

Three Kittson Central ...

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He leaves June 2 for Fort Benning, Ga., and will be there for 22 weeks for basic and airborne training. He has committed to a four-year contract. Should he like his time in the military, Docken hopes to make a career of it.

When Holm enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, she was given four options for her position - administration, supply, dental assistant or finance clerk. She said math and accounting are strong suits for her and is eager to learn the finance clerk position.

"I'm going into it with an open mind," she said.

All her siblings, plus her mom, dad and grandfathers are in or have been in the military. When choosing a branch, her siblings all suggested - and she agreed - the Air Force was best.

"It's the easiest branch," she said. "I was looking at the Navy, but my sister in the Navy said, 'No, Genna. I think the Air Force is your branch.' I looked into it more and found it's more lenient and has the most freedom. That's me."

Holm has committed to four years in the Air Force and then plans to use her GI Bill to attend college for nursing and eventually become a nurse practitioner.

This decision came after she job-shadowed

Julie Johnson, NP, at Kittson Healthcare Center in Hallock this year. Her decision to enter the military was cemented after she took the ASVAB aptitude test in her junior year of high school.

Holm leaves for basic training in September in San Antonio, Texas, at Lackland Air Force Base. After that, she will attend finance clerk training at Biloxi, Miss. She is looking forward most to meeting new people from different backgrounds, the steady paycheck, security and the overall experience she'll have in the military.

"And serving my country," she added.

Pankratz's long-range plan to become a chiropractor cemented her choice to enter the National Guard.

"I mainly chose it to pay for college, because my college is going to be really expensive," she said.

She'll attend Minnesota State University Moorhead for her biology degree and then Northwestern Health and Science University for her chiropractic degree.

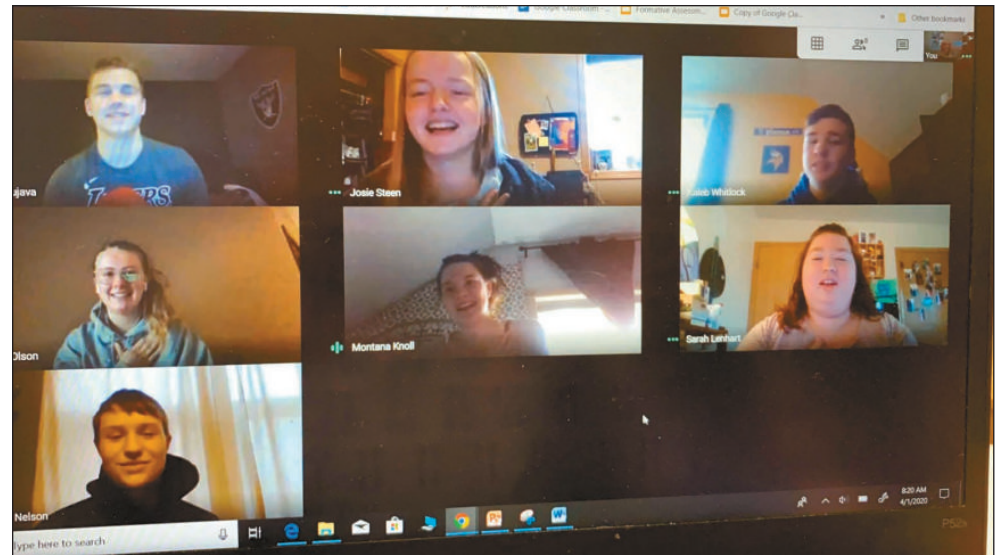
"But now knowing a little more about it, I just really like the National Guard because of the people, it teaches you how to work hard and it's just a great opportunity," she said.

She said entering the military will reinforce responsibility, discipline and respect, making her a better person. Pankratz leaves for basic training on July 1 at Fort Jackson, S.C. She's looking forward to the challenge and believes the mental aspect of basic training will be more difficult than the physical. She's looking forward to learning more about herself as she makes her way through the process.

After basic training, Pankratz will enter advanced individual training as a musician. She has played the trumpet during her time at Kittson Central. Finally, in January 2021, she will enter college at MSUM.

Docken, Holm and Pankratz plan to stay in touch as they go through their military ventures and look forward to meeting up again in person to talk about how they've changed. Each one agreed they are excited to have such close friends entering the military at the same time.

"I'm very glad to be going into the military with my two classmates," Holm said. "And they're good friends. We've had a lot of conversations about going into the military. It's hard to have been out of touch with them in the last couple of months of school. I'll miss them."



THE LANCASTER CLASS OF 2020 gathers on one of the many meeting platforms being used by students to finish their school year via distance learning. The students (top l-r) Jarrett Kujava, Josie Steen, Kaleb Whitlock, (middle) Mariah Olson, Montana Knoll, Sarah Lenhart and (bottom) Tucker Nelson, also use it to stay in touch with one another. (Submitted Photo)



KCC BEARCAT SENIORS who participated in fall sports took a group photo during the Meet the Bearcats night. Seniors playing football include (back l-r) Matthew Stewart, Zach Vig, Kaleb Whitlock, Mitchell Docken, Cade Langan and Gunnar Klein. Senior girls (seated) included Morgan Olson and Shelby Pankratz, volleyball players; Mariah Olson, KCC Cheer Team member; Josie Steen and Marlee Turn, volleyball players. (Submitted photo)

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