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Franchising: Alive and Well Among Our Veteran Community

By Annie Barbarika and Rob Bond

In this fourth annual survey of veterans in franchising, the news is overwhelmingly positive. First and foremost, the US is finally decreasing its role in Afghanistan, the end result being that our military forces will be completing their tour and coming home from both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Franchising

The best statistics on the overall role of military veterans in franchising have been collected by the IFA. Through their VetFran Program, with over 580 participating franchisors, coupled with the White House-led Operation Enduring Opportunity, over 4,300 military veterans and spouses have become franchisees since November 2011. Additionally, franchisors have employed nearly 65,000 veterans during this same period. On April 30th, the White House announced that 290,000 veterans and military spouses have been hired or trained since the launch of the program, with VetFran contributing almost a quarter of this total.

For this year's survey, the World Franchising Network (www.WorldFranchising.com) asked over 3,000 franchisors to return a questionnaire that detailed the involvement of military veterans in their programs and the "discounts" they are offered in terms of initial investment, franchise fees, and on-going royalties. Detailed profiles of 426 firms can be found on www.Franchises4Vets.com. From this very impressive list, we selected the 50 companies that we feel not only had the best representation in their operations (including franchised units, company-owned units, and among the ranks of senior management), but also for the individual programs that they have created to attract veterans. It is worth spending some time going to the website to investigate the various industry groupings and specific systems that interest you.

There are several companies that have over 15% veteran-owned franchised units, including:



"Hard work, follow through, and perseverance are some of the things my Army experience provided that helps me succeed in my Snap-on Tools Franchise."
— John Winkler, Snap-on Tools Franchisee

Franchisor	Franchised Units	Vet-Owned Units	% Vet-Owned
JAN-PRO Cleaning Systems	13,560	5,230	38.6%
WIN Home Inspection	176	60	34.1%
ColorTyme Rent-to-Own	219	55	25.1%
Advanced Maintenance	11	2	18.2%
Kitchen Tune-Up	155	28	18.1%
Mosquito Squad	125	21	16.8%
Wild Birds Unlimited	287	45	15.7%
CruiseOne	820	127	15.5%
Matco Tools	1,500	230	15.3%
Anytime Fitness	2,165	327	15.1%

It is also worth noting that two smaller franchises—not included among the Top 50 because of their size—have a great veteran participation rate.

Franchisor	Franchised Units	Vet-Owned Units	% Vet-Owned
Star Wellness	1	1	100%
Steelhouse Fitness	2	1	50%

Offsetting these very positive strides is the reality that unemployment among veterans (those leaving active duty within the past 10 years) is 11.7%, versus an overall jobless rate of 7.1%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Clearly, these discrepancies must be addressed.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that discounts are only one element of the due diligence process. It is critical to investigate all facets of the franchise program being offered. These include financial performance representations (Item 19 in Franchise Disclosure Documents), annual growth, outstanding lawsuits, management, etc. It is also of the utmost importance that you work with a knowledgeable professional (franchise attorney, financial advisor, or experienced broker with no vested interest in steering you) who has been through the acquisition process many times. Good luck in finding a franchise that works for you!

Top Franchises for Military Veterans

Company	Internet
Advanced Maintenance	www.advancedmaintenance.com
AdvantaClean Systems	www.advantacleansystems.com
Always Best Care	www.franchisewithalwaysbestcare.com
Anago Cleaning Systems	www.anagousa.com
Anytime Fitness	www.anytimefitness.com/franchise
Batteries Plus Bulbs	www.batteriesplus.com/franchising
Bennigan's	www.bennigans.com
Border Magic/Boulder Designs	www.bordermagic.com
BrightStar	www.brightstarfranchise.com
ColorTyme Rent-To-Own	www.colortyme.com
ComForcare Senior Services	www.comforcarefranchise.com
Cookies By Design	www.cookiesbydesign.com
Coverall Health-Based Cleaning Systems	www.coverall.com
Creative Colors International	www.creativecolorsintl.com
CruiseOne	www.cruiseonefranchise.com
Doc Popcorn	www.docpopcorn.com
Enviro-Master	www.enviro-master.com
Express Employment Professionals	www.expressfranchising.com
Fantastic Sams	www.fantasticsamsfranchises.com
FASTSIGNS	www.fastsigns.com
Flip Flop Shops	www.flipflopshops.com
Griswold Home Care	www.griswoldhomecare.com
Happy & Healthy Products	www.happyandhealthy.com
HoneyBaked Ham Co. & Café	www.honeybakedfranchising.com
Hungry Howie's Pizza	www.hungryhowies.com/franchising
Instant Imprints	www.instantimprints.com
Jan-Pro Cleaning Systems	www.jan-pro.com
Kitchen Tune-Up	www.kitchentuneup.com
Liberty Tax Service	www.libertytaxfranchise.com
Little Gym, The	www.thelittlegymfranchise.com

Maaco Collision Repair and Auto Painting	www.maacofranchise.com
Matco Tools	www.gomatco.com
Maui Wowi Hawaiian Coffees & Smoothies	www.mauiwowifranchise.com
MOOYAH Burgers Fries Shakes	www.mooyah.com
Mosquito Squad	www.mosquitosquadfranchise.com
Mr. Transmission	www.moranindustries.com
Padgett Business Services	www.smallbizpros.com
Papa John's Pizza	www.papajohns.com
Pet Supplies Plus	www.petsuppliesplus.com
Pirtek USA	www.pirtekusa.com
Renue Systems	www.renuesystems.com
ServiceMaster (ServiceMaster Clean, Furniture Medic, et al)	www.ownafranchise.com
Sign-A-Rama	www.sign-a-rama.com
Snap-on Tools	www.snaponfranchise.com
Spherion Staffing Services	www.spherion.com
Sport Clips	www.sportclipsfranchise.com
TeamLogic IT	www.teamlogicit.com
Tropical Smoothie Café	www.tropicalsmoothiefranchise.com
TSS Photography	www.tssphotography.com
Tutor Doctor	www.tutordocor.com
U.S. Lawns	www.uslawnsfranchise.com
Vanguard Cleaning Systems	www.vanguardcleaning.com
Wild Birds Unlimited	www.wbu.com
WIN Home Inspection	www.wini.com
Wings, Etc.	www.wingsetc.com