

Durant grad seeks career in military law

By Katelynn Toft

A former 2019 Durant graduate has her sights set on a career as a military attorney and will soon enter law school.

Second Lieutenant Ellie Berry graduated from the University of Dubuque in the spring of 2023 and was commissioned as an Army officer through the university's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).

Lt. Berry is now serving at Fort Lewis-McChord in Washington state. She is Officer in Charge for Essential Personnel Services at the division level for the 593rd




Photo contributed by Ellie Berry
Former Durant graduate Lt. Ellie Berry wants to become a military attorney.

Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

She hopes to begin law school in 16 months at Seattle University while being on active duty.

During Lt. Berry's senior year of high school, she enlisted in the Iowa National Guard. Her sergeants advised her to apply for the ROTC.

"I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer, but I never knew the route I was going to take," said Lt. Berry.

Lt. Berry went to the University of Dubuque through the Army's ROTC scholarship program. She was able to attend as a full-time student and a full-time cadet.

The ROTC program allowed her to make money while attending college and graduate debt-free.

Lt. Berry received her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Philosophy, and English paving the way to become a lawyer.

"Before my cadre informed me about the Funded Legal Education Program (FLEP), I had assumed that the Army was going to postpone my dream of practicing law," said Lt. Berry.

"In the summer of 2022, I completed an internship with the Fort Riley Office of Staff Judge Advocates (JAG). This experience only served to affirm that I was pursuing a career that truly excited me," said Lt. Berry.

Certain cases she could see once becoming a fully certified JAG officer are cases involving administrative law, paralegal support, wills, immigration, domestic abuse, and other military justice cases.

For some crimes, the sentences must be served at Fort Leavenworth.

Court procedures are carried out differently in military cases than in civilian cases. Split verdicts are permitted, and there are no mistrials. There are distinctions between the military and federal rules of evidence.

"All of this shines little light on just how the two differ from one another," said Lt. Berry.

Law school takes three years to complete, but Lt. Berry is obligated to serve two years in the Army for every year of law school.

"I intend to serve for more than six years," she said. "After 20 years in the Army, if everything goes according to plan, I would like to retire as a major or lieutenant colonel."

Once she finishes, Lt. Berry can become a civilian lawyer as long as she is certified.

"I want to practice family or immigration law as a civilian lawyer after I leave the Army," she said.

During high school and college, Lt. Berry was a very busy person. She was active in cross country and track. In college she was team captain and MVP two times.

Lt. Berry's academic accomplishments were just as impressive. She was in the National Honor Society, a representative for the National Council of Youth Leadership, and Academic All-Conference all four years.

The active military lifestyle suits Lt. Berry just fine.

She loves structure and sometimes becomes a workaholic. Working with and guiding fellow soldiers are great perks of the military lifestyle.

"Being so far away from family is the one thing that is out of alignment," she said. "I dislike missing my siblings experience milestones in their lives."

Lt. Berry said the Army creates an environment of endless opportunities.

"It is very hard to settle in your career," she said. "Each day I go to work, I want to learn more and get better at my job so I can impact other soldiers' lives."

Junior interested in taking over family business

By Gavin Broussard

When the time comes, junior Josh Peel is interested in taking over the family business at the Iowa 80 Truckstop in Walcott.

Peel's Inc. owns the restaurants at the truckstop, including the Iowa 80 Kitchen, Caribou Coffee, Wendy's, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and Dairy Queen.

Josh has dreamed of being an entrepreneur and owning his own business since he was a little kid. He would be the fourth generation of Peel to be involved in the family business.

"I don't like the idea of working for someone," said Josh, who like his father, Jeff, wants to earn his way to the top of a business through experience, rather than a

degree.

"It's not going to be handed to me," said Josh. "It's pretty much work my way from bottom to top."

Josh already has some work experience inside the Iowa 80 Kitchen. Josh does various things to help his father whenever he is asked.

"I'll stock inventory, do dishes," he said. "I'll just go around and clean."

Josh and his dad have already talked about the possibility of Josh taking over the business though there is no pressure from his father.

His father has talked to Josh about tasks and responsibilities that would come with being an owner.

Josh has two sisters, Allie and Han-

nah. According to Josh, he is the only one who has shown real interest in taking over the business.

Josh only has to point to football, one of his favorite sports, to show how hard he likes to work. Josh never played his freshman and sophomore seasons due to injuries he suffered prior to the season.

This year, he pushed himself to the limit to be able to play.

"The season rolls around, and I

work hard at practice, I do the extra and unnecessary repetitions, and I go 100 percent every time," he said.

Due to injuries, Josh got a shot to play on the varsity team and caught a touchdown pass in the second game of the season against Columbus Catholic.

"This changed me as a person and helped me realize hard work really does pay off when you make the right choices," said Josh.

RISE & GRIND

EST. 2021

624 5th Street
Durant, IA

Senior Isabelle DeLong is making her final appearance for the Durant Wildcats basketball team this season. Set to start for the third year in a row, DeLong has been playing basketball competitively since the second grade. DeLong enjoys being able to have a stronger bond with her dad, Head Coach Ross DeLong, and making lifelong memories.



DeLong

PEX

INK & APPAREL

708 5th St., Durant, IA 52747
563-785-6223

Apex Ink and Apparel's junior high athlete of the month

Eighth grader Owen Collier is going out for junior high wrestling this year. Collier has been wrestling for ten years and got into it because of his dad. Collier enjoys wrestling at the state tournament, and his goal this year is to qualify for the finals at state.



Collier

ARTY'S

DIET CAN START TOMORROW

609 W. 5th St.
Wilton, IA 52778
563-732-2222

Arty's Ice Cream and Grill's boys' basketball player of the month

Junior Kayden Kerr is playing for the Durant Wildcats basketball team this year and has been playing organized basketball since seventh grade. He got into basketball because he attended University of Iowa Hawkeye games. Kerr enjoys being competitive and wants to help himself and his teammates be successful.



Kerr



DeLong



Shelangoski

Photos taken by Nic Poston
Sophomore Breanna Mosier gives blood at a blood drive hosted by Impact Life on October 24. At the blood drive, 31 units were collected, and the goal was 28. These units will help up to 93 patients.

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Senior Lainey Shelangoski is wrestling for the third year in a row for Durant's girls' wrestling team. Shelangoski said her coach, Casey Strub, got her into wrestling in her sophomore year. Wrestling has taught her to have a stronger work ethic, got her out of her comfort zone, and made her comfortable in uncomfortable situations.



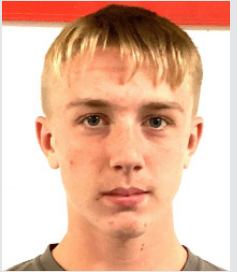
Shelangoski

TACO BELL

755 W. Iowa 80 Road
Walcott, IA 52773
(563) 468-5460

Peel's Inc. boy wrestler of the month

Freshman Gunner Klahn is going out for the Durant Wildcats boys' wrestling team. Klahn has been wrestling since kindergarten, and he got into wrestling because of his dad. Klahn enjoys wrestling because it is an individual sport.



Klahn