

"When I show up in my Boy Scout uniform, I'll look in the mirror and laugh and think, 'This is not the uniform I was planning on wearing.'" - Becky Daul



## SERVING THE COMMUNITY IN A DIFFERENT KIND OF UNIFORM

# BECKY DAUL

By GRACE BRANDT

**W**hen Becky Daul was a junior in high school, she felt like her future was one big question mark. Recovering from weeks in the hospital because of a health issue, she didn't know whether she wanted to attend college right away after graduating or what else she should do.

But everything became clear when a friend in the Marine Corps encouraged her to talk to her local recruiter.

"About ten minutes later, I got a call from the recruiting sta-

tion," she remembered with a laugh. "I didn't want to go, but it ended up being really awesome. I remember going to my first enlisted PT (physical training)... and I just remember getting my butt handed to me. I couldn't even lift my arms the day after I'd gone. I was in a ton of pain. My dad asked me, 'So, are you not going back anymore?' I was like, 'No, I'm definitely going back.' It pushed me a lot harder than I'd ever been pushed, but there was a sense of accomplishment of pushing through it to finish it."

Once Daul discovered the world of the United States Marine Corps, she dove into it head-first, deciding to attend college right away after all so that she could earn a degree and be qualified to earn a commission as a second lieutenant. She chose MSU-Mankato, joining the university's Marine Corps officer program.

After two years of physical training and putting together an

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officer package, Daul was selected by the Marine Corps' officer selection board to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) during the summer of 2017. If she made it through the rigorous 10-week program, located in Quantico, Virginia, she would earn the right to commission as a second lieutenant.

"It was super-stinking awesome," Daul said. "I loved every second of being there."

But, while Daul enjoyed her time in the barracks and was able to keep up with the intense training, she slowly started to realize that something wasn't right. She was more sluggish than she should have been, even factoring in the extreme lack of sleep candidates experience, and her feet started causing her extreme pain.

"You just assume you're stressed, eating wrong, etc.," she said. "Everyone's feet hurt, but mine were a little bit more, and I could tell."

Daul went to the medical corpsman a few times, but there was no diagnosable problem, so she continued with the training. However, after a particularly grueling overnight hike with 90 pounds of weight in her pack, the pain grew even worse and she ended up back in medical care, where she was finally diagnosed

with cellulitis - a serious bacterial infection.

While the corpsman assured Daul she could quickly recover from the infection, it lingered. Daul ended up on bed rest for three days and missed several more days of training, which eventually meant she had to be sent home because candidates can't miss more than seven days of field work.

Despite her early release, Daul was invited to return for a future class because she had done so well before her cellulitis disqualified her. When she returned to Mankato, she immediately threw herself back into training, planning to return to OCS the next summer. However, the pain in her feet persisted. She visited several doctors before finding the answer: she had an autoimmune deficiency which disqualified her from continuing on with the Marines.

"It was kind of a whole year of a slump of, 'What do I do next?'" Daul said. "I worked so dang hard for it. I put so many hours into it. I sacrificed relationships with family and friends and really pushed myself. I didn't have a background in anything other than yelling at people. My entire plan was the Marine Corps. I didn't want to do anything else. You don't foresee something like an immune deficiency is what's going to stop you all of a sudden."

Daul graduated in May 2018 and started looking for full time jobs as she worked part-time at Chankaska Creek and Winery.



When she saw an opening with the Boy Scouts of America, she decided to apply “on a whim,” figuring there was no way she’d be given an interview. However, she ended up getting hired as a district executive, in charge of 400 volunteers and nearly 400 youth members within a roughly 100-square-mile area in southern Minnesota.

Daul’s job includes fundraising, overseeing volunteer efforts, speaking with parents and recruiting new members - including new female members, since the Boy Scouts is working to open all levels of its program to girls too.

“Having someone who looks like me and talks like me in front of girls worked in my benefit,” she said.

Daul says her time in the Marine Corps taught her skills and lessons she’s been able to apply to the Boy Scouts, even though it was something she never expected to do.

“In a weird way, the Marine Corps actually prepared me a ton for having the job I have now,” she said. “It just wasn’t necessarily what I thought I was going to be doing. When I show up in my Boy Scout uniform, I’ll look in the mirror and laugh and think, ‘This is not the uniform I was planning on wearing.’”

One way the Marines helped prepare Daul was the fact that both the Marine Corps and the Boy Scouts are so male-dominated.

“[I’m now] very used to being the only female in the room,” she said. “It helps with a lot of my volunteers. We have tons of vets, law enforcement, fire fighters - scruffy men. Having my background with the Marine Corps gives me an advantage talking to these men. I’m not this ‘super girly-girl’ talking in front of them;



I’m someone who’s had my face slammed in dirt and gotten up from it again.”

Daul said she loves her job and especially appreciates the opportunity she has to help her young members succeed in the

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“Without the Marines, I wouldn’t be in the position I am right now. I wouldn’t have the confidence to do the job I’m in right now. There’s a lot of leadership skills and different life skills that I got from the Marine Corps, so, as sad as it is, it benefited me a lot more to being the person I am right now, having gone through that. It’s sad I didn’t get to do it, but there’s so much more I can do because I had the experience that I did.” – **Becky Daul**

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program and beyond.

“We want to get them all the way through the Eagle Program,” she said. “You see the youth, the way they grow up and the kind of people they can be after they achieve that rank. It’s the same way I looked at the Marine Corps... I did it because I wanted to lead Marines and help them be successful and do all these cool, amazing things. Now, I get to help dozens of youth do the exact same thing. It’s really cool getting to do the background stuff in order to help these kids achieve something they otherwise wouldn’t have if there wasn’t someone in my position helping them get there.”

Reflecting on how her life has gone and how her plans have changed, Daul said she’s still grateful for the time she invested

into the Marine Corps.

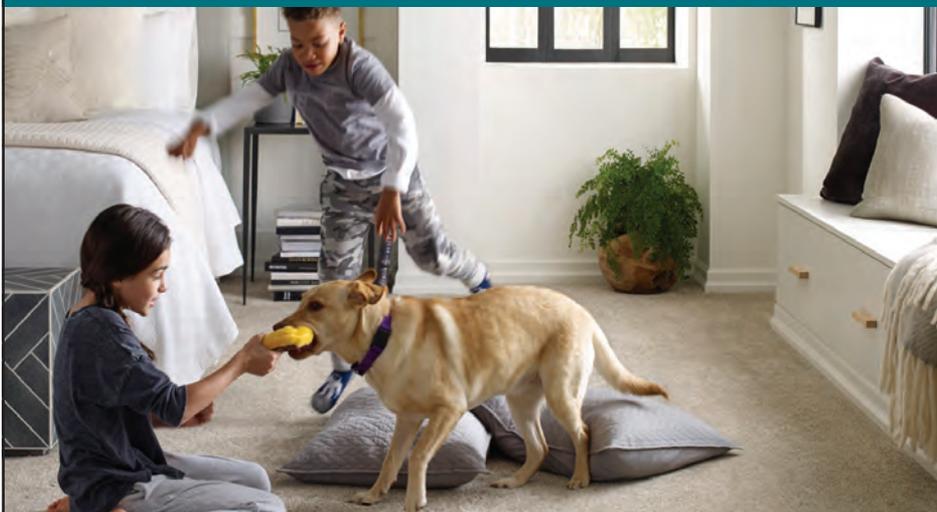
“Without the Marines, I wouldn’t be in the position I am right now,” she said. “I wouldn’t have the confidence to do the job I’m in. There’s a lot of leadership skills and different life skills that I got from the Marine Corps, so, as sad as it is [that I couldn’t join], it benefited me a lot more to being the person I am right now, having gone through that. It’s sad I didn’t get to do it, but there’s so much more I can do because I had the experience that I did.”

*Grace Brandt is a wandering reporter whose home base is Mankato.*

### Getting to know you

**WHO:** Becky Daul  
**HOMETOWN:** Waukesha, WI  
**LIVES IN:** Eagle Lake  
**FAMILY:** Black Lab, Rocky  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Starting her own cupcake shop or dog rescue

  
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