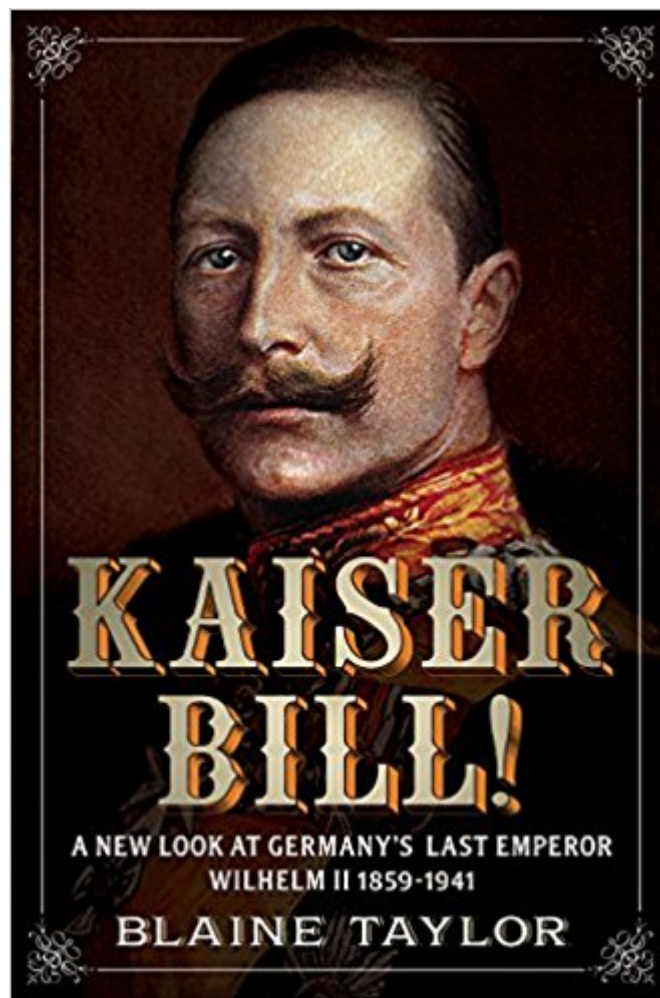




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Kaiser Bill!: A New Look At Imperial Germany's Last Emperor, Wilhelm II 1859-1941



Synopsis

Wilhelm II (27 January 1859 - 4 June 1941) was the last German Emperor (Kaiser) and King of Prussia, ruling the German Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia from 15 June 1888 to 9 November 1918. He was the eldest grandson of the British Queen Victoria and related to many monarchs and princes of Europe, three notable contemporary relations being his first cousins King George V of the United Kingdom, Marie of Romania, Queen consort of Romania and second cousin to Tsar Nicholas II of the House of Romanov, the last ruler of the Russian Empire before the Russian Revolution of 1917 which deposed the monarchy. He became monarch in 1888 and ruled in peace for twenty-five years. Wilhelm's father had been the hero of three wars and his mother the Princess Royal of Great Britain. When his father died prematurely of throat cancer, Wilhelm succeeded him at age twenty-nine and became the icon of the new 'Wilhelminian' age. Germany excelled in commerce, agriculture, trade, science, cars, the arts, and medicine. Already having Continental Europe's greatest army, Wilhelm set about winning world power via overseas colonies and the building of a vast Imperial High Seas Fleet that rivalled Britain's. Eventually, he was defeated by the combined forces of the UK, US, France and Russia, and driven into exile by the red revolution. He remained politically active in exile, pressing for a return to the monarchy up to the time of his death in 1941. This is a fresh look at a much maligned figure, including his relationships with Bismarck, Hindenburg, Tirpitz, King Edward VII and Tsar Nicholas II, all on the precipice of global change. Was Wilhelm a visionary, a fool, or both?

Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: Fonthill Media; 1st edition (November 19, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1781550018

ISBN-13: 978-1781550014

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.2 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #527,309 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #205 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > World War I](#) #436 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Germany](#) #805 in [Books > History > Military > World War I](#)

Customer Reviews

Gives the reader a better understanding of the last kaiser and the country he led down the road to war (Military Heritage)

Blaine Taylor is the author of eight previous photographic studies on the World War II era. The winner of six awards for writing and editing, he is a veteran of the US Army's 199th Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam, and has 12 medals and decorations, including the Combat Infantryman's Badge. An international magazine writer, Mr. Taylor lives and works in Towson, Maryland.

This book is awful. It's extremely disjointed, with no chronology, moving about in time and place with each new paragraph, let alone each chapter. The writing style is horrid. Sentences begun remain unfinished; it's impossible to tell where a quote ends, since there are the beginning quote marks but not the ending ones (a constant, not merely one or two random quotes); Taylor simply is in love with the comma but doesn't really seem to know how to use it properly (he just uses it a lot); he has depended on movies, of all things, as an important part of his research (complete to giving, as part of a chapter, a list of actors playing which characters in several movies - not even documentaries, but docudramas & a Nazi propaganda film); and he seems to have worded sentences simply to add more words, as if he had a word count that he had to meet, making for some confusing sentence structures. The photos were obviously cropped after he wrote the captions for them, and no one took the trouble to review them to see if they still made sense (some of them don't). If he had an editor at all, the wretch should be fired, as the evidence of this book indicates total incompetence (I'm an editor by profession, so know of what I speak!). There is a great deal of speculation passing as fact (was the Kaiser bisexual? Not able to determine from this book, but Taylor seems to accept as fact that he was.). And there are facts presented that I know are incorrect - fairly minor things in general, but it still detracts when you encounter something you know to be wrong (example - Tsar Nicholas II was not Wilhelm's first cousin. Second cousin at best - it was Tsarina Alexandra who was his first cousin.) He also contradicts himself - at one point, he has Wilhelm's mother, Victoria, dying from spinal cancer. A few pages on, she dies of cancer of the larynx. Either way, she actually died of breast cancer! This book is in no way a decent biography. I had to really force myself to finish it. The biggest fault is a total lack of chronology, but all the other problems I mentioned added to the irritation. If you want to know more about the last Kaiser, you'd better buy something else.

This book examines the Kaiser via short stories on many aspects of his life, policies and events. Not for the specialist, but a great way for the general reader to approach this complex leader.

Extremely inaccurate. Timelines messed up, events that never happened are stated, and incorrect events and dates. If you're looking for a decent and accurate history book, don't get this one.

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