the trials of pushing paper at the Pentagon. I also learned the various roles of the military, and where the Department of State fits inside the larger national security apparatus.

Alongside my growing appreciation for our nation's military might, I was at times overwhelmed and bemused by the sheer size of the military, its budget and bureaucracy, and the choices of its leader. As friendships developed, I found that many of my military colleagues wrestled with similar questions.

In the end, I think all 10 Department of State students in my graduating class felt we learned as much from our classmates as we did from our classwork. Izzo, for instance, said his experience helped him understand how our nation formulates national security policy and how FSOs add value to the process.

Department of State students who attend the Naval War College see it as a career milestone, not a "sleeper post" but an assignment dedicated to examining complex international problems at strategic and philosophical levels. Those who undergo the experience leave as a different kind of diplomat. More information on senior training opportunities as well as detail assignment opportunities, including points of contact for specific programs, are available on the Career Development and Training HR intranet site.

Students listen to a lecture in the college's Spruance Auditorium, known affectionately as "The Big Blue Bedroom."
Photo by Usha Pitts

Previous page: U.S. and international flags representing countries at U.S. Naval War College fly during the school's graduation day in Newport, R.I.
Photo by Chief Petty Officer James Foehl