

## **Air Force Doctrine Essay Contest Winners Announced**

**MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala.** — The Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, in partnership with Air University Innovation Accelerator (AUIX), is pleased to announce the winners of the recent Air Force Doctrine Essay Contest. The contest recognizes outstanding contributions that advance the intellectual foundations of airpower in the modern era. The competition highlighted innovative thinking on Agile Combat Employment (ACE), point defense, and joint integration, topics that directly shape the Air Force's ability to deter and prevail against peer adversaries.

This year's prompt challenged participants to consider how air defense capabilities must evolve to counter emerging threats that include small, unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS), loitering munitions, and ballistic missiles. Effective point defense (PD) is critical for maintaining operational readiness and mission success in the future.

Participants were asked to consider the responsibilities, limitations, historical context, and emerging technologies of point defense, and whether the USAF should rely solely on organic Air and Missile Defense (AMD) capabilities or focus on an integrated joint force approach?

Top Prize included \$1,000, publication in *Wild Blue Yonder Online Journal*, LeMay/CC Coin, and professional development opportunities.

**First Place:** "No Base is Safe: Joint Point Defense and Agile Combat Employment in an Era of Saturation Threats"

2nd Lt Jonathan E. Williams

**Second Place:** "Defending the Edge: Forging a Joint Point Defense Doctrine for Agile Combat Employment"

SrA Carrson M. Bruderer

**Third Place:** "The Point Defense Paradox: Sustaining Airpower in Contested Distributed Operations"

Capt Amanda C. Molina

The essays highlight the urgent need to rethink the Air Force's approach to point defense in an era defined by precision fires, swarming drones, and contested logistics. A common theme across all three winning submissions is clear: survivable ACE operations require doctrinal innovation, joint integration, empowerment and mission type orders.

These winning works demonstrate that the future of doctrine is shaped not only by senior leaders but also by the thoughtful contributions of Airmen at every rank. The LeMay Center encourages others to engage with doctrine and participate in future contests. Visit the website for more details at: <https://auix.org/inspiring-doctrinal-innovation-essay-contest/>.