

## GRUNT: Daughter to become Marine Corps officer

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earns the respect of those salty Marines, about half of whom will be combat veterans, standing in formation to greet her. I hope she can look her platoon in the eyes and earn their respect because of who she is, not what she is.

That won't be easy — it isn't for men either, and it shouldn't be. It isn't her platoon sergeant's job to make her job more comfortable because she is a woman — and that's the deeper fear that so many of my fellow infantry veterans are mulling. Not that females are incapable of leading infantry Marines, but that females will instantly be treated as something other than equals because of their gender. They fear that standards they have long been held to will crater and the Corps will get weaker instead of stronger. And if it turns out any other way than completely equal, she will not succeed because she will not have earned the respect of her Marines.

If it turns out she doesn't belong, I hope they get rid of her as fast as they took her in. The young Marines who will deploy into combat under her command deserve that kind of honesty, because the Marine Corps is not some candyland where they pass out lollipops to non-hackers, revel in excuses for failure, or have an "empathy tent" where softer souls and weak bodies can go play with crayons.

The Corps exists solely — and trains every day of

the week — to "locate, close with, and destroy the enemy, and to repel the enemy assault by fire and close combat."

That's it, and that's all.

For this veteran-turned-observer, the only important part of the equation, at the end of the day, is whether or not this officer — any officer — is a good leader of her Marines. That means she leads by example, never asks others to do something she isn't willing to do herself, doesn't break in the field when people are counting on her, is fair and just with her discipline, and succeeds as a force multiplier when rounds are coming down range.

If she can do all of that — and there is no reason to believe she can't — then she will earn the respect of the very hard and inflexible world of combat infantrymen she is now stepping into. We should all want that.

I can admit my own skepticism. I've labored over it for a long time. Call it sexism, some kind of lingering chauvinism, whatever the PC flavor of the day might be. I don't care what you call it,

because I am being honest, based on my own formative experiences, and honesty makes a far more interesting conversation.

And I have a stake in all of this. My own daughter will become a Marine Corps officer in the near future, and the only thing that I would ever ask for her is that she be granted the opportunity to prove herself at the highest level, to demonstrate her intellect, her iron commitment, and her physical capabilities in a level arena — not one designed to see her succeed.

Given that opportunity, I know she will succeed, and hope she learns to lead with judgment, justice, integrity, and honor in the decidedly inelastic world of the Corps, where many hard and accomplished males have failed.

I hope for that because, in the final analysis, that's precisely the kind of country my Marine Corps has been fighting from the Barbary Coast, to Belleau Wood, to Guadalcanal and Fallujah to build, honor, and to protect for future generations.

## ECO BIKING: Program will be available next summer

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to recycle, and how they can take part in projects together and enjoy fun summer outdoors. For more information call Walden at 541-719-8021, or go to her website next summer early and get in on the tours her bikers will be taking: [www.bbekids.org](http://www.bbekids.org).

As of now, the first kid's Eco Bike tour for 2018 will be on Wednesday, June 20, meeting 9 a.m. at Black Butte School. Better get it on your calendar before the tour is filled.

If this sounds good to both

child and parent, Walden will be ready for you to join her next summer. And in between visiting golden eagle nesting territories both my wife, Sue, and I will be with some of the eco bikers to share what we know about the world of nature and how it all fits into all our lives.



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Eco bikers Rope Chew (L) and Athen Garrett wondering why crawdads were abundant in early summer, but gone in late summer.



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