



Finding Security in Remote Work

BY VICTORIA THOMPSON, ACP

Remote work, with its promise of flexibility and greater availability during training and deployments, was once a distant possibility for underemployed military spouses. According to a 2022 Forbes article, before the COVID-19 pandemic, only about 5% of positions were remote. The silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the move toward remote work and more flexibility in jobs to work from home when needed. I remember when

COVID-19 hit like it was yesterday. I worked for the Red Cross as a Regional Program Manager for Service to the Armed Forces in Fort Stewart, Ga. My husband, who was deployed at the time, will never understand why there were toilet paper shortages. Like most organizations in 2020, the Red Cross had to work fast to move to a completely remote workforce. While the shift caused a lot of complications for an organization whose

workforce had always worked predominantly in person, it made us innovate our services to ensure our clients still got the help they needed. I had to homeschool my two boys alongside my daily work duties. While it was a strain, it was the first time I didn't have to worry about a sick kid derailing my work. It was also the first time I felt that, despite the circumstances, my status as a military spouse did not significantly impact my work.

Fast forward to 2022, and our family had a permanent change of station; the Red Cross went back to in-person staffing, and I had to get a new job. I did what most of us do and took the next available job that I could get. I enjoyed my job, but working as a secretary was a significant change. This was a common pattern for me: we would move every few years, and I would have to start over at the bottom and then work toward a job that felt like a better fit based on my experience and education.



I wanted to work remotely to support my family, have a better work-life balance, and find a job that would move with me so I would not have to start over again.

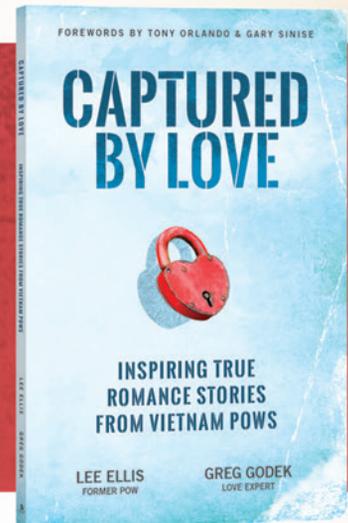
I found a few jobs that spoke to me and started interviewing. My vast professional network was the most important factor in my job search success. My previous manager with the Red Cross asked me to apply for a remote job they felt would be an excellent fit for me; another friend posted that her company, American Corporate Partners (ACP), was hiring. I liked the missions of both organizations, and timing was the deciding factor that led me to work at ACP as an Operations Associate.

Most people know that their network is essential, but many don't realize how extensive their network really is. Leverage your volunteer connections, other military spouses, and people you know in your community. Let them know what you are looking for in a position. As a known entity, you will have a higher standing among other applicants for any job. Many people in your network would love to support you in your goals.

One of the best ways you can grow your network is through mentorship! A mentor in the career field that you are interested in can connect you with people to help you in your career goals. To learn more about how ACP can help you with your career goals, visit our website at acp-usa.org and apply for our mentorship program! ★

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