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Daniel moved 13 times in 15 years before his father retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army, including one two-year stretch in South Korea. In choosing a college, Daniel wanted to find a school that could finally become home.

The pride and admiration in Daniel Napier's voice is palpable as he talks about his father's 23 years of service in the U.S. Army.

"I can't say enough good things about the role my dad played in my childhood," he says. "He was a model of leadership in our family, and a model for what sacrificial service is all about."

Being the son of a lieutenant colonel comes with its challenges, though. By the time Daniel was 15, he had moved 13 times, including a two-year stretch in South Korea.

"I'm an extrovert," Daniel says, "so it's relatively easy for me to make friends quickly and thrive wherever I am. I think it actually made the transition to college easier, because I've been through so many transitions like this before."

When it came to choosing a college, Daniel was looking for a place that feels like a home. "One thing people don't understand," he says, "is that even as vast as the Army is, the community can feel really small at times. So I was looking for a school with a strong Christian foundation and a small, tight-knit community. Gardner-Webb rose to the top of the list."

Napier family

Daniel found his niche within the Gardner-Webb community in the University's sports information office, where he works as a media relations rep for several of Gardner-Webb's NCAA Division I teams. He hopes this experience will propel him into a career in the sports media or marketing.

But what he loves about Gardner-Webb extends beyond just professional development. "I've had so many people—staff, professors and friends—who have really taken a personal interest in delving into my life," he says.

That began with Pam Skinner, the person responsible for processing Daniel's military grants and scholarships.

"She was just so easy to work with, always eager to answer our questions," Daniel says.

"I've also enjoyed getting to know professors like Dr. Bob Carey, Dr. Joseph Webb and Dr. June Hobbs, people who have really invested in my life," he adds. "Classes are small, so it's hard for any student to get lost. The professors do a wonderful job of being consistent and available to every student."

Finally, Daniel says, the spiritual community at Gardner-Webb has been rich and challenging. Having grown up in a family whose cornerstone was their Christian faith, Daniel says being at Gardner-Webb has helped him take responsibility for his own spiritual growth.

"I could just tell God was calling me here," Daniel says. "Being here has been such a blessing."

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.