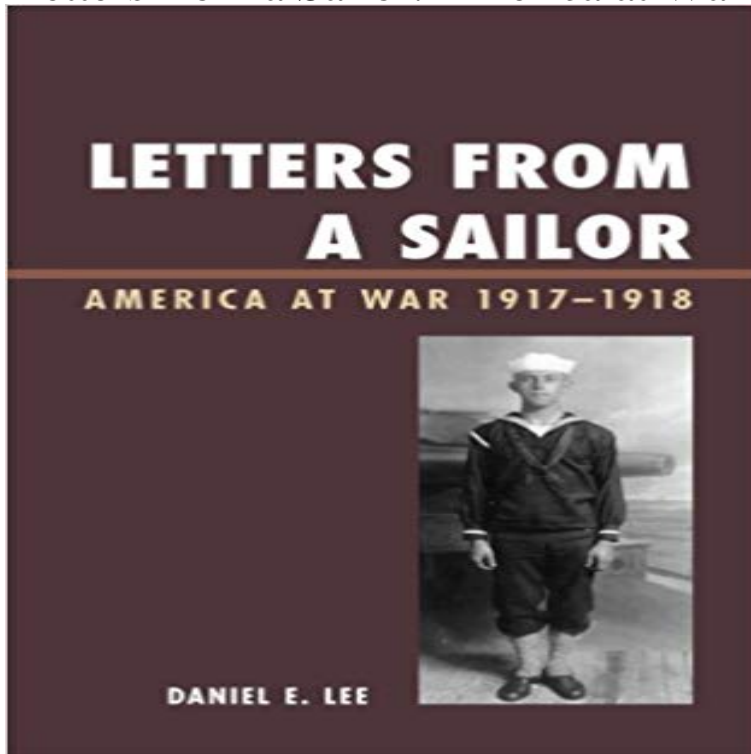


Letters from a Sailor: America at War 1917-1918



Letters from a Sailor is based on 85 letters written by Conrad Lyman Ostroot, who served in the U.S. Navy during World War I. The letters are poignant, engaging, and captivating, giving eloquent expression to the humanity of a person who lived nearly a century ago? a person who comes to life in the words he wrote. The letters recount Conrads experiences at boot camp at the U.S. Naval Training Station on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay (popularly known as Goat Island), on a long train trip across the country as he travels to Boston for radio school on the campus of Harvard University, at a wireless radiotelephone school at the Navy facility in New London, Connecticut, and at Fort H.G. Wright on Fishers Island, where he is assigned to a listening station set up to monitor ship traffic to and from New York Harbor. He repeatedly expresses his desire to go over the pond and have a chance at Fritz and is exhilarated when he finally gets orders to go to England and help establish a listening station to monitor German submarine activity. After spending a few days in New York, where he visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art, takes in Broadway shows, and marches in the funeral procession for the Archbishop of New York, he ships out on September 29, 1918, aboard the HMT Caronia, a British troop transport. The narrative ends on a heartbreaking note. Conrads desire to have a chance at Fritz was not to be realized. Twelve days after the last letter, he dies of the Spanish flu aboard the HMT Caronia en route to England and is buried at sea.

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