesota Historical Society will determine the final disposition of the artwork.

Suggested Board Resolution

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, having previously accepted the recommendation of CAAPB staff that the condition in M.R.2400.2703, Subpart 6., Item C., for removal of the commemorative work are met, now further accepts the recommendation by the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee (CARC), formed for the USS Ward Number Three Gun, that the proposal outlined in the application from Executive Director Randal Dietrich to remove the USS Ward Gun from the State Capitol Mall to the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Camp Ripley, meets necessary criteria in M.R.2400.2703., Subpart 9.

The Board specifically determines the following stipulations per the CAAPB staff report dated May 22, 2025:

- removal of the work from its location in the Lower Mall of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall in the Capitol Area of Minnesota;
- transfer of the gun to prominent interior placement in the new Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Fort Ripley, Minnesota;
- removal of the stone sign with the engraved names of the Minnesota soldiers associated with the USS Ward (DD139) and the historic use of the gun at the very beginning of WWII, with disposition of the sign to be determined by the Minnesota Historical Society, (as required by Statute 15B);
- demolition of the concrete bases of the stone sign and the gun and restoration of the site as outlined in the report from the Department of Administration report dated January 27, 2025."

Attachments:

1. **Attachment A: USS Ward Number Three Gun Applicant documents** – this includes the Application for Removal of the USS Ward Number Three Gun from Randal Dietrich, Executive Director of the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum.
 - a. Attachment A2: Supplemental materials for the USS Ward Number Three Gun application.
2. **Attachment B: Summary of Public Comments** – this summary includes a listing of all public comments gathered from the 35-day public comment period from March 31 to May 5, 2025.
3. **Forthcoming - Attachment C: CARC Member Opinions and Comments** – this is a transcription of the views and comments that were shared during the CARC Meeting held on 05.22.2025.
4. **Forthcoming - Attachment D: A detailed budget of the Removal Request**