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Visitors to the State Capitol Complex in Harrisburg can share in a moving, enhanced experience as The Wall That Heals will be exhibited from May 9-13. For those unfamiliar, The Wall That Heals is a travelling, scaled-down replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. The display has been presented in nearly 600 communities throughout the United States.

Those visiting the exhibit in Harrisburg in May can supplement their experience with the personal stories of Pennsylvania veterans who served in Vietnam. PCN is a state-wide Public Affairs network, somewhat of a C-SPAN for the Commonwealth, funded by Pennsylvania cable companies. Since 2002, PCN has conducted more than 350 oral histories with Pennsylvania veterans from all branches of the military. The award-winning program began under the moniker, "World War II: In Their Own Words," and later expanded to "Voices of Veterans," to include those who served in more recent conflicts.

By downloading the free PCN Select app, visitors can bring stories of the Vietnam War to life through highlights of selected interviews featuring Pennsylvania's Vietnam veterans. Photos and stories of these men and women will also be on display, many excerpted from PCN's interviews with hometown heroes. Over the years, PCN has donated a majority of the interviews from the series Voices of Veterans to the National Veterans' History Project housed in the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C.

PCN's Todd Abele has produced Voices of Veterans since 2014. He notes, "You really feel the emotions when you watch PCN's veterans' interviews. These men and women survived events and hardships we can't imagine." He recalls interviewing soldiers who were ambushed in jungles, airmen who were shot down and held as POWs in the Hanoi Hilton, and petty officers who ran the gauntlet of Vietnam's inland waterways and coasts.

"The Wall That Heals reminds us of the sacrifices of Vietnam veterans during a difficult period of American history. PCN is happy to share the stories of these brave men and women."

The Wall That Heals exhibit is 375 feet in length, and reaches 7½ feet at its highest point, rising as visitors walk toward the center. The wall is constructed of a synthetic granite material, Avonite, and it is constructed in a chevron shape, similar to the Memorial in Washington, D.C. LED lighting allows visitors to read the names on the wall at all times.

A mobile education center will also be stationed nearby, explaining the Vietnam War, and the cultural conflict surrounding the war. Transformed from the trailer that transports The Wall That Heals, the education center provides information on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, including a display of the type of items left at the Washington, D.C., exhibit, a digital kiosk that helps visitors search for names, and a custom Harley-Davidson "Gold Star Bike" donated by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, that pays tribute to mothers who lost sons in the war.

Opening ceremonies for The Wall That Heals exhibition in Harrisburg will take place on Wednesday, May 9, at 7 p.m. Former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge will provide the Keynote speech. Gov. Ridge was named the first US Secretary of Homeland Security, served as a US Army staff sergeant, and received the Bronze Star for Valor for his service in Vietnam. PCN-TV will provide a live web stream of the event, and it will be televised statewide that evening at 9 p.m. - *The Mercury*



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