
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

LET US FIGHT AS FREE MEN: BLACK SOLDIERS AND CIVIL RIGHTS. By Christine Knauer. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2014. Pp. 341. \$49.95. America's military is often hailed as a model of integration in a racially divided society. Dr. Christine Knauer's new history of military integration marshals primary source evidence from the 1940s and 1950s to narrate an understudied social movement. Knauer documents the many forces advocating for military integration, including civil rights organizations, a mobilized public, a highly involved press, and individual visionaries (such as A. Philip Randolph and former army chaplain Grant Reynolds). Yet Knauer's history also highlights the reality of opposition that continued even after President Truman's famed Executive Order 9981. The dichotomies of "segregation and integration, discrimination and camaraderie, victory and defeat" marked the experiences of black soldiers as late as the Korean War (p. 11). *Let Us Fight as Free Men* also situates military integration within the broader civil rights movement, demonstrating advocacy for rights on the home front by black veterans, first after World War II and later after Korea. "America should be obliged," it was argued in the early 1950s, "to reciprocate the presumably undying patriotism and bravery of the black soldier by granting them the equal rights they deserved" (p. 220).

GRUESOME SPECTACLES: BOTCHED EXECUTIONS AND AMERICA'S DEATH PENALTY. By Austin Sarat et al. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press. 2014. Pp. 273. \$24.00. Can the death penalty be imposed humanely? In *Gruesome Spectacles*, Professor Austin Sarat and his student collaborators from Amherst College comprehensively describe the history of botched executions in the United States. Their exhaustive research finds that three percent of executions in the last century were botched, and the book recounts many of the truly shocking and violent stories that resulted. From hanging to electrocution, the gas chamber, and lethal injection, Professor Sarat vividly demonstrates that no execution method has avoided horrific consequences. He concludes by describing how the press has helped subdue outcry over botched executions by presenting them as strange circumstances that may counsel in favor of alternative methods of execution rather than presenting a deeper look at capital punishment itself. Professor Sarat argues that this has prevented the gruesome spectacles of botched executions from adequately entering public debate over the death penalty. Ultimately, *Gruesome Spectacles* strives to place these events into the public consciousness, leaving readers to question whether the state can ever truly avoid cruel and unusual punishment in executions.