



Accenture Women's Network Feature

"Supporting Military Spouses at Work...and in Life"

Accenture is committed to our military men and women, along with their spouses and families. *Chief Executive Officer in North America*, Julie Sweet, says, "*In North America alone, we're committed to hiring 5,000 veterans and military spouses over the next five years.*" Because the company already provides substantial job opportunities, hiring practices, and retention programs for transitioning service members seeking civilian employment, Accenture was selected as a #1 Vet Friendly Employer and a 2017 Military Friendly Employer.

In addition to supporting veterans and active members, Accenture also actively supports military spouses who face a unique set of challenges due to balancing their family, military life, and career while supporting and missing their deployed loved ones. In 2015, military spouses [Amanda Murnane](#) and [Sarah Walsh](#) co-founded Accenture's [Military Spouse ERG](#) to create an internal community that recruits, engages, mentors, and retains Accenture-employed military spouses. Due to the group's hard work and support, Accenture was later inducted into the [DoD's Military Spouse Employment Partnership](#), an employment and career partnership that connects military spouses to organizations committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining military spouses.

In May, the nation celebrates [National Military Appreciation Month](#) (NMAM) as a symbol of unity and National Military Spouse Appreciation Day to honor military spouses' contributions in helping to keep our country safe. On May 12th, the Military Spouses ERG and the D.C. Military ERG will co-host the first Military Spouses' Appreciation Day. This special event will be held both online and locally in the D.C./Globe Office and San Antonio Centers (LLP and AFS). It will be filled with Military Spouses and Family Spotlights, a Branding Workshop, and updates from the Military Spouse Leadership team.

We recently spoke with two of Accenture's military spouses who actively support an active duty service member and veteran to get a glimpse of how they balance their lives in the military with their professional careers at Accenture:

Amanda Murnane, Management Consulting Senior Manager, H&PS **North America (Washington DC)**

Tell us about your career path and your experience in Accenture as a military spouse.

I am a Senior Manager in our H&PS practice and currently the Change Management Lead for H&PS Enterprise Services. I've always been passionate about mission-oriented work. One of the most formidable experiences was my time on the Accenture Development Partnerships Core Team. I continued pursuing these and other interests at [UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business](#) through the company's tuition reimbursement program. I've had an amazing ride at Accenture. I am also a military spouse whose husband is in the [Navy](#). Despite my experience in the change management area, I was not prepared for the amount of change the military would bring into my life. Since 2012, we (and our three kids) have lived in five different cities. While we currently live in D.C., we will again be relocating to [Yokosuka, Japan](#).

During that time, I also wasn't prepared for the harsh realities facing military spouses. For example, the unemployment rate for us is 18% compared to 4.4% for our civilian counterparts. When the military decided to move us to Japan for the first time in 2012, I was excited about the adventure with my family. However, I also cared about my career. Unfortunately, I had no idea how limited the opportunities would be in Japan. Luckily, I was incredibly fortunate to find a role with Careers at Accenture that allowed me to maintain a career during my husband's deployment.

After several other Accenture-employed military spouses heard about my story, they asked me to share any best practices and lessons learned from the experience. Knowing the road ahead of them was a tough one, I knew I had to help military spouses find a way to thrive in their careers at Accenture. This deep passion was the main reason I co-founded the Military Spouse ERG (with [Sarah Walsh](#)). The ERG was a grassroots effort to help military spouses find one another and navigate through military transitions while growing their careers at Accenture. I guess you could say that it is my way of "paying it forward."

What unique challenges do military spouses face in the workforce, and how can they juggle military commitments with an Accenture career?

Active-duty Military Spouses face unique challenges that impact them personally and professionally. Since our service members are an active part of the military, we typically have to pack up and relocate our families domestically /internationally every 1-3 years. Some of us also take on significant leadership responsibilities based on our military members' challenges at home and abroad. While tending to extra military-related obligations and pre/post-deployment activities (e.g., moving logistics, finding a new home, car, schools, healthcare, childcare), we often bear the burden for basic family activities like financials, childcare, etc. because our service member is either already deployed or in pre-deployment training. During all of this chaos, we are left alone to deal with the pain of having a loved one deployed far away,

sometimes in harm's way. All the while, we come to work and make valuable contributions every day!

Outside of the personal challenges, when military spouses come to me and ask how I have worked through professional challenges, I talk to them about my experience and offer suggestions. At the same time, I also make it clear that they can also:

- **Take control of their own career.** It is vital that women advocate for themselves and their families while educating people around them about what it means to be a military spouse—because each military families' experience is as unique as the service member's specialty (pilot, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, artillery, and artillery submariner, etc.). The Military Spouse ERG is here to support them. However, ultimately it's up to them to let people know about any challenging situation they may face due to their family's military service. They should work hard to advocate for themselves, as they can bring a unique perspective based on their varied experiences.
- **Seek leadership support.** Leadership support is critical and ties into my first point. Military spouses need to let the people around them know what's going on in their lives and what support they need. I would not be sitting with you today if it weren't for the help of some fantastic Accenture leaders like [Katherine LaVelle](#), [Cathy Farley](#), [Elaine Turville](#), [Todd Singleton](#), Linda Singh, Jamie Breen, Melanie Brasher, and Lynne Segall.

What is the Military Spouse ERG, and how does it support military spouses?

The [Military Spouse ERG](#) was formed out of a passion for helping other military spouses be successful. It is a community that recruits, engages, mentors, and retains Accenture employed spouses of active-duty service members, reservists, and veterans. We recognize the leadership roles military spouses play at their service members' commands and their vital role in supporting the mission. The ERG's mission, in turn, is to help military spouses navigate Accenture during military deployments and transitions while thriving in their careers!

This year, the ERG has two main focuses:

- **Partner with Human Resources.** Because of the added challenges our military spouses face, we are actively working with H.R. to figure out ways Accenture can help us overcome those challenges. On April 28, we will host another H.R. policies workshop. These workshops are designed to help military-affiliated Accenture people understand Accenture programs and policies. For example, military spouses lose 20-35 productive days with every relocation. We want them to have access to available resources to help take some of the stress out of a military move. So, if you are a spouse, a veteran, if you work with spouses or military veterans, or are interested, we encourage you to join us.
- **Continue the Got your Six Program.** We started this program to help existing Accenture military spouses who have an upcoming military move or deployment potentially find roles that will allow them to stay with Accenture. If you are a military spouse – or know of one

who is about to move due to military deployment – or want to mentor a military spouse as they navigate Accenture DTEs and geographic lines, WE WANT YOU!

What does 'Leading in the New' mean to you?

I believe Leading in the New is about adapting to new realities and new sets of circumstances. My MBA experience at UC Berkeley was driven by themes of innovation and diversity of thought and experience. Military deployments consistently provide us with real-world leadership development opportunities. Through the Military ERG, we are helping Accenture retain a very diverse, talented, adaptable, and loyal workforce with an unusually high propensity to give back to Accenture.

Jamie Butler – Business Operations Senior Analyst, H&PS NA, Accenture Federal Services (San Antonio)

Tell us about your career path and current role.

As a military spouse raised in a military family, sacrifice and perseverance were an integral part of my DNA. Unexpected life events and moves to different duty stations extended my college experience; it took me eight years to acquire my bachelor's degree.

In July 2015, I joined Accenture as a PCS Analyst and am currently a member of the Shared PMO team for a federal client. I was hired under [Accenture's Military Spouse program](#) and am a prior military spouse and supported the career of a [U.S. Army Officer](#) for six years. In addition to working at Accenture and supporting military spouses, I have extensive non-profit and program management experience and am currently active with numerous community organizations.

What are the unique challenges military spouses face as they try to grow their careers?

As a military spouse, I think one of the biggest challenges is figuring out who you are and what you want your career path to look like. This is hard after you've spent years supporting your military spouse and family. Another challenge I believe military spouses face is how we communicate and relate our capabilities and abilities. We often struggle with how our specific skillsets can actively support a corporate environment. It is important to find mentors and leaders that can help you define who you are, outline what you are looking to accomplish with your career path, and help you set goals to reach your potential.

I am thankful for the AFS San Antonio Delivery Center leadership, who have invested the energy and time to help me find my way in Accenture. These leaders have helped me realize my skills. Being a military spouse has taught me how to be flexible in constantly changing and demanding situations and think on the fly. It has taught me how to interact and work with people from

various backgrounds and unique experiences. It has also taught me how to ask questions that others may be hesitant to ask and seek opportunities to continue learning and growing.

How did your military experience help you transition into the corporate world and Accenture?

When I joined the corporate world, I dove in headfirst to feel that I was years behind my peers. It turned out that my years of experience with being involved in political action groups and leading community organizations provided me with the critical skills needed to make an immediate impact in my program and my project management career. My military spouse experience also taught me the importance of making connections and being open for mentorship to be empowered while empowering others in return.

As the first official military spouse hired through [Accenture's Military Spouse Hiring Program](#), I finally found a company that genuinely wanted to give back to the community and provide career opportunities to those people who have worked hard to serve our country. If I could go back in time, I would have made the same choices that brought me to where and who I am today. I have grown with each life experience, and I believe my experiences have given me the skills, maturity, and passion that make me the professional I am today.

What does 'Leading in the New' mean to you?

Leading in the New means that we have to focus on our people, foster talent, and implement leadership initiatives to deliver value to our clients with new technologies, processes, and services.

In this new digital and technology environment, I believe we must be unafraid to take risks and be bold. Our people must feel empowered and motivated to contribute and actively participate in helping Accenture lead in this fresh and exciting business space.

I feel that no matter what your level or your role is, everyone can bring something of value to their team and engage in a way that pushes the boundaries of innovation and thought to deliver value to our clients—year after year.

Additional sidebars



Jamie and Christina Harrison attending a Celebrate America's Military Event that honored our active-duty military community.



Jamie and Daisy Butler represented Accenture at a Hiring our Heroes event held at Joint Base San Antonio.



Jamie's family consists of 1 Active Duty Serviceman and 4 veterans! GO ARMY!!!!