



**VetFran Q&A with Josh Lien**  
Mosquito Joe of Austin & San Antonio



Josh Lien's journey from a farm upbringing in rural Minnesota and South Dakota to entrepreneurship has been defined by hard work and adaptability. After earning an ROTC scholarship to South Dakota State University, he graduated in 2003 and became a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. Serving as a Medical Service Corp Officer in the 4th Infantry Division, Josh completed two deployments to Iraq, where he refined his leadership skills and gained deep insights into the complexities of military operations. Following his active duty in 2007, he worked in pharmaceutical sales and as an operations officer for an intelligence training program, which took him to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2014, Josh transitioned fully into civilian entrepreneurship by purchasing a Mosquito Joe franchise in Round Rock, Texas. His business quickly expanded from one territory to seven, achieving over \$2 million in annual revenue. Josh is also a seasoned real estate investor, with a portfolio that includes rental properties, property flips, and land development for an RV park. Alongside his business ventures, he and his wife Fabiola are actively involved in the Austin community, where he and his eldest son perform in La Murga de Austin for Austin FC games. His commitment to family, community, and a wide range of hobbies, from poker to water sports, highlights his balance of personal and professional success.

We sat down with Josh to learn more about his journey into franchising and specifically, why Franchising presents a great opportunity for Veterans.

**Q: When and why did you decide to join the military?**

Josh: I mainly joined the military due to the opportunities that it offered. I come from a small town in rural South Dakota, so having the opportunity to get a college education, have a guaranteed job after graduating, and travelling the world was very enticing. I wasn't in a financial situation to go to college without assistance, so I applied for military scholarships during my senior year of high school in 1999 and both the Army and Air Force offered me three-year ROTC scholarships to South Dakota State University. I was dual enrolled (both Army and Air Force) during my freshman year, and when the army offered to make my scholarship a retroactive four-year scholarship, I went with Army.

**Q: Tell us about your overseas deployments as well as what you did back home while not deployed?**

Josh: I had two deployments while on active duty, both to Iraq. My first was in 2003 immediately after my completion of Officer Basic Course. I caught up with an armor unit that had already been deployed for approximately five months starting with the initial push into Iraq. This was before HMMWVs were armored, and we were using sheet metal to fabricate our own doors to offer more protection than the fabric ones we deployed with. Our battalion was spread out over four small Forward Operating Bases. I was slated to take over as the medical platoon leader, but for much of the deployment I was considered a spare officer and conducted logistics missions and support roles.

In 2006 I deployed again to Baghdad. I had transitioned mainly to an office role as the battalion operations officer, but we were in a camp that experienced a total of 280 mortar and rocket attacks during our year-long deployment, and part of my responsibilities included responding to these attacks and conducting damage assessments.

I left active duty in July 2007 but accepted a government contractor position on a program that provided training to police forces in Iraq and then Afghanistan. I spent another approximately 3 ½ years deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of that program between the years of 2008 and 2012, working very closely with active-duty military personnel.

**Q: What type of missions were you involved in while on deployment?**

Josh: My battalion commander in 2003 felt that it was important to have an officer leading every patrol that left our FOB. When I arrived, I was slated to take over as medical platoon leader for the battalion, but until the existing medical platoon leader transitioned out, I was given responsibility for the daily logistics missions to get meals, fuel, ammunition, and other supplies for our very small forward operating base. I would also lead missions to provide security and support to our Public Affairs team doing outreach events to the local population. During larger battalion-level missions where we would block entry/exit to an entire village and go door-to-door searching for weapons and insurgents, I would head up the support package where we would have medical support, maintenance support, and would collect detainees.

**Q: Looking back at your experience in the military, what gives you the greatest sense of pride?**

Josh: After my first deployment in 2003, we received quite a few brand-new medics coming from initial training, and we had about 18 months to prepare for the next deployment. Being able to help train these Soldiers for our deployment in 2006 and see them succeed and save lives during that difficult deployment and then watch as they advanced their careers after was very fulfilling.

**Q: Why did you choose a franchise concept like Mosquito Joe rather than start a business on your own?**

Josh: I didn't have any experience with running a business or business ownership, so when I decided I wanted to start a business, I decided early on that I should look at proven franchise concepts rather than start something on my own.

**Q: What led you to Mosquito Joe and how do your military skills transfer over to running this business?**

Josh: When I started my business, there were not many companies offering this type of service, so I immediately saw the potential in offering people relief from mosquitoes. I went with Mosquito Joe mainly because the branding message resonated with me, and I felt the corporate staff were committed to my success.

**Q: Are there opportunities for Veterans in franchising beyond ownership, i.e. General Manager roles or Operations Directors? Why do they also fit well into the franchising model?**

Josh: I feel that people with military experience obtain the organizational, decision-making, and leadership skills that make them a good fit for a number of management roles, both in and out of the franchising arena.

**Q: How is being in a franchise model similar to being in the military in regard to sharing best practices and camaraderie across the franchise system?**



Josh: I feel like the relationships among franchise owners are very similar to those of military officers. Like military commanders, franchise owners each have our own unit to lead. Our businesses share common systems and procedures, so many challenges are common across the board. We all have unique skillsets and leadership styles. We are all stronger in some areas than others. We form bonds with other leaders who have gone through the same challenges we have and capitalize on each other's strengths with improved processes and best practices.

**Q: What advice can you give to Veteran's in seeking to start their own business in franchising?**

Josh: Spend time researching different business models to find one that's a good fit for your personality. I've had friends try to get into franchising and fail because they didn't enjoy the work. Also make sure that you're in a financial position to fully commit yourself to a business even though you might not be able to take a paycheck while your business grows.

**Thank you, Josh, for your time and for your service!**