



# Fare Thee Well

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On May 26 I will graduate – a joyful and bittersweet occasion. I am ready to depart, but am left wondering how four years moved so quickly. And however imperfect my reminiscing, I will nevertheless remember my time at Hamilton College with thoughts of gratitude – such a small place up on a hill, chock-full of gifted

other. They will help to define me. “Carissima” – I will listen to and hum softly our college’s anthem at a Reunion, thinking President Melancthon Woolsey Stryker must have treasured his time at Hamilton (1892-1917) when he wrote the alma mater: “Calling us back from stress and storm / Tenderly all thy good old ways / ... We love thee

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people with big dreams. As Robert Frost declared in his poem “Birches,” I have endeavored “to fill a cup / Up to the brim / And even above the brim.” And at the graduation ceremony that Sunday, I will think the morning is full of hope and promise, filled even to the very brim. Amen to all that.

Words, phrases, friends, mentors, books, edifices, poems, artworks, projects, festivities, papers, walks, teammates, professors, coaches, articles, concerts, commemorations, theses, ceremonies – I know will make me float forward, and time travel. W. S. Merwin, a national Poet Laureate, was right in “Language” about the power of memory to summon images: “Certain words now in our knowledge we will not use again, and we will never forget them.” Certain experiences, people, and places marked my time at Hamilton like no

evermore.” The sway of memory will help us to clasp and “Gather we close to thee again.” The strength of those words written in 1901 twined with memory is a powerful device, as Stryker predicted.

Nothing is ever perfect. Cicero conveyed to us that the pursuit of knowledge and excellence should be made in “calm and tranquility.” I missed that lesson. These last four years I struggled with, and attempted to master and plumb: the tomes of the philosophers, renowned literary works, art historians’ critical essays, dramatists’ plays, artists’ paintings and sculptures, poets’ verse, historians’ panegyrics, and social thinkers’ admonitions – not in “calm and tranquility,” but at an often-frenetic pace. Of the ancient philosophers, the Italian Renaissance artists, the modernists, and a myriad of recommendable characters and

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# U.S. Troops at the Border: When is the Time to Leave?

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In October 2018, President Trump announced that he would be sending more than 5,000 active-duty military personnel to the U.S.-Mexico border in response to an approaching caravan of migrants. The troops would be there to support the Border Patrol and National Guard in their mission to secure the border. Currently, the Posse Comitatus Act prohibits active-duty troops from performing

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law enforcement activities.

The troops’ role on the border has been to conduct operations such as building barricades, serving food, and providing logistical support to the border agents. In the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, more than 1,000 troops are still deployed. According to a Vice News interview,

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thinkers, I fell asleep each night hearing other people’s voices, reading other people’s words, and considering other people’s images and ideas – learning all the while what it meant to think for myself. I found words for the sublime and the difficult. I tried to discover new words for the ordinary and the ineffable. Hamilton professors and Alexander Hamilton Institute (AHI) mentors taught me how to write more cogently and speak more persuasively. The college taught me how to move through the world with confidence, and to appreciate the gift of friendship.

From the Roman philosopher-ruler Marcus Aurelius (and my

professors, mentors, and friends) I learned many things, such as: cherish those “*people with whom fate has brought,*” “*the soul is dyed with the color of its thoughts,*” and “*each day brings its own gifts.*” From Dante, I learned not to be afraid even if “*I found myself astray in a dark wood*” (*The Inferno*). From Ovid, Vergil, Lucretius, I learned that texts speak to us of their numerous lessons even across many centuries. From Michelangelo, Raphael, Giotto, Botticelli, and Matisse, I learned that fidelity and perseverance are found in beauty, and that in certain unexpected moments artistry can break through the mundane, change one’s perspective, move and enchant. In some form or

another, I wrote homage about these remarkable individuals of antiquity, poetry, and art. So cheers to unrehearsed and impromptu experiences, windows whooshed open, academic pursuits, friendships forged, animated discussion, disastrous and humorous interactions, love and resolute deliberations; I am content. “Beauty is a fragile gift,” Ovid rightly said, and so too is education a gift, but made of hardy material. I read, queried, considered, wrote, edited, and persevered; I will graduate with a double major in Classical Studies and Art History – grateful, a better person than when I came. Thank you, Hamilton. Fare thee well, my friends.

their primary role is to “harden” various areas that Border Patrol agents have identified as vulnerable spots by building barricades in these areas. The troops also help to maintain the readiness of the Border Patrol agents by repairing their vehicles and other equipment.

Although the troops are only supporting the Border Patrol, they

continually extended. The White House recently announced that it is spending an additional \$377 million for the troops at the border. Such a cost seems unnecessary, as these military personnel are serving in roles that could be filled by civilians.

Moreover, being stationed at the U.S.-Mexico border detracts from the troops’ battle readiness. They

to train for future deployments or conflicts, and lack of military readiness is a national security risk.

Since their role could easily be filled by civilian contractors, the troops are not integral to the border security mission. They could return to their bases and continue training for future deployments.

There is a fierce debate between Republicans and Democrats over the broader issues of immigration reform and border security, but it is clear that the military is not needed at the border. Training needs to resume so that the troops can be prepared for future conflicts and deployments. Deploying them to the border severely inhibits their readiness and therefore weakens our country’s defense. It is time for the federal government to pull active-duty troops off the border and return them to their original purpose.

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have been serving in this auxiliary capacity for more than six months and there is no end in sight. Department of Defense officials are still unclear on when the troops will be taken off the border, as their deployment has been

are neither training nor maintaining readiness for their primary role as a military force. The United States military’s primary role is to serve in the defense of the country. While deployed to the border as a supporting force, they are not able

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## CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

1. *Fare Thee Well*  
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2. *U.S. Troops at the Border: When is the Time to Leave?*  
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