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## CITY OF PALMDALE

### *NEWS RELEASE*

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#### AV Wall Display Begins at Palmdale Amphitheater

PALMDALE – In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the original Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C, the City of Palmdale and Point Man Antelope Valley will host the Antelope Valley's Mobile Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall (AV Wall) from Wednesday, Nov. 8 to Monday, Nov. 13 at the Palmdale Amphitheater, located at 2723 Rancho Vista Blvd.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. was dedicated Nov. 13, 1982, with an estimated 150,000 taking part in the ceremonies, including President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan.

This year's presentation of the AV Wall will run from 5 pm on Nov. 8 until 8 am Nov. 13. The monument is open to the public around the clock during the display period. Admission is free.

The Veterans Day ceremony is planned for 11 am on Saturday, Nov. 11. A Candlelight Memorial Walk will take place at 9 pm on Saturday, Nov. 11.

Taps will be played nightly at 10 p.m.

The Veterans Day ceremony will include a musical salute provided by the Guardian Brass, the Air National Guard Band of the West Coast. The keynote speaker

will be Cold War veteran and Iraq War "embed" journalist Dennis Anderson. As a reporter for United Press International, Anderson covered the dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial in 1982.

At 252 feet, the AV Wall is slightly more than half the length of the Washington wall. With 58,318 names of the American servicemen and women killed during the Vietnam War, the AV Wall is the nation's most accurate tribute wall to the national memorial.

More than \$102,000 for construction of the AV Wall was raised in a grass roots effort completed in 2009, with the largest contribution coming from school children during a "Pennies for Soldiers" fundraising drive. The Point Man Antelope Valley organization, a veterans talking and peer counseling group, was designated the "Guardians of the Wall."

"It's not our wall," said Pointman Outpost Leader and Vietnam veteran Mike Bertell. "We are the guardians, but it's everyone's wall. Most walls keep people out. This wall brings people together."

Sponsors include Signs and Designs, which constructed the wall and engraved the names; the City of Palmdale, Hunter Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, Hilton Garden Inn, and Green Valley Nursery.

For details, go online to [www.AVWALL.org](http://www.AVWALL.org) or call 661/524-6408.

### **ABOUT THE AV WALL**

The Antelope Valley's Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall is a half-scale replica of the black granite wall on the Washington Mall that was designed by artist Maya Lin. It is one

of the rarest home-grown memorials of its kind in the nation and represents the Antelope Valley's commitment to the men and women who served their country.

The six-day display at the Palmdale Amphitheater is staffed completely by volunteers, veterans, local service organizations and others. The volunteers attend an in-depth training so they can provide visitors with the best possible experience during their visit to the wall. Volunteers help look up names in the computer database, assist in locating the names on the wall, and provide information about the wall design and layout.

The AV Wall was designed and fabricated by Signs and Designs, Inc. of Palmdale. From 2005 through 2009, over \$100,000 was raised locally to build the wall. It was dedicated at a ceremony at Joe Davies Heritage Airpark at Palmdale Plant 42 on Nov. 13, 2009.

The AV Wall has traveled across Southern California, most recently to San Diego last month for the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show that drew 50,000 people. It has been visited by thousands of men, women and children since its dedication and has provided education, healing and a gathering place for Vietnam Veterans to mourn and remember. A visit to the AV Wall offers a chance to show respect and honor those who lost their lives in Vietnam.