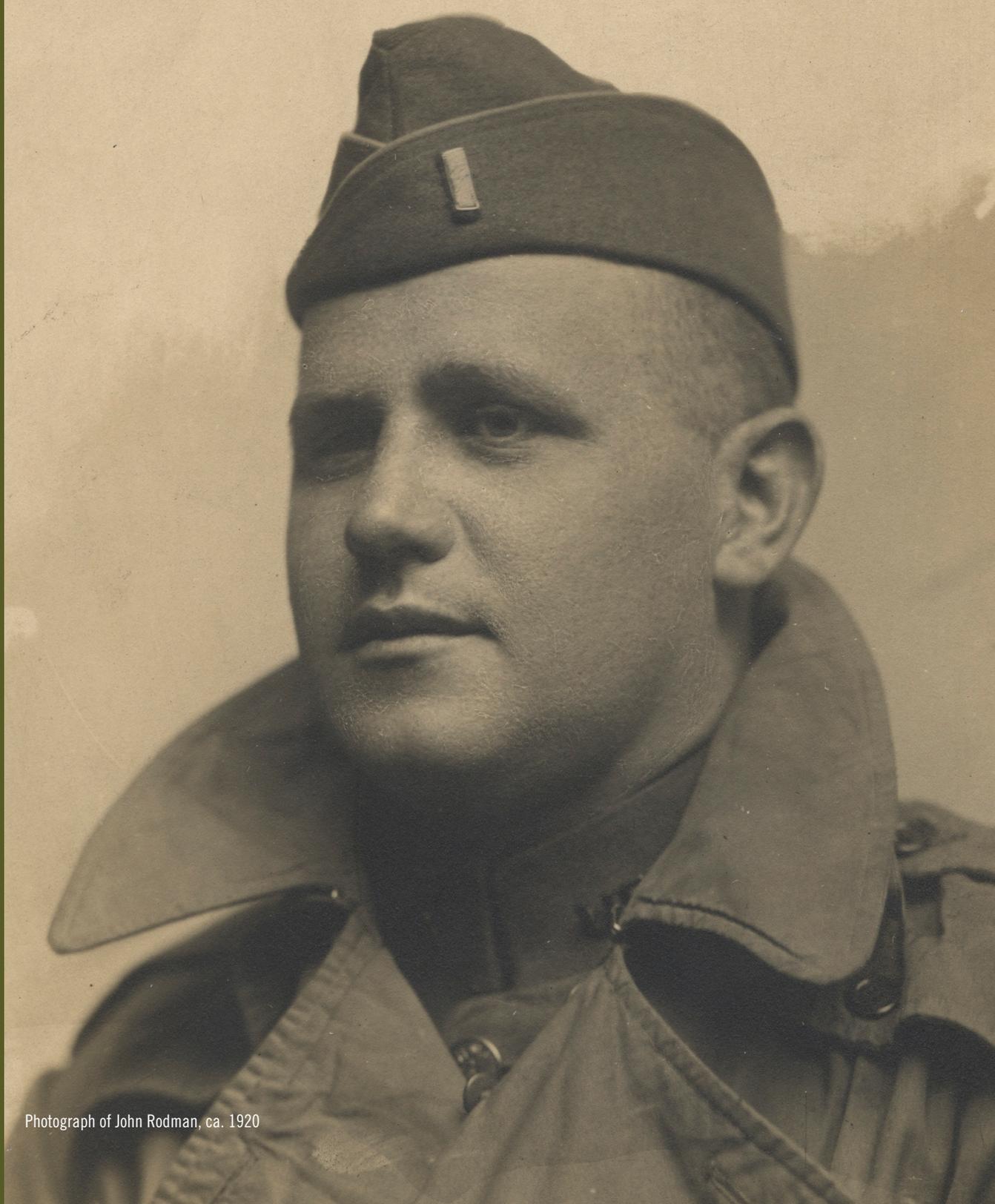


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Photograph of John Rodman, ca. 1920

## JOHN H. RODMAN

### LETTERS FROM A POW

CONTENT RECOMMENDED FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

#### EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

“Kentucky Military Treasures: Selections from the Kentucky Historical Society Collections” highlights personal stories that exemplify the military experience and demonstrate the significant contributions and sacrifices that Kentuckians have made in service to the nation in battle and at home. This selection of artifacts is pulled from the collection of the Kentucky Military History Museum which is housed at the Old State Arsenal.

“Kentucky Military Treasures” is thoughtfully presented in a timeline chronicling major U.S. conflicts beginning with the War of 1812 and continuing to present engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq. Within the exhibition students can examine primary sources including artifacts, photographs and manuscripts from over 200 years of military history. They will also have the opportunity to study signature stories highlighting the experiences of seven Kentuckians and their service in the military. Also included in the exhibition are a selection of personal experiences told through letters, poems, audio recordings, oral histories and emails.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### World War II

Responding to a worldwide economic crisis, increasingly militaristic Japan and Germany sought to expand their spheres of influence through several invasions. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war in 1941. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared that every United States citizen should contribute to the war effort at home or abroad. Kentucky contributed over 300,000 individuals to military service; almost 8,000 of them died and countless others became prisoners of war. The war ended for Germany in May 1945 and for Japan three months later, after atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

##### John H. Rodman

Major John H. Rodman, of Owensboro, Ky., led the 57th Regiment, Philippine Scouts in 1939. When war erupted two years later, he commanded the 92nd Regiment of the 91st Infantry Division, Philippine Army. Captured on April 9, 1942 on Luzon, Rodman remained a prisoner of

**SECTION** | World War II

**OBJECTIVES** | To analyze letters written from a prisoner of war and understand his perspective of the war from beginning to end.

**CORE CONTENT CONNECTIONS** | SS-HS-2.3.1; SS-HS-2.3.2; SS-HS-4.2.4; SS-HS-5.1.1

the Japanese until September 1945. Unlike many prisoners, he communicated with his family through radio broadcast and letters.

#### ARTIFACT LIST

1. Record, Radio Message from Rodman, Broadcast Over Radio Tokyo, 1943 (1992.20.30)
2. Postcard from John H. Rodman to Lila M. Rodman, 1943 (1992.20.02) [rotating]
3. Letter from Taiwan POW Camp, 1944 (1992.20.02) [rotating]
4. Letter from Manchuria POW Camp, 1945 (1992.20.02) [rotating]
5. John Rodman Newspaper Clipping and Letter, 1942 (1992.20) [rotating]

#### VOCABULARY

We encourage you to introduce the following vocabulary words independently or in conjunction with the pre-visit activities.

<b>Bataan</b>	<i>province in the Philippine Islands captured by the Japanese army in 1942</i>
<b>Homefront</b>	<i>the location of civilian activity during war</i>
<b>Insurance premium</b>	<i>payment for insurance</i>
<b>Major</b>	<i>a commissioned officer (officer training) in the army, air force or marine corps ranking above a captain and below a lieutenant colonel</i>
<b>Primary source</b>	<i>an artifact, document, recording or other source of information that was created at the time under study</i>
<b>Prisoner of war</b>	<i>a member of the armed forces of a nation who is taken by the enemy during combat</i>

# JOHN H. RODMAN

## LETTERS FROM A POW

(CONTINUED)

### ACTIVITY\*

Discuss the acronym POW. Have your students write down what they think it means. Explain what a prisoner of war is and how they were treated during World War II.

Next have them learn about John Rodman. By the time Rodman's mother received the letter he wrote in February 1942, he had already been captured by the Japanese. There are four other communications in the KHS collections from John between 1942-1945; (1) the first is a radio broadcast of a personal message written by John in 1943, (2) the second is a postcard to his wife in 1943, (3) the third is a letter to his sister in 1944 and (4) the fourth is another letter to his sister in 1945 after his release from the prison camp.

1. How do Rodman's letter to his wife and the first letter to his sister describe his life as a POW?
2. Why do you suppose Rodman brings up insurance premiums in three of his five correspondences?
3. Compare and contrast the letter written to his mother in 1942 with the letter written to his sister in 1945.
4. Describe the radio broadcast. What are some key words you were able to identify? How does the broadcast differ from the letters Rodman wrote?

\*All artifacts and information for this activity can be found on [the online exhibition](#).

Letter from John Rodman to his mother, 1942.  
Donated by Anne Sullivan, 1992.20

Batam  
Feb 24

James S Rodman  
15 Douglas Blvd  
Lexington Ky.

to mother:

On Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> I sent you Christmas greeting  
time before that. I mailed you a letter. My Ch  
was mailed Dec 5<sup>th</sup> from Toe lobon Leyte.  
I received those letters as until now there has  
little opportunity to write a slight chance  
being mailed. I don't know if this is  
you for a long time but I hope they get  
P.I. somehow.

I will almost for again come to the Island  
with my Regiment. a couple of days after the War  
red and have commounded it ever since  
into action before Christmas and however  
on the front line since then. I was shot  
shoulder on Dec 28<sup>th</sup>. but was very  
the bullet went out through. missing every  
The Doctor evacuated me to Manila  
the evacuation of 4 1/2