



**NAME/PEN NAME: Donna Mokri**

**GENRE: Children's Books; Memoir; Family History**

**Q & A:**

*What has been your most rewarding moment as an author?*

My most rewarding moment as an author was when I actually held my book in my hands because I wanted to leave this gift to my children, grandchildren and future generations in our family. I wrote a book for children, designed to help adults start a conversation about what life is like when a soldier is in the military, away from home and loved ones. My book, "A Soldier Comes Home," was my way to honor the memory of my son CPL Yari Mokri.

*If you could offer one piece of writing advice to a novice author, what would it be?*

My advice is to "just write" what you feel or think about or when an idea pops into your head. Be open to receiving negative feedback to improve your skills, as well as be gracious and humble when receiving positive feedback.

*What have been some of the biggest helps for developing your writing skills? Written resources, classes or conferences, fellow writers you've learned from or have mentored you, other?*

The San Gabriel Writer's League is an inspirational group of writers that share ideas and offer suggestions and provides enlightening speakers that encourage everyone to write. I also attend workshops, when possible, subscribe to a couple of writer blogs, and I read every day.

*How often do you write, and do you have a strict routine and writing plan?*

I try to write every day. However, it's not always possible. Sometimes it may be just an idea and I will write it down so I don't forget. For me, flexibility gives me the freedom to be creative, whereas a strict routine would cause me stress.

*Have you ever based characters on real people? Give us a couple of examples.*

My book, "A Soldier Comes Home" is based on conversations with my son, letters he wrote to me and the experiences he shared as a soldier in the Army. It is a story of a brave and courageous young man, my son, Yari Mokri, who was deployed to Iraq in 2006.

*What made you consider writing in the first place?*

When my children were growing up, I would read to them or make up stories for them at bedtime. This inspired me to think about writing a book for children "one day." However, I never imagined I would write a book about a soldier, my son, who was killed in Iraq in 2006. I considered writing "A Soldier Comes Home" as a way to work through my grief and to honor my son. It was created by two friends – a mother who lost a son in the Iraq war and had a story to tell, and an artist who brought the story to life through the beautiful illustrations.

## **BIOGRAPHY:**

I was born in Munich, Germany, raised in California, and moved to Texas in the 80's. I've been married for forty-six years, am mom to three children, and Oma to five grandchildren. I retired from Child Protective Services a number of years ago. I enjoy spending time with my family, gardening, knitting, crocheting, crafting, reading and photography.

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