

answering the call

Burke graduate gives back through military service

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When the USS Port Royal neared the pier at Pearl Harbor, Lt.j.g. Daniel Fowler could see his family waiting in the distance.

After spending eight months in the Middle East aboard the ballistic missile defense cruiser, he and the rest of the crew were more than ready to return to the beautiful islands they left behind last June.

The sight of her only son serving on that ship as a Naval officer is one Cathy Fowler had not even imagined just three years before.

Daniel's future in the business world had seemed nothing but bright. He had graduated in 2005 third in his class at Burke County High School, where he lettered in football, baseball and track. He left his parents' farm to earn a finance degree from the University of Georgia, recording nearly a 4.0 grade point average in his four years there. He spent two of his summers interning in Washington, DC for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, gaining a wealth of experience underwriting nearly \$25 million in loans to electrical cooperative borrowers through Rural Development.

With his knack for numbers and impressive portfolio, Daniel surprised his parents when he announced his plans for life after graduation.

His next step was the U.S. Navy.

His grandfather and two of his uncles had served as Navy officers, which certainly had some impact on his decision.

But a man who lived long before them ultimately steered his path toward military service. The words of Benjamin Franklin rang true to Daniel more than 200 years after they were written.

"His autobiography and mention of the Pennsylvania militia had a great impact on my joining the service," Daniel said. "He pointed out that we are all free to enjoy the benefits that state

defense provides but goes on to stress the need for volunteers that will provide that defense. I felt that I would never be capable of taking American freedom for granted after having served to provide it."

So five months after turning his tassel as an honor graduate at UGA, Daniel headed off to Officer Candidacy School in Newport, R.I. He endured three months of grueling tests, wearing a red X on his forehead as the Regimental Commander, a ranking at the top of his class earned through grades, fitness and military bearing.

After graduation, Daniel was sent right back to the Classic City where he had attended college. In Athens, he was in the next to the last class to graduate from the Supply Corps School there before it was converted in 2010 to a health sciences campus by UGA and the then-Medical College of Georgia.

Daniel's solid performance there allowed him the privilege of requesting his orders to Pearl Harbor for a 24-month sea-based tour.

Last June, he and his crew left for the Arabian Gulf aboard the USS PORT ROYAL (CG 73). Some 80 percent of them had never been deployed but would spend six months in the Middle East working with the carriers

George H. W. Bush and John C. Stennis conducting plane guard operations, guarding Iraqi oil platforms, performing vessel boarding search and assist visits, and fulfilling their strategic deterrence mission.

Daniel served as the Food Service Officer, Disbursing Officer and the Helicopter Control Officer. He and his crew members endured exhausting schedules keeping watch through the night even after performing their assigned duties by day. They returned about two weeks ago to Pearl Harbor, where Daniel's mother, father Dan, sister Mary and her husband Brian were among those waiting with banners and big hugs.

When he finishes up his sea-based tour, Daniel will serve another 24-month tour, this time based ashore.

Though he's not sure what the future holds beyond his first four-year Navy commitment, he said the lessons he's taken from his military service are ones he knows will affect him for a lifetime.

"It has been a true honor to work with and experience such a diverse group of people (from each and every one of the 50 states, and several Polynesians) who have one thing in common," he wrote in an email, "...a love for what their country represents."

JROTC @ BURKE COUNTY

Hundreds of students at Burke County High School have gained an appreciation for military service through the school's Air Force JROTC program since it was chartered in 1997. As one of the largest programs in the state for the school's size, BCHS has 265 AF JROTC cadets and is designated as a Distinguished Unit of Merit.

Grounded in the Air Force core values, the program serves to educate and train high school cadets in citizenship, promote community service, instill responsibility, character, and self-discipline, and provide instruction in air and space fundamentals.

BCHS's cadets have already logged more than 20,000 hours of community service this year.



A FACE FROM WAYNESBORO

Meanwhile on the east Coast of the country, another service member from Burke County has become a literal poster-child for the Marines.

Cpl. Damany Coleman was featured in a marketing campaign rolled out by the Marines this month highlighting diversity and the hometowns represented in the Corps.

Ads, like the one pictured below, have appeared in various magazines, print publications and on the Internet. After his selection for the campaign, he was asked to choose a landmark in his hometown, and pointed photographers to Jones Lake along Liberty Street for the advertisement's background.

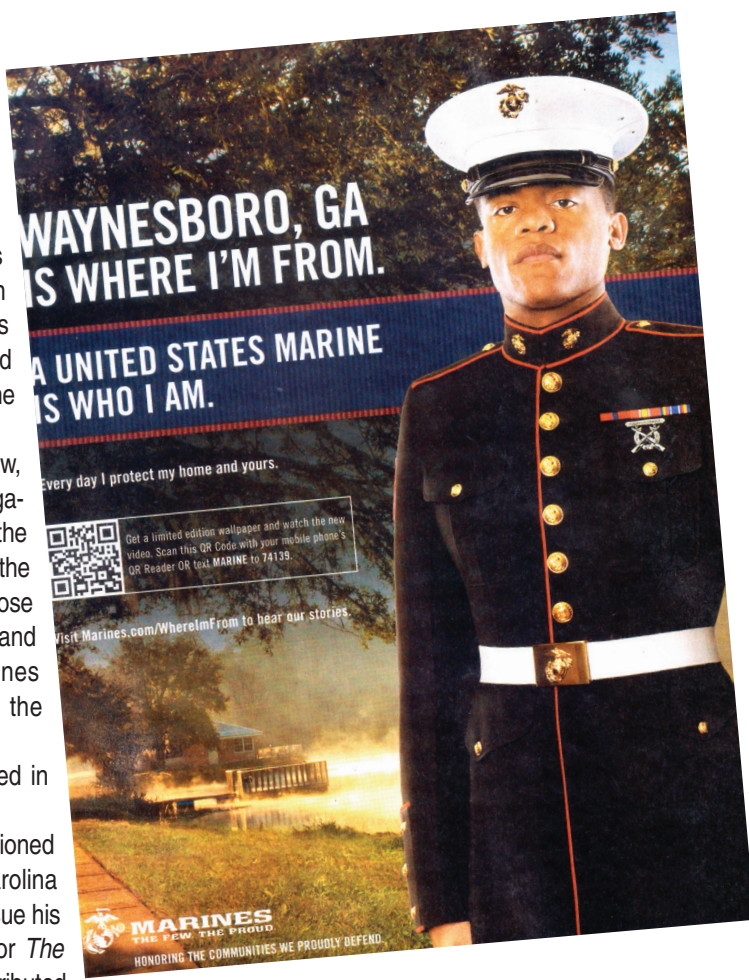
Cpl. Coleman is also featured in video interviews.

Cpl. Coleman is currently stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina where he has been able to pursue his love for writing as a reporter for *The Globe*, a weekly newspaper distributed in more than 600 locations on and near the base.

Cpl. Coleman enlisted in the Marines shortly after graduation from Burke County High School in 2008.

Though he hadn't always known he would serve, he had a love for history and the characters that shaped it such as General George Patton Jr. By participating in football, track and wrestling teams at BCHS, he grew to appreciate being part of a larger team and said that also impacted his decision to enlist.

After basic training at Parris Island, SC and Ma-



rine Combat Training at Camp Geiger, he attended Defense Information School at Fort Meade in Maryland. His scores on a placement test had allowed him to pick his occupation, an opportunity that enabled him to pursue journalism.

With the end of his active duty service approaching in October, Cpl. Coleman is already considering early re-enlistment and plans to be career military.

After spending two years at *The Globe*, he hopes to move into marketing and public affairs for the Corps.

To read some of Cpl. Coleman's articles, visit *The Globe's* website at www.campjeuneglobe.com.



Courtesy of Cathy Fowler

Lt.j.g. Daniel Fowler returned two weeks ago from an eight month deployment to the Middle East, where he was aboard the USS Port Royal.

3x5 Schoolhouse players (p)



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