



The Summer the Archduke Died: On Wars and Warriors

Louis D. Rubin Jr.

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When World War II erupted, fifteen-year-old Louis Rubin pedaled his bike down to the Charleston harbor to see whether a German freighter might have come there to escape British warships, as had occurred in 1914. Although he went home disappointed, young Louis never lost his fascination with matters military.

Now one of America's most esteemed literary scholars, Rubin again turns his thoughts to history—particularly military history—by sharing his lifelong interest in the First World War and its aftermath. *The Summer the Archduke Died* offers essays, beginning with the outbreak of the Great War in Europe in 1914 and covering events of subsequent years, that examine historical issues in a fresh way. These essays take in a panoramic view of German militarism, the American role in the war, and British and American politics and politicians. They convey the impact of the war on writers and include a critical review of Theodore Roosevelt's life and legacy.

Rubin brings a keen eye for controversy to such matters as the battle of Jutland and Churchill's stance on the war with Hitler. In a provocative essay on the New British Revisionism, he not only debunks recent criticism of Churchill but also examines the decline of the British class system. In "Ladies of the British Establishment," he contrasts the politically notorious Mitford sisters with Violet Bonham Carter, who used her social position to advance the status of women in public life.

Ranging from the outbreak of the Great War to "A Certain Day in 1939" when European peace was shattered once more, Rubin's lively pieces are rendered with the literary craftsmanship for which he is renowned. As informative as it is entertaining, *The Summer the Archduke Died* will appeal to aficionados of history and fine writing alike.

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