Jacob Remick has always known that he wants to serve his country. For him, joining the Army National Guard, and eventually the University of New Hampshire Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), was not a choice but a calling. “I always felt the need to serve… I’m healthy, I’m willing, I’m able (so) I should.” Since coming to UNH, Jacob has taken advantage of the many different opportunities on campus and credits the skills he has acquired in the ROTC and National Guard for assisting him at every turn.

Jacob started at UNH in January 2015 after completing the first leg of his training with the National Guard. He intended to go straight into active duty out of high school, but decided he wanted to pursue his degree first. He said he knew he wanted to come to UNH after going on a campus tour. “After visiting the campus and seeing how big it is and all of the opportunities, it just made the most sense,” he said. While moving back to New Hampshire after spending time at basic training in Georgia was a bit of a struggle, Jacob said he immediately felt at home in Lord Hall. “It was the best thing that could have happened to me… they had this sense of community that they [had] already built, and they just welcomed me as if I was there the whole time.” Jacob immediately connected with the other students in Lord (whom he continued to live with for the next three years) and joined the UNH Club Ski Racing Team, pursuing a passion he has had since childhood. His genuine nature and calm demeanor helped him make connections.

Not so easy, Jacob points out, was balancing his ROTC commitments with his major in mechanical engineering. Jacob has always enjoyed working with his hands but is quick to point out that a single course in the program can take up 20 to 30 hours per week of his time. Jacob credits ROTC with preparing him to meet the demands of his major. He says, “The focus of the ROTC program is learning how to lead, understanding how to be led and developing fundamental principles to ensure success.” ROTC has provided additional opportunities, including attending U.S. Army Mountain Warfare School and Air Assault School, where he learned to rock climb and rappel from helicopters. “Mechanical engineering and ROTC are not a perfect match,” he admitted, “but I don’t regret the challenges… all the hard work is paying off.”

“I want to see myself in a leadership role where I have a responsibility to inspire others to accomplish something. That’s when I feel most alive.”

At the core of Jacob’s passions is a desire to hone his leadership skills and use them to serve his community. During his sophomore year, Jacob jumped at the opportunity to be an orientation and backpacking leader for the PAWS program, an outdoor education program for first-year students. Jacob and a PAWS co-leader were responsible for eight students while they hiked along the parts of the Appalachian Trail (AT) for one week. Jacob looks back on this as one of his fondest memories at UNH and said this is where he really began to gain confidence. Whether it’s guiding students along the AT, showing younger cadets how to tie knots, or serving as a UNH career ambassador, Jacob is all about encouraging those younger than him. “Being able to teach someone else a skill or empower young cadets or other individuals to accomplish something… it is extremely rewarding.”

After graduation, Jacob will be going to work full-time with BAE Systems—a multinational defense, security and aerospace company—in Nashua, N.H. He will also be heading back to Georgia for the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (IBOLC) and will continue to serve as an infantry officer in the Army National Guard. Regardless of where his career takes him, Jacob said, “I want to see myself in a leadership role where I have a responsibility to inspire others to accomplish something. That’s when I feel most alive.”

To the Wildcats who will come after him, Jacob said, “Effort is the key aspect to everything (and) what you put in is what you get out. The university has so many opportunities to help you out no matter what route you want to take.”