

Brooks E. Kleber Memorial Lecture in Military History

12th Annual Lecture Series

A War within a War

World War I Black Combat Soldiers and the Fight for Equality

Dr. Jeffrey T. Sammons

Professor of History
New York University

Dr. John H. Morrow Jr.

Professor of History
University of Georgia

In 191 days of fierce combat on the brutal front lines of World War I's bloodiest trenches, one of the American Expeditionary Force's units performed above and beyond the call of duty. The unit lost 280 men killed, but never gave up an inch of ground or lost a single man captured. Back home, the unit received accolades and the *nom de guerre*, "The Harlem Hellfighters," despite the prevailing racism of the day and the fact that the entire unit was black. In the trenches, however, the unit, self-identified as "The Harlem Rattlers," still dealt with racism and bigotry despite their proven prowess in combat. Dr. Jeffrey Sammons of New York University, and Dr. John Morrow, Jr. of the University of Georgia expand on the story of the 369th Infantry Regiment and take it beyond the injustices on the field of battle in their book, *Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War: The Undaunted 369th Regiment and the African American Quest for Equality*. In this lecture, they will go even further, connecting the African American Soldiers' struggle against the Germans and their own command to the wider context of racism in the Army and how the Harlem Rattlers set the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. Jeffrey Sammons has served as a professor of history at New York University since 1989. Before joining the faculty at NYU, he taught at the University of Houston, Princeton University, and worked as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Dr. Sammons also authored a critically acclaimed book titled *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society*. Dr. John H. Morrow, Jr. is a professor at the University of Georgia. Dr. Morrow served as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1993 to 1995, before returning to full-time teaching and research. Dr. Morrow received the Department of the Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal in 2005 for his work as a visiting professor at the United States Military Academy, and is a frequent speaker at numerous Army and Department of Defense schools and organizations. Dr. Morrow's most famous work, *The Great War in the Air: Military Aircraft from 1909-1921* (1993) is considered the definitive study of air power in World War I.

DATE: Thursday, February 4, 2016

TIME: Doors open at 6:30 PM and the talk begins at 7:15 PM. The question period concludes around 8:30 PM.

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multipurpose Rooms

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