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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- List of Main Characters -- Illustrations and Maps -- Preface and Acknowledgements -- Prologue -- CHAPTER 1. 'Quiet Earnest Faces' The National Cause -- CHAPTER 2. 'Glad to Go' Patriotic Idealism -- CHAPTER 3. 'Ready to Go' Training -- CHAPTER 4. 'Write as Often as You Can' Letters and Parcels -- CHAPTER 5. 'Sticking it Out' Fear and Shell Shock -- CHAPTER 6. 'A Certain Sense of Safety with Him' Leadership -- CHAPTER 7. 'Such a Helpless Lot of Babes' Care for the Men -- CHAPTER 8. 'Drops of his Blood on my Hand' Horror and Endurance -- CHAPTER 9. 'I Merely Did my Duty' Discipline and Morale -- CHAPTER 10. 'Very Gallant in Every Way' Early Losses -- CHAPTER 11. 'Blighty, oh Blighty in about a Week' Leave -- CHAPTER 12. 'I Am Serene, Unafraind' The Somme -- CHAPTER 13. 'Capable of Finishing the Job' Battles of 1917-1918 -- CHAPTER 14. 'The Men Cannot Grasp It' Armistice -- CHAPTER 15. 'We Will Remember Them' Remembrance and Commemoration -- CHAPTER 16. 'All the Best and Choicest and Unblemished' War Heroes -- CHAPTER 17. 'Among the Happiest Years I Have Ever Spent' Survivors -- Epilogue The Great War in Perspective -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	This book was inspired by the author's discovery of an extraordinary cache of letters from a soldier who was killed on the Western Front

during the First World War. The soldier was his grandfather, and the letters had been tucked away, unread and unmentioned for many decades. Intrigued by the heartbreak and history of these family letters, Fletcher sought out the correspondence of other British soldiers who had volunteered for the fight against Germany. This resulting volume offers a vivid account of the physical and emotional experiences of seventeen British soldiers whose letters survive. Drawn from different regiments, social backgrounds, and areas of England and Scotland, they include twelve officers and five ordinary “Tommies.” The book explores the training, journey to France, fear, shellshock, and life in the trenches as well as the leisure, love, and home leave the soldiers dreamed of. Fletcher discusses the psychological responses of 17- and 18-year-old men facing appalling realities and considers the particular pressures on those who survived their fallen comrades. While acknowledging the horror and futility the soldiers of the Great War experienced, the author shows another side to the story, focusing new attention on the loyal comradeship, robust humor, and strong morale that uplifted the men at the Front and created a powerful bond among them.
