

Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War

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Résumé ou extrait : Présentation de l'éditeur : "When on May 15, 1918 a French lieutenant warned Henry Johnson of the 369th to move back because of a possible enemy raid, Johnson reportedly replied: "I'm an American, and I never retreat." The story, even if apocryphal, captures the mythic status of the Harlem Rattlers, the African American combat unit who were said to have never lost a man to capture or a foot of ground that had been taken. It also, in its insistence on American identity, points to a truth at the heart of this book, the Black men of the 369th fought to convince America to live up to its democratic promise. It is this aspect of the storied regiment's history, its place within the larger movement of African Americans for full citizenship in the face of virulent racism, that this book brings to the fore. Though discussed in numerous histories and featured in popular culture (most famously the film Stormy Weather and the novel Jazz), the 369th has become more a matter of mythology than accurate history. This book, which eschews the regiment's famous nickname, the "Harlem Hellfighters, " a name never embraced by the unit itself, tells the full story of the self-proclaimed Harlem Rattlers. Combining the "fighting focus" of

military history with the insights of social commentary, this book reveals the centrality of military service and war to the quest for equality as it details the origins, evolution, combat exploits, and postwar struggles of the 369th. The authors pay particular attention to the environment created by the presence of both Black and White officers in the unit. They also explore the role of women, in particular, the Women's Auxiliary of the 369th, as partners in the struggle for full citizenship. From its beginnings in the 15th New York National Guard through its training in the explosive atmosphere in the South, its singular performance in the French army during World War I, and the pathos of postwar adjustment, this book reveals the details of the Harlem Rattlers' experience, the poignant history of some of its heroes and its place in the story of both World War I and the African American campaign for equality."

Sujet - Collectivité : États-Unis Army. Infantry Regiment. 369th. États-Unis Army. American Expeditionary Forces. États-Unis Army. France Armée. -- Troupes noires américaines -- Noirs américains -- 20e siècle

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