

**SPECIAL OPS**

VETREPRENEUR SUCCESS STORY

## TAKING THE PLUNGE

Former parachute rigger jumps into business ownership with PostNet franchise.

BY WARREN DUFFIE



**FUN FACTS**

*Favorite TV show?* "Reba"  
*Hobbies?* Walk my dogs,  
clean my house, read  
*Favorite sports team?*  
Steelers and the Flyers

wouldn't share her revenue figures, her business draws approximately 60 customers weekly, mainly local small-business owners.

"Most of our jobs involve printing," Crow said. "We print a lot of business cards and banners as well as menus for area restaurants. A good number of customers also use our fax, notary and shipping services."

**IN UNIFORM**

Crow enlisted in the Navy in 2003. After training, she served in Virginia, California, Guam and Bahrain. Crow left the Navy in early 2010, after her husband died. They had often discussed starting a business together, and she decided to honor him and move forward with the endeavor.

"The year before, we were in line at the post office in Ocean View, trying to mail out Christmas cards," she said. "The line was crazy, out the door. We were very frustrated. I had used the services of a PostNet in Virginia Beach for awhile and was very impressed.

My husband and I knew Ocean View didn't have a PostNet, so we talked about opening one."

When Crow decided to go into business, she met with the owner of the Virginia Beach PostNet, Dennis Allard, to get information and advice about the company. He even let her work in the store a few times, so she could get a feel for things.

One of the most nerve-racking aspects of entrepreneurship was leaving the security of the military, Crow said. "That was secure income. It's scary to leave a job that pays you on the 1st and 15th of each month to not knowing when you will start making money.

"Doing this without my husband has been the hardest thing," she continued. "We had planned to do this together. Fortunately, I have great friends who have helped throughout this process. I look forward to opening more locations."

**THE FRANCHISEE**

**Amanda Crow**

Age: 26  
Residence: Norfolk, Va.



**Military Service:**

U.S. Navy (2003-2010)

**Highest Rank Held:**

Petty Officer 2nd Class (E-5)

**Education:**

- Aircrew survival equipmentman school, Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.
- Special operations parachute rigger school, Fort Lee, Va.
- Jumpmaster school, Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.
- Navy freefall school, Tactical Air Operations Inc., Calif.

**Crow's Advice:**

- **Learn from your mistakes and be accountable.** "That's something we all learned in the military. I've messed up print jobs before and paid for re-printing out of my own pocket. We're all human and make mistakes. Just acknowledge them, learn from them and make things right with your customers."
- **Do your research.** "Learn as much as you can about your prospective franchisor. Talk to executives as well as other franchisees. Find out the good and the bad, so you can make a sound decision."

**A** former parachute rigger for Navy special ops, Amanda Crow understands high-pressure scenarios. She was responsible for correctly packing, repairing and maintaining parachutes for some of America's most elite warriors.

"I was also a jump master, the person who told people when to jump out of an aircraft," Crow said. "So I'm accustomed to stressful environments."

**JUMPING INTO BUSINESS**

In October 2010, Crow embarked on her most daunting challenge yet: business ownership. The former petty officer 2nd class opened a PostNet franchise in the Ocean View area of Norfolk, Va., only a half mile from Naval Station Norfolk.

Her store's services include digital printing; copying; document binding, stapling and laminating; graphic design; computer rental stations; private mailbox rentals; and packaging and shipping with UPS, FedEx, DHL and the U.S. Postal Service.

Crow has two full-time and part-time employees and one freelance graphic designer. Though she

**DID YOU KNOW?**

During her career, Crow was the Navy's only female special ops parachute rigger.



Photos by Jordie Seetle, M3's Photo Graphic Studio



**PostNet**

[www.postnetfranchise.com](http://www.postnetfranchise.com)

**HQ:** Denver, Colo.

**Founded:** 1993

**# of Franchises:**  
more than 850 worldwide

**START YOURS**

**Minimum Net Worth**  
\$300,000

**Franchise Fee**  
\$29,900

**Military Discount**  
\$5,000 off franchise fee

**Store Development Fee**  
\$94,900

**Advertising Fee**  
\$6,500

**Liquid Capital Required**  
\$60,000