

SMALLTALK

about big ideas

Recharging with history and hip hop

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Over shutdown, I saw the Broadway musical “Hamilton,” about the life and times of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton and the birth of our nation. Unlike traditional Broadway musicals, this one features both singing and rapping. Since seeing it, I’ve been quoting – and yes, quasi rapping – some of the songs. My favorite lyric is, “I Am Not Throwing Away My Shot!”

The past few months have been a bit of a whirlwind for me, and seeing this show helped me to take a break, and to let myself be inspired by something that on the surface has little to do with shipbuilding. If you are like me, though, it’s hard to totally disconnect from work and the responsibilities that comes with it.

As I watched “Hamilton” (which was incredible and I highly recommend), it helped me recharge and relax. It also resonated with me personally and professionally. It cleared my mind and got me thinking in a different way about my vision for our future and my responsibility as president. Like I said... it’s hard for me not to relate everything back to the shipyard, even a hip hop musical. In fact, I centered my recent Apprentice School commencement address around my experience.

“Hamilton” caused me to ask myself questions like, *‘What stories will future generations of shipbuilders tell about us? What legacy will we leave?’*

But most of all, it left me inspired.

The work we do is critically important. We are all part of something greater than ourselves, and the Navy and our nation are counting on us. Equally important, we have the responsibility to listen to our minds and our bodies – to take care of ourselves – and to find a balance between life and work. If you feel like you’re getting burned out or lacking the inspiration or creativity you once seemed to have, get out of your surroundings and clear your mind. Whether it’s spending time with family, unplugging, exercising, binge watching Netflix, or going to see a musical – find what inspires you and make time to do it.

Remember, you only get one life. Don’t throw away your shot!

