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## Army spouse pens romance novel

Author Naomi Boom's official website biography states that while searching for romance novels to read, she was not satisfied with the existing selection and basically decided to write her own.

However, that initial process of writing a book presented significant challenges for a new author. Boom is the professional pen name for Naomi Mehnert, a military spouse and stay-at-home mother with a recently discovered personal love for writing. Naomi's husband is Sgt. 1st Class Brian Mehnert, who works at the Kansas City Military Entrance Processing Station. Her novel, 'To Tempt a Viscount' will be published Jan. 13, 2017.

"My initial process for writing my (first) novel was a mess. I had no idea what I was doing, so I came up with a basic outline and started writing," Mehnert said. "I was a little embarrassed by my new hobby, as I figured nothing would come from it, and wrote at night in secret. Not that my husband would have poked fun at my new hobby, but I did not want him to see me start something only to fail. He doesn't know this, but I had already tried painting and failed miserably. I did not want the same thing to happen with writing. So, I ultimately waited until I grew more confident in my writing abilities before telling him."

After embarking on her first project, Mehnert recalled the process of questioning her own decision to write a novel, despite having reached 10,000 words. She said several personal doubts and other significant rhetorical questions surfaced among her thoughts as well.

"I determined I would see my project through to the end, even after I learned that any small addition would require an extensive amount of work," she said. "We military spouses face unique struggles, and my struggle was to find something to call my own, something that could follow me on moves. I love my toddler dearly and am so grateful I get to stay home with him, but I needed something for me. Writing has given me a sense of pride — no matter how many books I ultimately sell or do not sell."

Gaining more experience as a writer allowed Mehnert to learn from those initial mistakes. And, once she initiated the process of submitting work to publishers, such engagement in the business aspects involved with producing a novel for the retail market significantly augmented her practical understanding.

"After months of waiting, I received multiple rejections and almost gave up," Mehnert recalled. "Luckily, I stumbled upon my current publisher, The Wild Rose Press Inc., and they gave me some useful pointers."

The Wild Rose Press is a royalty-paying publisher that takes submissions. The company has been publishing electronic and print titles of fiction for nine years. Its book titles span the sub-genre spectrum from romance in all lengths to mainstream and women's fiction.

Mehnert said countless hours went into revising and editing her novel. She also found that her six years of experience as a member of the South Dakota Air National Guard influenced her work as an author in subtle ways, too.

"I loved being a member of the South Dakota Air National Guard. I worked in finance and enjoyed being part of a great community of hard-working people. My novel has nothing to do with the military as it is based in 1820 England, but my time in the Guard still made an impact," she said. "Both of my parents and the Guard instilled a professional work ethic within me, but serving in the Guard is what gave me confidence to believe in myself. I don't think anyone who has been in the military and leaves with an honorable discharge can leave feeling like a failure."

Mehnert completed a bachelor's degree in business while her family lived in Germany. She said that the foundation gained from completing a formal business degree has actually helped with marketing and administrative matters.

"Promotion was like a hidden monster that I never knew existed within the publishing industry," Mehnert said. "I had always figured that my publisher would promote my novel, and I would get to sit back and write. I was so very, very wrong."

Mehnert said she learned that the current publishing industry standard requires every author to spend a great deal of time promoting his or her own work using multiple platforms, including the Internet and social media.

"Every author will claim the best source of promotion is to write more novels," she said. "I have worked steadily to accomplish that. So, I am pleased to say that I just signed another contract for the next novel in my series."

Mehnert said she intends to ultimately complete four novels in her current series. She welcomes questions about the process and business of writing. Her website is <http://www.naomiboomb.com/>. The site also includes a descriptive overview along with excerpts from her novel.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT

Author Naomi Mehnert, who goes by the pen name Naomi Boom, sits in her writing area in the home she shares on post with her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Brian Mehnert, medical section supervisor at the Kansas City Military Entrance Processing Station, and their 2-year-old son, Wyatt, Dec. 5 in Oregon Village. Naomi's first book, "To Tempt a Viscount," which is set in 1820s England, is available for e-book and print-on-demand pre-order; the e-book and printed version will be available Jan. 13. She is currently writing the fourth in her Entangled Nobility series.

“I have learned a lot by making many mistakes and am willing to help others avoid some of those pitfalls,” Mehnert said.

And, as a military spouse who primarily cares for a toddler during the day, finding time within her schedule to write was another creative logistical undertaking.

“I first started writing in my child’s room when I put him to sleep at night. I used a flashlight and wrote with a pen on paper,” she said. “The more I wrote, the more I set my rhythm — which now means I write when he naps during the day or at night when he sleeps. Now, I no longer use a flashlight at night, but simply go downstairs to a well-lit room.”

Nonetheless, Mehnert said challenges still occur between the creative endeavors of an author and those inherent responsibilities among members of a military family.

“I wish I could say that I always manage to do everything without sometimes allowing other areas of my life to slide. Unfortunately, I cannot, and think it would be unfair to omit mentioning that my house is not always spotless,” Mehnert said. “My husband chips in a lot. Sometimes he watches our toddler for hours so that I can finish a scene or complete an edit for my editor. Things can get a little crazy with deadlines. But, I don’t mind having some dirty dishes in the sink at times as a minor consequence of being able to pursue my passion for writing.”