

# OMEGA

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **OMEGA WELCOMES VETERANS FOR UNIQUE RETREAT TO HELP WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

#### ***Free Public Program to Be Held Saturday Night***

RHINEBECK, New York – According to the *New York Times*, the Veterans Affairs Department has reported an estimated 134,000 veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, have sought help at a VA facility for possible Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In response to the growing number of returning veterans in need of support, Omega Institute is hosting a helpful retreat for the third consecutive year. Omega today welcomed 80 veterans, who were sponsored to take a 5-day meditation retreat aimed at providing tools for dealing with symptoms of PTSD. The retreat, taught by Zen Buddhist monk, Vietnam veteran, and author Claude Anshin Thomas, is taking place on Omega's Rhinebeck, New York campus, October 21–25, 2009, and will also include a free public program led by Thomas on Saturday evening, October 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

The veterans retreat at Omega has grown in enrollment from 12 participants in 2007, to 80 this year. Thanks to generous donations Omega received to its scholarship fund, the program has been underwritten since 2008, allowing increased access to veterans of any war, and their family members and friends. Scholarships substantially cover the cost of tuition, accommodations and meals on campus, and up to \$100 in travel expenses. Thomas does not accept payment for his teachings. As a result, Omega Institute is donating a portion of the retreat's proceeds to the Zaltho Foundation, [zaltho.org](http://zaltho.org).

“We who have fought in war know intimately about life and death,” says Claude Anshin Thomas. “We who have been wounded by war—physically, psychologically, and spiritually—need to come together in order to support each other.”

Thomas, a Vietnam veteran, is author of *At Hell's Gate* and the founder of Zaltho Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes peace and nonviolence. Thomas received numerous awards, including the Purple Heart, for his service in the Vietnam War. After struggling with his re-entry into life at home, he studied mindfulness meditation with Thich Nhat Hanh. During the retreat, Thomas will share his inspiring story from combat to Buddhism as a road map for those who might feel trapped in cyclical patterns of response related to a traumatic experience.

While the retreat is sold out, space is available for the **free public program** with Thomas, titled, “The Hidden Cost of War.” This free evening program will include a lecture, question-and-answer session, and book signing. No registration is required. Attendees should arrive at Omega's Rhinebeck campus 30 minutes prior to the event and

look for directions to the program location at the Administration building. Thomas's talk will begin promptly at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

**About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies**

*Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change. Located on 195 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York and at exceptional locations around the world. eOmega.org*

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