

Florida's World War II Military Camps
By Linda Slusar, Wendell Watson Elementary School

I. Lesson Summary

Summary

During World War II nearly one-half million Floridians participated in the war effort. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to read and explore facts about two important Florida military training camps: Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson. The students will learn how both camps housed German prisoners of war. Students will share their thinking on a variety of graphic organizers.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Work together in groups of 3 to 4 to explore facts about Camp Blanding and Camp Johnson;
2. Organize background vocabulary information on a Tree Map graphic organizer;
3. Compare and contrast both military camps on a Double Bubble Map organizer. This activity will be a classwork assessment grade;
4. Organize their thinking on a BKWL Chart. (Background, What I Know, What I Want To Know, What I Learned Chart).

US Event or Era

The four lessons cover a timespan of 1940-1946; the World War II war years in Florida.

Grade Level

The lessons can be implemented in the elementary school on the fifth grade level. It is suggested that the four lessons on Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson be presented after a unit on World War II.

Materials

1. AAA Road Map of Florida. (7 to 8 copies depending on class size.) Maps can be obtained at a local AAA travel office.
2. One copy per student fact sheet on Camp Blanding.
3. One copy per student fact sheet on Camp Gordon Johnson.
4. One copy per student BKWL Chart.
5. One copy per student Double-Bubble Map organizer.
6. One copy per student Tree Map Graphic organizer.
7. Notebook Paper
8. Transparency copy of BKWL Chart
9. Two large sheets of bulletin board paper
10. Sticky Notes
11. Overhead Projector
12. Highlighters (1 per group)

Lesson Time

Students will complete the lessons in four days by working 30-45 minutes per day.

II. Lesson Procedures

Day 1

Materials

1. Large sheet of bulletin board paper to hand sketch an outline of Florida.
2. One sheet of notebook paper for each student to fold into a 4-square.
3. Seven AAA Road Maps of Florida. (One for teacher demonstration, and one for each group).
4. One highlighter for each group.

Objectives

1. The students will locate Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson on the AAA Florida Road Map.
2. The students will write about what they Want to Know about Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson on the 4-square notebook paper.

Procedures

1. To introduce Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson, the teacher will place a large sheet of Bulletin Board paper on the chalkboard that can be easily see be the students.
2. The teacher will hand sketch the outline of Florida on the Bulletin Board paper and will note the following to the students: the panhandle, the coastline, the Florida Keys, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico.
3. The teacher will ask the students to name prominent cities. Most will probably name Orlando. The teacher will identify Tallahassee as the capital of Florida, and Jacksonville. The teacher will also discuss the compass rose directions and descriptions by identifying the following:
 - a. Orlando is in central Florida
 - b. Jacksonville is in Northeastern Florida
 - c. Tallahassee is in North Central Florida
4. In the first square of the 4-square notebook paper, the students will write the location descriptions for Tallahassee and Jacksonville. (Example: Tallahassee is located in the North Central area of Florida.)
5. The teacher will hang the AAA Road Map of Florida on the Chalkboard.
6. The teacher will demonstrate to the students the map index and military heading on the map.
7. The teacher will put the students into groups of 3 or 4 and will pass out the AAA Road Maps of Florida to each group.
8. The students will use the map index and military heading to locate Camp Blanding in the index. The students write down and locate the coordinates (E-21) on the map and will use a highlighter to mark the area where Camp Blanding is located. The teacher will have the students note the proximity of the camp to Jacksonville. (20 miles Southwest)
9. Using the map index, the students will locate Carrabelle Beach Florida where Camp Gordon Johnson is located. The students write down and locate the coordinates (E-13) on the map and will use a highlighter to mark the area where Camp Gordon Johnson is located. The teacher will have the students note the proximity of the camp to Tallahassee. (30 miles Southwest)
10. In the second square of the 4-square, the students will write the location descriptions Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson. (Example: Camp Gordon Johnson is located Southwest of Tallahassee.)
11. In their groups, the students will write two questions: One about what they would like to know about Camp Blanding, and another about what they would like to know about Camp Gordon Johnson. The students will write the answers to these questions in the third and fourth sections on the 4-square notebook paper.
12. The teacher will collect the students' 4-square notebooks.

(Sample 4-square notebook)

1. Tallahassee is located in the Northcentral area of Florida.	2. Camp Gordon Johnson is Southwest of Tallahassee.
3. What did soldiers do at Camp Blanding?	4.

Day 2

Materials

1. Large sheet of bulletin board paper to make a class-size BKWL Chart.
2. Sticky notes for each group.
3. Overhead Projector.
4. BKWL Transparency. (Teacher will make a transparency on a copy machine.)
5. Student Copies of BKWL Chart.
6. Student 4-square notebook. (Three squares filled in.)

Objectives

1. The students will write what they know about military camps.
2. The teacher and students will organize their thoughts on the BKWL Chart on the bulletin board paper.

Procedures

1. The teacher will return the 4-square notebooks to each student and will have the student reassemble their groups of 3 or 4.
2. On the bulletin board paper, the teacher will make a class size BKWL Chart Similar to the one below:

<u>Background</u>	<u>What I Know</u>	<u>What I Want to Know</u>	<u>What I Learned</u>

3. The teacher will discuss with the students what they know about military camps.
4. The teacher will give the students one to two minutes in groups to talk about their ideas.
5. The teacher will have the students write one fact about military camps in the last square of the 4-square notebook.
6. The teacher will have the students talk over the facts they wrote in their 4-squares. Then, the teacher will have each student group choose one fact from the 4-squares and record it onto a sticky note.
7. The teacher will call on students to read their sticky notes and discuss their ideas.
8. The teacher will call on one student to put their sticky note on the bulletin board BKWL chart under the What I Know section.
9. The teacher will proceed to the What I Want to Know section of the BKWL Chart.
10. The teacher will have the students re-read their 4-square questions and talk over the facts. Then, the teacher will have each student group choose one good question about Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson.
11. Then, the teacher will have each student group record their question onto a sticky note.
12. Then, the teacher will have each student group read their question and will have each group put their sticky note on the bulletin board BKWL chart under the What I Want to Know section.
13. The teacher will set up the overhead projector and BKWL transparency.
14. The teacher will pass out copies of the BKWL Chart to the students.
15. The teacher will discuss and review the students' sticky notes on the What I Know Section of the BKWL chart.
16. The teacher will record the main ideas of what the students know on the transparency and will confirm the students' knowledge of military camps.
17. The students will copy the facts from the transparency under the What I Know Section on their BKWL charts.
18. The teacher will continue the procedure with the What I Want to Know Section using the questions the students wrote on their sticky notes.
19. The teacher will confirm the students' questions by writing them on the transparency under the What I Want to Know Section.
20. The students will copy the questions on their BKWL Chart.

Sample Copy of BKWL Chart

What I Know	What I Want to Know
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A military camp trains soldiers for war.2. Soldiers learn how to follow directions.3. Soldiers learn about weapons.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What did soldiers learn to do at Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson.2. How did soldiers train before going into war?3. What were the living conditions like on a military camp?

Day 3

Materials

1. Vocabulary Sheet for Each Student.
2. Tree Map for Each Student.
3. Camp Blanding fact sheet for each student.
4. Camp Gordon Johnson fact sheet for each student.
5. Class Size BKWL Chart.
6. Background Information Sheet for teacher.

Objectives

1. The students will understand military vocabulary and develop background for unit by reading the Vocabulary Sheet.
2. They will organize ideas about military terms on a Tree Map Graphic Organizer.
3. The students will read and discuss the Fact Sheets on Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson.

Procedures

1. The teacher will start a lesson on understanding military terms.
2. The teacher will read aloud the page of terms on the Vocabulary Sheet.
3. The students will fill in the six major military units of war: Squad, Platoon, Company, Battalion, Brigade, and Division by filling in the Tree Map For Classifying and the Vocabulary Sheet to fill in information about size of the unit and commander of the unit. (The students will need to do the Math.)
4. After the students complete the Tree Map, the teacher will discuss the Main Idea and Details of Army Organization.
5. The teacher will write background statements in the Background Section of the Class-size BKWL chart.
6. Within the background statements on the chart these responses need to be included in the background section:
 - a. The smallest unit of soldiers is called a squad. It has 10 men and is led by a staff sergeant.
 - b. The largest unit of soldiers is called a division. There is a minimum of 5,760 soldiers with a General in command.
 - c. Amphibious warfare training was very important for the invasion of the Pacific Islands.
7. The teacher will read aloud the background sheet to the class.
8. The teacher will pass out the Fact Sheet about Camp Blanding and will read and discuss the sections with the students. The teacher will answer any questions that the students have.
9. The teacher will pass out the Fact Sheet about Camp Gordon Johnson and will read and discuss the sections with the students. The teacher will answer any questions that the students have.

Day 4

Materials

1. Camp Gordon Johnson Fact Sheet.
2. Camp Blanding Fact Sheet.
3. Double Bubble Thinking Map.
4. BKWL class size chart.
5. Student copies of BKWL chart.
6. Notebook paper.

Objectives

1. The students will compare and contrast Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson by making a list of what was the same and different at each camp on a sheet of notebook paper.

(Sample Answers)	
Same	Different
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A military camps for soldiers. 2. German P.O.W's occupied both camps. 3. Both Camps had poor housing facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Camp Blanding served 800,000 troops. 2. After World War II Camp Blanding became a National Guard facility. 3. Camp Gordon Johnson was an amphibious training facility.

2. The students will use their list to fill in the graphic organizer called the Double Bubble Map.
3. The teacher will demonstrate how to fill in the map.
 - a. In the two large circles write Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson
 - b. In the three connected circles in the center of the map, write three ideas that are the same about Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson.
 - c. In the three circles on the left and right edge of the Double Bubble Map write three ideas unique to Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson.
4. The students will hand in the Double Bubble Map as a classwork assessment grade.
5. As a recap or summary experience the class is ready to discuss what they learned about each military camp.
6. The students will tell four facts and the teacher will write the facts on the class copy of the BKWL chart on the chalkboard. The students will fill in the student copy of the BKWL chart.

(Sample Answers To Write)

Background	What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Camp Blanding trained 800,000 soldiers. 2. Camp Blanding became the largest P.O.W. camp in Florida for German prisoners. 3. Camp Gordon Johnson was an important amphibious training center. 4. Camp Gordon Johnson also was a large POW camp for German prisoners.

III. Activities

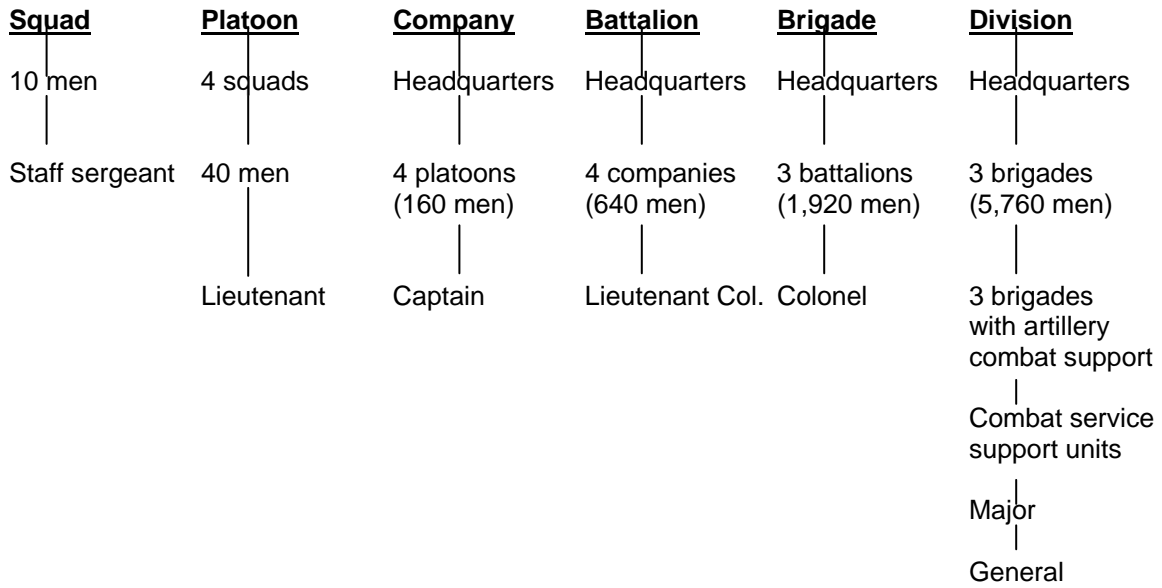
Day 2 BKWL Chart

Background	What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned
B	K	W	L

Day 3 Background Vocabulary Sheet

1. Squad – A group of 10 men led by a staff sergeant.
2. Infantry – Soldiers trained and armed to fight on foot.
3. Platoon – 4 squads commanded by a lieutenant.
4. Company – 4 platoons of infantrymen commanded by a captain.
5. Battalion – A military unit composed of headquarters and 4 companies – commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel.
6. Brigades – A military unit composed of headquarters, 3 battalions, and commanded by a Colonel.
7. Division – A military unit composed of headquarters, 3 brigades of combat support, combat service support headed by a General.
8. P.O.W. – Prisoner of War.
9. Amphibious operations – Vehicles in planned operations capable of land and water maneuvers.
10. DUKW, or “Duck Truck,” was a new amphibious truck that could travel over water at 6-8 MPH. Troops were taught to load and unload warships to the DUKW that was out at sea.

Day 3: Military Units (Answer Key)



Day 3: Military Units

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Days 3 & 4 Background Fact Sheet

During World War II the army was given the job of defending the U.S. from an axis invasion. The U.S. held more than 350,000 prisoners in 500 prison camps across the U.S. More specifically, the U.S. government made plans for imprisoning several thousand German, Japanese, and Italian people from Latin America. FBI agents and U.S. diplomats relied on local police and secret informants for information concerning suspected enemy agents. During this time over 4,000 Germans, 2,000 Japanese, and nearly 300 Italians were suspected of being enemy axis agents. Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnson were two military camps in Florida receiving enemy agents. They were called prisoners of war or P.O.W.'s. Under the terms of the 1929 Geneva Convention countries at war were permitted to use the labor of P.O.W.'s in military camps as long as their work was not related to the war effort. By the end of the war, most P.O.W.'s were sent back to their country of birth in exchange for U.S. prisoners.

Also during World War II the armed forces developed two amphibious units: The Atlantic Fleet and The Pacific Fleet. In 1942 General C. Marshall declared that the Army would prepare for training an amphibious warfare needed for massive invasions in the Pacific Islands. Training was offered at Camp Gordon Johnson. Training included teaching soldiers how to disembark a ship, and load an amphibious craft. New technology created the DUKW or "Duck Trucks" that traveled on land and sea. This amphibious vehicle could travel over water at 6 to 8 miles per hour. The amphibious craft was used to load and unload warships not in a harbor.



Pictures E-11-1 (left) & E-11-2 (right): DUKWs were amphibious (land and water) trucks that could be used to haul people or supplies during WWII. At Camp Gordon Johnson, soldiers learned how to operate them.

Days 3 & 4 Fact Sheet: Camp Gordon Johnson

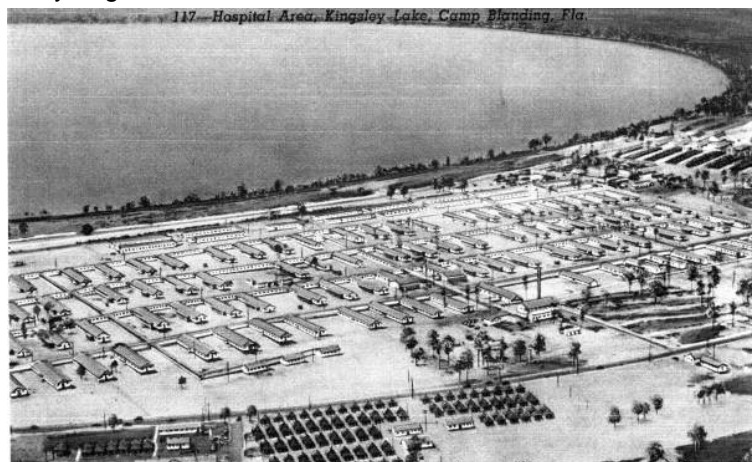
1. Camp Gordon Johnson is an important military base located 60 miles southwest of Tallahassee in Carrabelle, Florida.
2. The Army developed an amphibious training center at the base in 1942.
3. Amphibious vehicles were capable of land and water operations.
4. Camp housing was substandard. Troops lived in tents and barracks with sand floors.
5. Problems at camp included fighting off poisonous snakes, wild hogs, mosquitoes, fleas, and flies – Disease such as malaria could develop.
6. Problems of weather added to the miserable conditions.
7. The amphibious training center closed in 1943 after 14 men died during training.
8. September 1943 Camp Gordon Johnson became the Army Service Forces (ASF) training center.
9. The base served 30,000 troops.
10. German P.O.W.'s were sent to Camp Gordon Johnson to work on farms and in the lumber industry.
11. By 1944 2,500 German P.O.W.'s were imprisoned at Camp Gordon Johnson and 3 branch camps.
12. Small boat crews trained at Camp Gordon Johnson on DUKW amphibious vehicles. Training on these new vehicles was important to the Pacific war battles.
13. Training continued until the Japanese surrender in 1945.
14. In March, 1946 the camp was officially closed.



Picture E-11-3: The flyer above depicts DUKW training at Camp Gordon Johnson during World War II.

Days 3 & 4 Fact Sheet: Camp Blanding

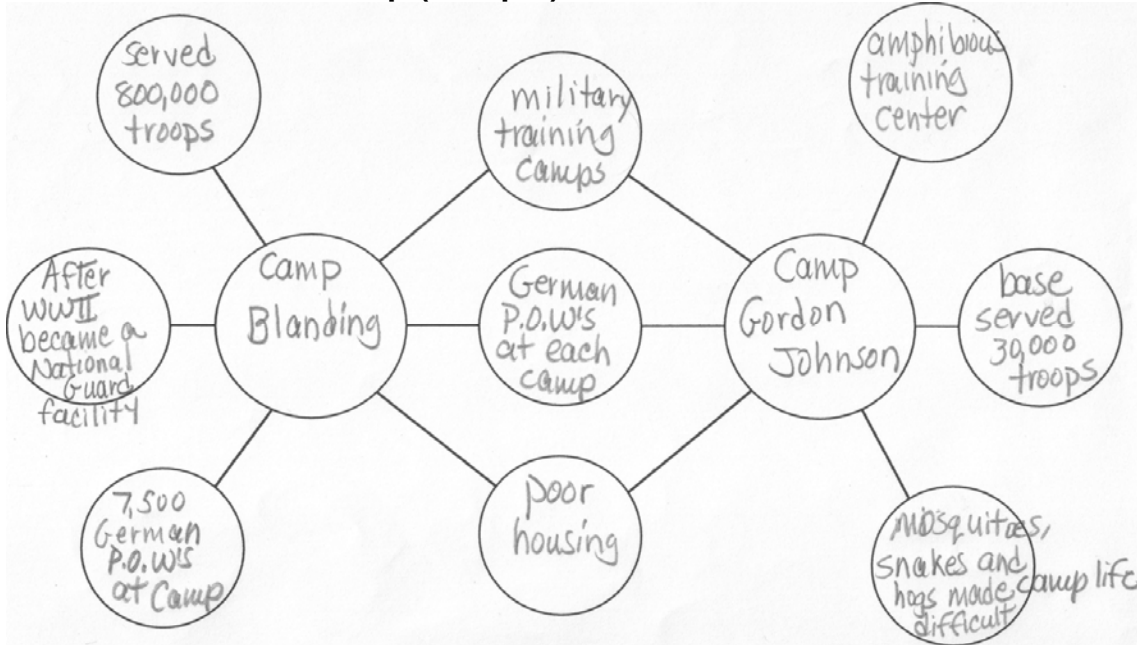
1. Camp Blanding is located in Clay County, 20 miles southwest of Jacksonville.
2. The camp was a training center for 800,000 soldiers from 1940-1945.
3. Camp Blanding was named for Major Albert Blanding, Chief of the National Guard, and a notable guardsman in World War I.
4. Basic training was provided for infantry and field training was provided for tank destroyer battalions.
5. Camp Blanding became an Infantry Replacement Training Center. Extensive field training was provided for 7 infantry divisions and field artillery brigades.
6. In 1942 German citizens deported from Central America were held at Camp Blanding. Germans on U-boats were also captured and imprisoned.
7. P.O.W.'s at Camp Blanding and other side camps were estimated to be 7,500 German prisoners.
8. Before the end of World War II, Camp Blanding was recognized as the largest P.O.W. base in Florida with 1,000 prisoners at the camp at any given time.
9. In 1945 Camp Blanding reverted back to a National Guard Training Camp.
10. The Army Corporation of Engineers found Camp Blanding to be unsatisfactory as a permanent army facility because of poor housing.



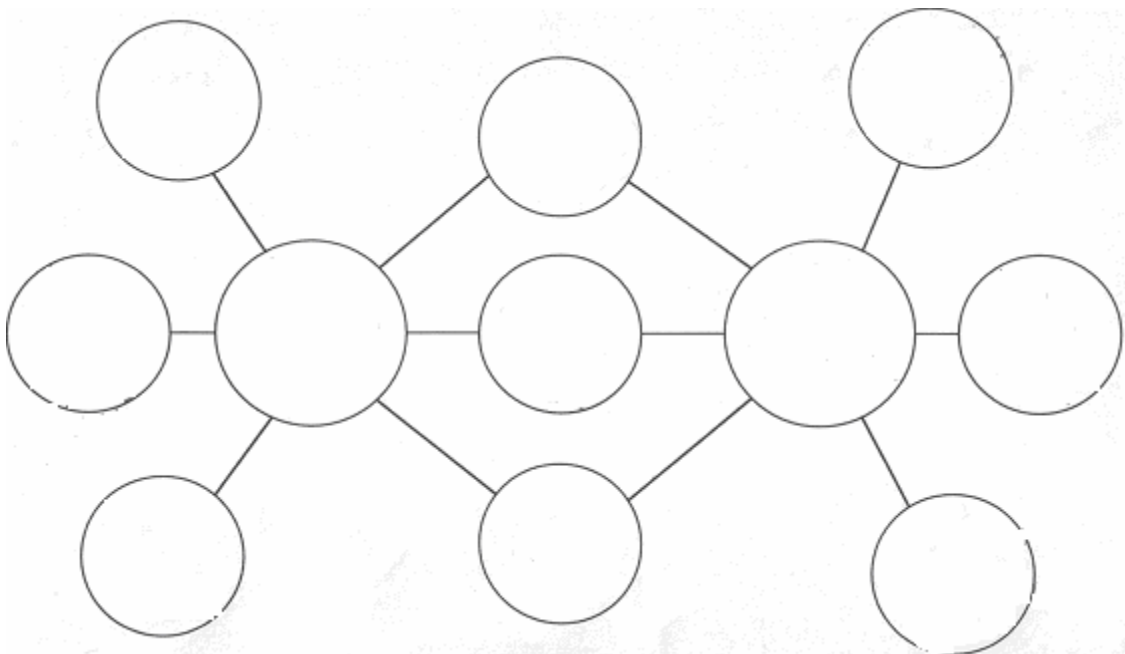
Picture E-11-4: Aerial picture of Camp Blanding near Starke, FL

IV. Assessments

Double Bubble Map (Sample) Assessment Answers



Double Bubble Map for Comparing (Similarities) and Contrasting (Differences)



V. Resources

1. Boyton, Alice and Blevins, Wiley. Teaching Students to Read Nonfiction 2003 New York: Scholastic, Inc.
2. Chambers, John W. Military History 1999 New York : Oxford University Press.
3. Coles, Florida WWII Heritage Trail Fl. Heritage Publication <http://www.flheritage.com>
4. Freitas, Joseph and Anne Florida The War Years: 1938-1945 1998 Florida: Wild Canyon Pub. Co.
5. Hyerle, David. Thinking Maps Tools for Learning 1995 North Carolina: Innovative Sciences, Inc. 1995
6. Vance, Jonathan F. Encyclopedia of Prisoners of War and Internment 2000 California: ABC-CLIO, Inc.
7. The Florida Memory Project's "Florida Photographic Collection"
(<http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/>)