



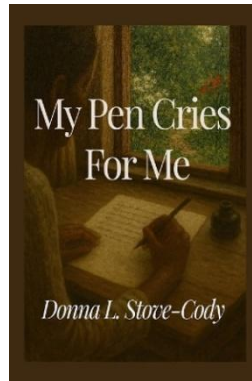
Words of Honor: Celebrating Veteran Poet Diana L. Stove Cody

Jessica Kennedy

I first encountered Donna Stove-Cody through the Military Women's Support groups and Recreational Therapy workshops at the Philadelphia VA, and later at local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) meetings. A U.S. Army veteran, community advocate, and accomplished poet from New Jersey, she carries her experience with quiet, determined purpose.

Her poetry has earned recognition that reflects its impact, including the Editor's Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Poetry from Poetry.com and the International Library of Poetry. Her work was also featured in the Women's Support Group Museum Exhibit at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Museum in Philadelphia, an event designed to raise awareness about Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and its lasting effects on survivors.

Cody served as an Officer's Personnel Record Specialist in the U.S. Army, a career that was tragically cut short after she endured multiple sexual assaults. What followed was a deeply personal journey with trauma, with PTSD, and with addiction.



Her debut memoir, *My Pen Cries For Me*, published in February 2026, chronicles that journey. Raw and unflinching, it traces her painful search for healing and the path she eventually found through poetry and storytelling. The book has already resonated widely within the veteran community, offering comfort to readers who recognize their own struggles in her words.

In an interview for this article, Cody reflected on the long road she's traveled.

"I've been going to therapy for years and still struggle with what happened to me. Writing saved my life, and it means the world to me that my work helps others get through challenging times too." She is direct about what she believes can make a difference.

"I always encourage every veteran to sign up for PTSD counseling and to try to express themselves through Creative Arts for healing. This can make a big difference". – Donna L. Stove Cody



Cody also wants veterans to know that help is accessible. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides free, confidential treatment for MST to all veterans, regardless of discharge status or whether the trauma was reported at the time. Services range from individual and group therapy through specialized outpatient programs to residential and inpatient care for those who need a higher level of support. Local Vet Centers offer an additional, community-based option for veterans who prefer a less clinical setting. Cody's work extends well beyond writing. She recently participated in a Philadelphia Veterans Advisory Commission meeting at

City Hall, where she joined discussions on critical issues facing veterans including MST awareness and improved care standards. Her presence in those rooms matters, she speaks for veterans whose voices might otherwise go unheard, and she holds institutions accountable for the promises made to those who served.



[VA Mental Health Services | Veterans Affairs](#)

[National Recreation Therapy Service - Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services](#)

[Vet Centers \(Readjustment Counseling\) Home](#)

[My Pen Cries for Me | Barnes & Noble®](#)

[Mental Wellness - VFW](#)



Each month, Cody brings her story directly to the people it resonates with most. She hosts poetry readings online and in person at veteran events, VFW posts, American Legion chapters, and local bookstores, where she reads excerpts from *My Pen Cries For Me*. The events are family-friendly and typically include free meals and veteran resources.

Fellow veterans say they feel genuinely connected to her work, and many return to each event. There's something powerful about hearing these words spoken aloud, in community, by the person who lived them. *My Pen Cries for Me* is available now at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.