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www.history.ky.gov/military



Photograph of John Rodman, ca. 1920



IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

I am interned in *Taiwan*

My health is ~~excellent~~. usual. ~~poor~~.

~~I am ill in hospital.~~

~~I am working for pay.~~

I am ~~not~~ working. *in the garden*

Please see that *Insurance Premiums* is taken care.

My love to you, *Shirley. Gladys. all others*

John.

20-2-43

MRS EFFIE LEE REEVES (SISTER)
APT. 1015, HOTEL EAST WINDERMERE
1642 EAST 56th STREET
CHICAGO ILLINOIS. U.S.A.

377

JULY 8TH. 1944

DEAR EFFIE LEE:

AS YOU KNOW I HAVE INSURANCE POLICIES WITH THE GOVERNMENT,
TRAVELERS AND TWO WITH AETNA. ALL HEAVILY OBLIGATED. SINCE 1940
GLADYS; MY WIFE HAS NOT BEEN PHYSICAL OR MENTAL CAPABLE
OF HANDLING MY AFFAIRS THEREFORE I WANT YOU TO ARRANGE
FOR ALLOTMENTS TO COVER PAYMENTS ON EACH POLICY. YOU TO
DETERMINE THE DETAILS. AS FAR AS I KNOW I HAVE
ABOUT ONE THIRD OF PAY NOW ALLOTTED AND WANT A
SIMILAR AMOUNT UNOBLIGATED. OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM HEAD OFFICES OF FIRMS.
PUBLIC LAW 490 OF 77TH. CONGRESS WILL COVER YOUR REQUEST.

I AM WELL. WOULD LOVE TO BE WITH YOU ALL
YOUR BROTHER JOHN H RODMAN
COLONEL JOHN H. RODMAN U.S. ARMY

Camp Hoten, Mukden, Manchuria

Sept 1 - 1945

Mrs Willis L. Reeds.

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

Dear Effie Lee: I wrote all of my family - as soon as I could and send it to Baker via 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 - with a unbelievable number of stoves, medicines - magazines, candy, canned fruit - cigarettes, tinned meats - movie films - screen cloth, I had - eggs & Bacon for breakfast with persapple juice & a chocolate bar - butter, coffee & sugar - chicken soup for lunch - split pea soup & spaghetti with canned peaches for dinner, 1 suits of underwear & socks - & pair of shoes - during day. & chocolate bar. a contain of cigarettes & matches & several packages of chewing gum. It after 10:00 Pm. the picture show still going on I am tired but far from being hungry - food the first time in years -

when we first - got our 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 - men 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. including a Colonel - James R. Maness - 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 all write and tell me the news - our mail - 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 - see it any how - write at once - Jimmy

Bataan P.I.

Feb 24 1942

Mrs. James S. Rodman
2045 Douglas Blvd
Louisville Ky.

Dear Mother:

On Dec 23rd I sent you Christmas greetings and some time before that - mailed you a letter. My Christmas letter was mailed Dec 5th from Toe Lborn Leyte. I hope you received those letters as until now there has been little opportunity to write a slight chance of the letter being mailed. I don't know if this will reach you for a long time but I hope it get out of the P.I. somehow.

I am well almost fat again. Come to the Island of Luzon with my Regiment. a couple of Day after the War was declared and have commanded it ever since. We got into action before Christmas and haven't been far from the front line since then. I was shot in the left shoulder on Dec 28th. but was very lucky as the bullet went out through missing every thing vital. The Doctor evacuated me to Manila so I was in on the evacuation of that City on New Years eve. We left there by boat as a great deal of the port area was on fire that night. It was plenty exciting Building burning so close to the boat that it necessary

JOHN H. RODMAN

LETTERS FROM A POW

CONTENT RECOMMENDED FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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 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]

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

VOCABULARY

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

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	<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)

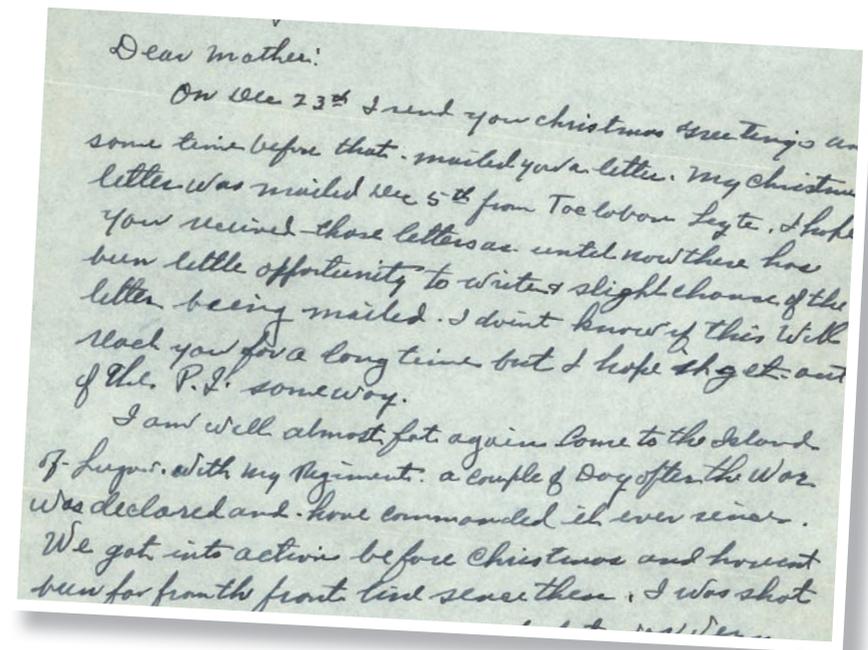
ACTIVITY*

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. Study the letters for five to ten minutes. Note your overall impressions.
2. Using the chart below, list the people, places and events you read.

PEOPLE	PLACES	EVENTS



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

3. How do Rodman's letter to his wife and the first letter to his sister describe his life as a POW?
4. Why do you suppose Rodman brings up insurance premiums in three of his five correspondences?
5. Compare and contrast the letter written to his mother in 1942 with the letter written to his sister in 1945.
6. 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](#).