STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

WHEREAS: On December 7, 1941, the destroyer USS Ward, crewed primarily by Naval Reservists from Saint Paul, Minnesota, fired the first American shots of World War II when it sank a Japanese midget submarine attempting to infiltrate Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS: The naval gun that fired those historic shots has stood as a symbol of Minnesota's brave entry into the global fight for freedom and has long been displayed outside the Veterans Service Building in Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS: On September 2, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, the Empire of Japan formally surrendered to the Allied Powers, bringing an end to the most devastating conflict in human history; and

WHEREAS: The USS Saint Paul, a proud heavy cruiser named in honor of Minnesota's capital city, was present in Tokyo Bay during the surrender ceremony and is one of the few American warships able to claim this historic distinction; and

WHEREAS: The City of Saint Paul's deep maritime connection is further honored through the placement of the ship's bell in Saint Paul's City Hall, symbolizing the enduring bond between the state and its naval legacy; and

WHEREAS: The gun of the USS Ward will be ceremonially removed today to undergo restoration before its permanent installation at the new Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum near Camp Ripley, preserving its story for future generations; and

WHEREAS: The State of Minnesota pauses today to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of the more than 300,000 Minnesotans who served in World War II, and to honor the legacy of those who helped secure peace and liberty across the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM WALZ, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, September 2, 2025, as:

USS WARD AND VJ DAY COMMEMORATION DAY

in the State of Minnesota.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 20th day of August.

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GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY OF STATE