



Col. and Mrs. Boland, Chairman of the Board Mr. and Mrs. Walters, Col. and Mrs. Risher, Members of the Excalibur Society, Alumni of Carlisle, Camden Academy, Camden Military Academy. I want to start by saying thank you to everyone who is attending this ceremony tonight, and who have attended in the past, and will attend in the future for the entire Corps of Cadets when I say we are forever grateful for your support. Your generous contributions to Camden Military Academy have forever positively impacted the lives of so many past, present, and future cadets. My name is Christopher Jacob Dean, and I'm from Waxhaw, North Carolina. I am the Battalion Commander of Camden Military Academy, and I have been at this school since the middle of my 10th grade year. Back in my hometown, the public school I attended was massive -- about 600 students per grade. My parents and I both knew that the large student to teacher ratio was a problem for me as well as a tempting environment to not focus on academics. At the time, hanging out with my friends was more important to me than my future. My slipping grades, poor attitude in the classroom and at home, and a lack of general interest in school activities were all reasons why my parents and I began researching alternatives. Towards the beginning of my 10th grade year, my parents brought up "Camden Military Academy." I had heard of CMA because my neighborhood friend had enrolled at Camden the past year. I thought to myself that a structured environment was just what I needed as a stubborn teenager trying to go against my parents, I didn't like the idea, especially coming from them. However, more and more throughout the 1st semester, I realized I needed something different. And, sure enough, at the start of the 2nd semester my 10th grade year, I came to Camden Military Academy. I first got a tour of the school from my future cadet-1st Sgt. 1st Sgt Chris Withtar, who graduated in 2015, was a great guy who always thought about others before himself. His selflessness and leadership skills were the reasons as to why I looked up to him. However, the person that really shaped me was my platoon sergeant, Matt Phillips. He made sure I knew exactly how to do things properly without cramming it all in one day. As a new cadet in the 2nd semester, Phillips helped me as much as possible to learn room standards, fallout standards, drill standards, and various other areas. And it's thanks to this school that taught him the leadership skills which he used to train me first to be a follower and now a leader. The help from my COC, my first day here was a great one. Unlike most cadets who come to this school and take at least a couple of weeks to get used to it, I fell in love with my first day. The help from my Chain of Command and tac officers from Band Company made me feel like I was at a second home. From the help of my COC, tac officers, LTC Armstrong and LTC Lawing, the Headmaster, Coach Thomley, and LTC Heflin, I have been provided with so many opportunities to succeed and grow. I can remember the first time attending Col Heflin's class and hearing him say, "You get out of this school what you put into it." I'm sure you all have heard that expression before, but something I have lived by for the entirety of my time here. I can also recall two significant conversations I had in my 10th grade year at Camden Military Academy. The first was with tactical officers, SGM Green and ISG Irvin's, powerful words to me. After watching me quickly fit into the military lifestyle, they told me that my performance as a cadet was that of a future Battalion Commander. At the time, I thought that goal was completely over my head, but their encouragement and leadership training helped me get to where I am now. The second significant conversation was over the phone with LTC Heflin towards the end of my 10th grade year and after CMA's atmosphere had rubbed off on me. I realized that continuing a military lifestyle because of how much I had thrived at CMA in such a short time. I began researching West Point, a place I never thought of before. I called Col Heflin to tell him that I was thinking about applying to West Point. The happiness I felt when he told me "you can do that" was an incredible feeling. The Dean of Students, who knew my situation, was that caring and supportive, helped me realize the key factor to self-success: have faith that I can do anything I set my mind to. These are some of the main reasons as to why I'm the Battalion Commander, and why I will be attending the United States Military Academy at West Point in a few weeks. All of the selfless acts this school has done for me, and for so many other cadets, is why I can easily say we are forever grateful for all of your help and faith in this school. It is not just the help and faith, but the strength of the leadership, the consistency in leading, and the leaders setting the right examples no matter the circumstances that make this institution like no other. As you all know, Col and Mrs. Boland's son, Matt Boland, passed on January 1st. Matt graduated from Camden Military Academy in 2003; and, though I did not know him personally, he was and forever will be a brother from CMA. We held a service for Matt on campus shortly after the cadets returned from Christmas break. The fact that Col and Mrs. Boland continued working so quickly after their tragic loss not only shows their remarkable dedication and courage, but also illustrates their belief in Camden Military Academy and all it stands for. Col and Mrs. Boland, we all thank you two for your unwavering commitment to this school during this incredibly difficult time in your lives. To conclude, I want to thank you all for your individual and combined efforts for making Camden Military Academy the amazing place it is today. From the good times of making the closest friends I have to the not-so-good times of drilling with my company because of a number of reasons, it all comes down to one thing -- teamwork. Everything at this school is done as a team. -- The team effort is what makes the cadet life a way of living, and one that changes cadets' lives for the better. My family and I are filled with gratitude for this school, and my family has never been more proud of me. Because of your collective faith and strength in this school, mine and so many other successes have been possible. For all of those reasons, I'm here tonight representing the entire Corps of Cadets, and we want to sincerely say thank you.



from left to right:

Johnson with her husband LTC William "Speedy" Johnson dressed in a red "Kappa Alpha Psi" suit; Carlisle graduate Dewayne Lee and his wife Maja-Lisa Anderson enjoy their time eating dinner together; Mayor Alfred Mae Drakeford and COL Katherine Brown smile together by the Springdale Hall's fireplace