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January 2011



Franchisee's brush with fame

Retired U.S. Marine Russell Johnson was used to serving the Commander in Chief of the military as a soldier on two combat missions to Iraq. So he was only mildly shocked when he heard his bid had been accepted to paint the Commander's wrought-iron fence that stretches around the 18-acres of White House grounds—not to mention, 14 vehicle and 17 pedestrian gates.

After the fence was sanded and prepped, the ornate fence had to be painted by hand, said Johnson, a new franchisee with Fresh Coat, an interior and commercial painting franchise.

Johnson did more supervising of his four-

man crew than painting, since managing a business, not doing the actual painting was what appealed to him about the franchise in the first place.

"I didn't know so many people came to the White House every day," he said. In addition to tourists and protestors, there was a parade of visitors from the Secretary of the Treasury to the President's Press Secretary. Johnson never did see the President during the two-plus weeks he was on the job, but he did spot the First Lady out in the yard. When asked if he acknowledged her, he laughed and said, "No, I didn't wave." Had the President shown up, however, he probably would have saluted.