

July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen and the Coming of the Great War

By Samuel R. Williamson, Russel Van Wyk

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Historians have long sought to explain how the world descended into war in the wake of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on June 28, 1914. Focusing on the interactions between two key leaders — one civilian and one military — in each of the Great Powers and Serbia, this documentary history explores how individuals, not monolithic governments and impersonal forces, contributed to the rapidly escalating crisis leading to World War I. A brief introduction outlines the background for July 1914, followed by seven chapters on events in each of the major nations involved, interwoven with over 70 documents — including memoirs, diaries, telegrams, press reports, and private letters — to illustrate how the crisis developed. An epilogue addresses the relative roles and influence of civilian and military leaders in leading the nations inexorably along the path to war. The volume also contains 14 images and two maps, a chronology, a glossary of key figures, Selected Bibliography, Questions for Consideration, and an index.

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Review
"This text is proof that solid scholarship can be presented in a manner that engages undergraduates. The vivid descriptions of the leaders' personalities, prejudices and predelictions help to bring the soldiers and statesmen of the July Crisis alive and serve to explain how and why certain fateful decisions were made."

About the Author

SAMUEL R. WILLIAMSON, JR. is Professor of History and Vice-Chancellor and President Emeritus of the University of the South. His most recent books include *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (1991) and with Steven L. Rearden, *The Origins of U.S. Nuclear Policy*, 1945-1953 (1993). He writes frequently about the causes of the First World War, while offering courses on intelligence and foreign policy in the 20th century. He is currently working on a two-volume study of Austria-Hungary before the Great War. Williamson has held administrative and teaching positions at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as well as the University of the South.

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