

Kentucky

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DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

LETTERS FROM A WORLD WAR II
PRISONER OF WAR, 1942-1945

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WAR DEPARTMENT

The Adjutant General's Office

WASHINGTON

February 4, 1943.

In Reply
Refer To AG 201 Rodman, John H.
(1-16-43) PC-G 017011-2

Mrs. James S. Rodman,
2045 Douglass Boulevard,
Louisville, Kentucky.

Dear Mrs. Rodman:

Report has been received that your son, Colonel

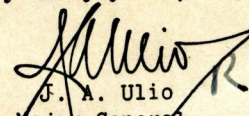
John H. Rodman, O-7425, Infantry,

7425 Infantry

is now a prisoner of war of the Japanese Government in Taiwan
Camp.

The Provost Marshal General, Prisoner of War Information
Bureau, Washington, D.C., will furnish you the address to which mail
may be sent. Any future correspondence in connection with his status
as a prisoner of war should be addressed to that office.

Very truly yours,


J. A. Ulio
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

[Letter from J.A. Ulio to Mrs. James H. Rodman, February 4, 1943 \(MSS141, Box 1, Folder 2\)](#)

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

LETTERS FROM A WWII POW, 1942-1945

THEME *World War II*

OBJECTIVE *To analyze letters written by a prisoner of war and understand his wartime perspectives.*

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. Through voluntary enlistment and conscription, 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, Kentucky, 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 the Japanese until after they signed a formal surrender on September 2, 1945. Unlike many prisoners, he communicated with his family through radio broadcast and letters.

DOCUMENT LIST

1. [Letter to Effie Lee Reeves, March 3, 1944 \(MS141, Box 1, Folder 2\)](#)
2. [Letter to Lila M. Rodman, May 14, 1944 \(MSS141, Box 1, Folder 2\)](#)
3. [Letter to Effie Lee Reeves, September 1, 1945 \(1992.20.02b\)](#)
4. [See more documents in the John H. Rodman Papers, 1942-1945](#)

VOCABULARY

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

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

LETTERS FROM A WWII POW, 1942-1945

DOCUMENT OBSERVATION

Use the table below to help analyze the documents. Consider listing things such as the handwriting and condition of the document or make a guess at why it was written. What do you wonder about the document?

I See...	I Think...	I Wonder...

DOCUMENT INTERPRETATION

Answer the following questions in 3-5 sentences.

How does Rodman's letters to his family describe life as a POW? Do you think his descriptions are accurate? Why or why not?

Why do you think Rodman brings up insurance premiums in his correspondences?

How do military personnel communicate with their friends and family today?

TO: MRS. EFFIE LEE REEVES
APT. 1015. HOTEL EAST WINDERMERE;
1642 EAST 56TH STREET
CHICAGO, 37, ILLINOIS.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

MARCH 3RD 1944

DEAR EFFIE LEE:-

HAPPY TO HAVE RECEIVED FOUR LETTERS FROM SHIRLEY MAILED MAY;
JULY; AUGUST 1943. AND MOTHER'S EASTER, YOUR BIRTHDAY MESSAGES, PLEASED
ABOUT MOTHER; WORRIED ABOUT GLADYS ONLY KNOW SHE SICK AND
UNABLE TO WRITE. PLEASE SUMMERIZE ALL INFORMATION; DON'T WITHHOLD FACTS.

I HAVE INSURANCE POLICIES WITH NORTHWESTERN TRAVELERS; GOVERNMENT AND TWO
AETNA ALL HAVE LOANS DUE OR INTEREST PAYABLE AND POLICY
WITH LINCOLN, SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS. GLADYS PREVIOUSLY INSTRUCTED TO PAY ANNUAL
PREMIUM ON LINCOLN AND NOTIFY OTHER COMPANIES OF MY STATUS
CHECK WITH HER AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION. SHIRLEY BABIES KEEP
HER BUSY SO YOU MUST WORK. I WILL COME BACK.

LOVE TO ALL.

John

COLONEL JOHN H. RODMAN U.S. ARMY.

Letter to Effie Lee Reeves, March 3, 1944 (MS141, Box 1, Folder 2)

MRS, LILA M RODMAN
2045 DOUGLASS BOULEVARD
LOUISVILLE KENTUCKY
U.S.A.

MAY 14, 1944

DEAR MOTHER

YOUR LETTER OF FEBURARY 1943 GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE AS
IT CONTAINED MUCH FAMILY NEWS. IT, EFFIE LEE'S AND LILA'S LETTERS
REINSURED ME AS TO YOUR HEALTH ILL ATTEND ONE OF
YOUR BIRTHDAY DINNERS YET. I AM WELL, REASONABLY RESIGNED TO
MY LOT. YOURS AND THE GIRLS LETTERS PLUSS SIX FROM
SHIRLEY INCLUDING THREE SNAPSHOTS OF HER FAMILY ARE MY ONLY
POSSSESSIONS THEREFORE ARE CHERISHED AS THE LINK I HAVE WITH
THOSE I LOVE. SO GLAD I CAN WRITE YOU ON
MOTHERS DAY. WISH I COULD BE WITH YOU. WITH ALL
MY LOVE TO YOU AND EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.

YOUR SON JOHN

COLONEL JOHN H RODMAN, U.S. ARMY

Letter to Lila M. Rodman, May 14, 1944 (MSS141, Box 1, Folder 2)

Camp Hoten, Mukden, Manchuria
Sept 1 - 1945

Mrs Willis L. Reeves.

Hotel East Wimpermore
1642 E. 56 St
Chicago Ill. U.S.A.

Dear Effie Lee: I wrote all of my family - as soon as I could and sent it to Baker in the first plane - write to Shirley - some time.

I had already lots of the things that I was wishing for - at the time I wrote the first letter.

We have been bombed by B-29's with a unbelievable number of atomic medicines - magazines, books, candy, canned fruit, cigarettes, canned meats, movie films, screen salt, I had - eggs & Bacon for breakfast with persimmon juice & a chocolate bar - butter coffee & sugar - chicken soup for lunch - split pea soup & spaghetti with canned peas for dinner. I suits of underwear & socks & pair of shoes - during day & chocolate bar, a certain of cigarettes & matches & several packages of chewing gum. It after 10:00 pm. the picture show still going on I cannot sleep but I am from being hungry - food the first time in years - when I first - gained liberty - I got the job of being Provost Marshal

which means - chief of police - and of course I had my hands full for a few days - but now that there are so many more attractions in camp than on the outside - I am beginning to have it much easier. This has kept me from having time to write for 45 days - Some of the older officers & some of the - ones who are in the worst shape have already been evacuated. and by the time you get this undoubtedly some of them will already be in America. I'm missing a lot - Col. James R. H. H. H. of Louisville Ky. Of course we do not know when we will all get away from here - perhaps not for a month or longer for some of us. So eat write and tell me the news - we will get a lot of priority on this side of the world -

Love to - you and - all my family - John -

Don't call me a P.O.W. - but if - formally - POW will speed it up - even if my hand write at once - Johnny

Letter to Effie Lee Reeves, September 1, 1945 (1992.20.02b)