

# John and Michelle Holmes (Parents of Luke Holmes) USMA Class of 2015



Cadet 2/C Luke Holmes,  
USMA gives the benediction  
at West Point's  
Homecoming 2012

In February 2010, my son, Luke had worked hard on his academy applications, Congressional nomination packages, and the DoDMERB process. He heard that others had received appointments, but still had no news. It was time to form a plan B.

During our US Representative Academy meetings, Greystone was present to answer questions about another option if an academy appointment wasn't received. After a phone call to Greystone, we travelled south to Kerrville, TX and were extremely impressed with the campus. Luke spent the day with Commander Bailey, students, staff and attended class. He came away with a positive experience.

"Greystone, I want to go to Greystone and give the academies one more shot." The decision was made, not by a parent, but by a developing young man, who owned his decision. Greystone was a risk because it did not ensure an appointment, but we decided that if disappointed again, the year at Greystone would be worth the investment in his future.

Greystone phone meetings set the fast pace of expectations and work in the summer. We dropped him off in August, shedding tears as the revelation of a childhood era had ended but excited a young man was being unveiled. Academics, study, discipline, physical training, late hours, early mornings, fatigue, teamwork, relationships, self sacrifice, success, joy, failure, conflict, resolution and servant hood are a few of the words I would use to describe Luke's year at Greystone, all to bring developmental stress on a young person and an opportunity to reveal character – to correct, refine, mature, and understand if he really wants what he thinks he wants. If he does, then it's just plain hard work.

I had seen a young man mature. Greystone is an instrument not only for academy preparation, but also for life preparation. We had reservations about Luke's 'fortitude' to endure the rigors of an academy, but after being with this young man over the break, we had no doubts about his ability to achieve, whether at an academy or another plan B after Greystone. A young man of strong character had been born.

In mid-January Luke called to inform us USMA had placed him on their "wait list". We were disappointed, but at least he was on a waiting list. Plan B thoughts were beginning to form again. Then on January 26, we received a call from Luke. I answered...he's bawling. I asked him, "What's wrong?" "Dad, your son is going to West Point!" was his blubbery reply! Words, as a father, I will never forget. In May, at the completion of Greystone, we picked up a maturing young man, ready to address life and succeed where nine months earlier we had dropped off a wonderful young high school graduate, with excellent qualities, but much to learn. As a parent I am grateful. Greystone was successful prior to Luke's appointment. They established the program to refine and prepare a young person for life through dedication, sacrifice, and their willingness to be mentor, friend, counselor, and disciplinarian. It was not easy, we understand, but because of their action, they affected the future of our wonderful country.