2011 Postgraduate school profiles

LT Jon McKay
George Washington University Law School
Environmental Law

I chose to study environmental law because it is pervasive and growing, and it impacts almost every aspect of the Navy's operations. As a regulated agency, anything the Navy builds, floats or flies must comply with federal and state environmental laws. Therefore, environmental law is a means for me to see and touch almost anything the Navy does, but to do so through a focused legal prism. What I like about this area of the law, is how expansive it has become. It requires knowledge of litigation and administrative law; it has operational aspects; and it is no doubt evolving.

LCDR Matthew Kurek
Lewis and Clark Law School
Environmental and Natural Resources Law

As an operational law attorney and a carrier judge advocate, I became absolutely intrigued with the balance and interplay between military tasking and environmental concerns. This was the catalyst to my decision to specialize in Environmental and Natural Resources Law. As an environmental attorney, I hope to assist operational commanders understand environmental laws and regulations and provide legal guidance during operational planning.

LCDR William Weiland
Temple University - Beasely School of Law
Trial Advocacy

Successful trial advocates recognize that the profession demands a life of long study, self-critique, and practice. Advanced litigation techniques can be learned in the class room, and practiced in a mock setting. And that is why I chose to study Trial Advocacy at Temple University Beasely School of Law. The classes meet at nights and on the weekends, which allowed me to secure a position as a special assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. By serving as a full time federal prosecutor, I have been lucky enough to put the advanced techniques I have learned to the test. Quite honestly, the combination of education and experience simply cannot be beat.

CDR Joseph Hoelz
Columbia Law School
International Law

During my two staff judge advocate tours, I gained some experience in Environmental and International Law. I really enjoyed both areas of practice and knew intensive study in either would prepare me for future assignments. My professors are exceptional, but I have been even more impressed by my classmates. In addition to many of them being brilliant, they have been very open minded and are truly interested in a dialogue on the balance between national security and individual liberties.
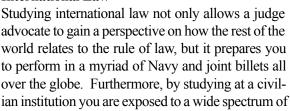
CDR Thomas Leary
Georgetown University Law Center
National Security Law

I selected the National Security Law for several reasons. First, with the nation at war with a non-traditional enemy, which operates across national boundaries - this area of law is of acute importance. Second, I've been fortunate to have served overseas with our nation's fighting forces, and have been witness to some of the national security decision-making processes. As a result, I wanted to be certain to understand as completely as possible the legal considerations that influence those decisions. And finally, as a formal field of study, National Security Law is a relative newcomer to the legal profession, so pursuing this degree opens up numerous interesting and potentially novel professional opportunities for me as I continue my career.

CDR Scott Suozzi
University of Pennsylvania Law School
International Law

Studying international law not only allows a judge advocate to gain a perspective on how the rest of the world relates to the rule of law, but it prepares you to perform in a myriad of Navy and joint billets all over the globe. Furthermore, by studying at a civilian institution you are exposed to a wide spectrum of views and build an instant network of attorney classmates from many U.S. states, countries, cultures, and regions.

LCDR Sylvaine Wong
Harvard Law School
International Law

I became interested in the Law of Armed Conflict during my first-tour deployment to the Arabian Gulf, where I worked side-by-side with military lawyers from our NATO partners. The tangible operational impact at a tactical level, caused by differences in national interpretation of laws, was eye-opening. Everything I am studying has direct relevance to the issues we faced in Afghanistan, and will continue to face in future international armed conflicts.