

2025 National Security Law Writing Competition

Employing and Defending Against Drones in the Contemporary National Security Environment

Deadline for Submissions: 21 November 2025

Overview: The Air Force Judge Advocate General's School (AFJAGS) is pleased to announce its tenth annual writing competition for students, practitioners, academics and policy-makers to provide unique perspectives and insights on matters of national security law.

Topic: DoD Employment and Countering of Drones in the Contemporary National Security Environment

This year's National Security Law (NSL) writing competition topic explores the increasing prominence of drones in warfare and the contemporary national security environment. On 10 July 2025, Secretary of Defense Hegseth issued a memorandum titled "Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance," saying, "Drones are the biggest battlefield innovation in a generation, accounting for most of this year's casualties in Ukraine. Our adversaries collectively produce millions of cheap drones each year."^[1] This year's competition asks writers to examine drones, particularly small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS), for offensive employment and/or countering sUAS considering factors including capabilities, authorities, and a whole of government approach. What threats or opportunities do sUAS's pose for national security in the era of Great Power Competition? What obstacles must be overcome to effectively employ or defend against sUAS operations, and what courses of action may be taken to improve the efficacy of DoD's efforts? What is the effect of any current FAA rules and the need for DoD-specific waiver processes? Student may address these questions, any combination thereof, or other pertinent issues relating to the DoD and sUAS.

Prizes: The prize awards will be provided by the Air Force JAG School Foundation, Inc. AFJAGS reserves the right to make no award in the event that the submitted articles do not meet minimum requirements and standards as determined by AFJAGS.

- **First Place** – Cash prize of \$3,000
- **Second Place** – Cash prize \$2,000
- **Third Place** – Cash prize \$1,000

Winners are free to independently seek public publication in [The JAG Reporter](#) or a law review or journal of their choice. AFJAGS will post the winning papers internally on the Knowledge Management section of FLITE.

Deadline: Entries must be submitted by **1630 Central Time on 21 November 2025**.

[1] U.S. Secretary of Defense, *Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance*, Jul 10, 2025, <https://media.defense.gov/2025/Jul/10/2003752117/-1/-1/1/UNLEASHING-U.S.-MILITARY-DRONE-DOMINANCE.PDF>

Eligibility: Failure to abide by these eligibility standards will result in the submission being rejected.

- **Who Can Apply** – The competition is open to all U.S. and international law school students and graduates.
- **Only Original and Previously Unpublished Papers are eligible** – If the paper has been submitted for publication in another forum, this must be noted in the submission of the paper to AFJAGS. In addition, if, after submission to AFJAGS, the paper is submitted or accepted for publication in another forum, AFJAGS must be notified. Papers prepared for law school or professional military education credit are eligible provided they represent original work.
- **Only One Author** – Jointly authored papers are not eligible.
- **Reviewed Papers** – Entrants may have others review and critique their work, but the submission must be the entrant's own product. The name of the reviewing professor or lawyer must be noted on the entry.
- **AFJAGS Faculty** – Members of the faculty of AFJAGS **shall not** participate in the contest or review any entry on behalf of an entrant.
- **Multiple Entries Not Permitted** – Only one paper may be submitted per entrant.

Format: Failure to abide by these format standards will result in the submission being rejected.

- **Word Count** – Entries must be a minimum of 4,000 words and a maximum of 7,000 words, including footnotes. This **does NOT** include title page and the separate cover page noted below. Entries under the word minimum or above the word maximum will be rejected.
- **Font** – The text of the entry must be double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font for body text, 10-point Times New Roman font for citation text, and 1-inch margins.
- **Sources** – Sources must be cited in footnotes according to *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*.

Entry Procedure: Each submission must include a separate cover page with:

- **Entrant's Name**,
- **Rank** (if military),
- **Mailing and E-mail Addresses**, and
- **Phone Number**.

The entrant's name and other identifying markings **must not** appear on any other page of the submitted entry. Submissions must be sent via email to afloa.afjags@us.af.mil as a Microsoft Word attachment.

Judging: A distinguished panel of experts will select the winning entries from among those submitted. Judges will evaluate works submitted using standards of quality applicable to traditional academic writing, with emphasis on the following:

- **Originality** – Does the work break new ground and advance the body of scholarship on law and policy in the national security arena?
- **Organization** – Does the work clearly define a problem and present a solution within a logical contextual framework?
- **Persuasiveness** – Does the work put forth a cohesive argument that is well-supported by reference to authoritative sources?
- **Mechanics** – Does the work meet high standards of quality in spelling, grammar, and citation format?