Lakeland’s World War II History  
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I. Lesson Summary

Summary
In this lesson, students will learn the significance of Lakeland’s military training facilities during WWII. They will focus, primarily, on the Drane Field military base and the Lodwick School of Aeronautics. Students will work together to discover the military’s impact on the economy and future growth of the city of Lakeland. In addition to learning vital information on the base at Drane Field, students will gain a valuable history of the city of Lakeland. Students will analyze primary resources (including photographs, historical documents, and interviews) to reach a conclusion on the impact of the various military establishments on the growth of Lakeland and of Polk County.

Objectives
Students will:
1.) work cooperatively to gain a brief history of Lakeland’s military base and training facility during WWII;
2.) and further discover the impact of Lakeland’s WWII military base on the growth of the city of Lakeland and of Polk County.

U.S. History Event or Era
This lesson can be implemented into a unit on World War II.

Grade Level
This lesson is intended for use in the middle school or high school classroom.

Materials
For implementation of this lesson, you will need copies of Handouts #1-4 (one of each for each group), Reading Notes for Handouts #1-4 (one of each for each student), “Master Note Sheet” (one for each student), a computer with Internet access (for the student in each group with Handout #1), and “Processing Assignment: Writing a Letter Home” for each student.

Lesson Time
At least one block period, or two 45-minute periods.
II. Lesson Procedures

Procedures
1.) Students will need to be divided into groups of 4.

2.) Handout # 1 will need to be given to one person in the group. Handout #2 will need to be given to another person in the group. Handout #3 needs to be given to another student. Finally, Handout # 4 needs to be given to the last student. Pass out Reading Notes for each Handout to each student, as well as the Master Note Sheet.

3.) Have students read the handouts assigned to them. Then, students will take notes on the corresponding Reading Notes. The student with Handout #1 will need to look up information and take notes on the three websites listed on the Reading Notes for that handout.

4.) Students will share the information from their handouts/notes with the other students in their group to fill in their own copies Reading Notes. Then, students may research together for the answers to the questions on the Master Note Sheet. This information can then be used along with the reading notes to complete the Processing Assignment.

5.) Using the information given from other group members and from the handouts, each student will need to create a letter following the rubric on the Processing Assignment. The student will choose one of the three options listed on the assignment and write a letter home to a friend, family member, or loved one.

6.) Finally students will share their letter and the information from their handouts to the rest of the group.
Handout #1: Interview with Claude M. Harden, Jr.

Interviewer: Mr. Harden, when were you born?

Harden: December 31st, 1933.

I: Were you born in Lakeland?

H: No, I was born in Pinemount, a settlement between Live Oak and Lake City [in north Florida]. I was born on my grandparents’ farm. My mother went there to have me and I was born in the same room that she was born in.

I: What brought you to Lakeland?

H: My parents were living in Highland City because my dad was a student at Florida Southern College and he was also a student pastor at Highland City Methodist Church… We lived there until I was four, when we moved to Medulla.

I: Do you remember where you were when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

H: I think we were coming home from church.

I: How old were you?

H: I was seven.

I: When did you realize that the U.S. was at war?

H: My mom and dad talked about it and they talked about it at school. We had ration stamps for sugar and gasoline. The man who ran the corner grocery store would save candy bars under the counter for the neighborhood kids. We couldn’t buy a new car locally, so we had to go to Miami and buy one. That car had to last until 1949, when we were able to get a new Ford station wagon.

I: What do you remember about the pilots’ training in Lakeland?

H: Drane Field Road was a dirt road because they were still mining phosphate in that area. The road ended at what became Drane Field. The entrance into the airfield was off of Highway 92 (New Tampa Highway), what is now Airport Road. It was a restricted area. In order to go to Plant City, you had to go around the south side of the airport or use Highway 92.

I: When did you meet some of the pilot trainees from Drane Field?

H: When I was eight, my parents moved to the west side of Old Highway 37 (Old Mulberry Road) and bought pasture that bordered the old phosphate mining area. On the other side of the fence bordering our pasture were what we called “the dumps,” which is where the excess dirt from mining was piled up. I remember “the dumps” as being high and rugged. One day when I was down there exploring the area, I saw some soldiers in a foxhole. They had a machine gun. The foxhole was camouflaged. I went closer to see what was going on. I asked them what they were doing and they said they were on training maneuvers and that they were in an observation post to report enemy aircraft.

I: Did you ever see them again?

H: I don’t think so.
I: How did the locals treat the pilots?

H: They were very welcoming. My parents invited some for dinner on several occasions. Usually this would be arranged through the USO office on base. You would call and request how many pilots you would like to entertain, and they would send them to your house.

I: Did the USO ever sponsor any other social activities for the pilots?

H: Oh, yes, they would arrange dances and socials with the local girls to help with the pilots’ morale. The dances were well-chaperoned.

I: Did the training that took place in Lakeland provide jobs for any of the locals?

H: Yes. Locals would be hired to work on the base. One of my aunts and her sister worked in the base exchange (PX). I believe there were also some civilians who worked in clerical-type jobs on the base.

I: Do you know anything about the training that took place at Lodwick Air School on the north side of Lakeland?

H: I know that it was basic flight training and they flew small planes. It was a private school that was contracted by the government to train pilots. The pilots that were at Drake Field already knew how to fly and they were trained on B-25 and B-17 bombers. I believe they trained navigators and bombardiers there, also.

I: What happened to Drake Field after the training was discontinued?

H: The buildings were dismantled. Most of the barracks were wooden. For a long time, you could see the foundations. The Lodwick barracks were Quonset huts. They were probably sold off as surplus equipment. A few are still in use on Ingraham Avenue in Lakeland today and, of course, the Kiwanis Pancake Festival is held every year, along with several other community events in the main hangar at what is now known as Tiegertown. That was originally the site of the Lakeland Municipal Airport, and after the war both Lodwick and Drake Field became City of Lakeland property. Drake Field then became the city airport and is now named Linder Regional Airport, named after Scott Linder, a local businessman. Drane Field Road was also opened to local traffic.

I: Overall, what is your opinion of the impact the pilot training had on the Lakeland area?

H: It really brought home the fact that the nation was at war, but I really see the long-term economic benefits. It gave Lakeland an identity. We now have the Sun ’n Fun Fly-in and we had the Piper Airplane manufacturing facility. Our airport is one of the busiest corporate airports in the area and the facilities are constantly being improved upon.
On May 22, 1941, the Lakeland City Commission passed a Resolution naming the Lakeland Airport No. 2, which was under construction, Drane Field in honor of Herbert J. Drane, one of Lakeland's outstanding citizens. The city had barely begun work on the new airport when, with war already raging in Europe, it leased the facility to the War Department. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers improved the three existing runways and constructed the necessary buildings to operate a training facility to fly combat bombers and fighters. The new base, a sub-base of MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida, was named Lakeland Army Air Field. Thousands of men received part of their training here.

The following articles are from the archives of The Lakeland Ledger.

May 23, 1943

“Drane Field One Year Old and Still Growing with Much Vigor”
-New buildings, equipment added for men at Lakeland Army airbase

Drane Field is one year old—and the post this morning, with its numerous buildings and extensive equipment, is a big contrast to the bare site which the first troops found when they arrived to begin clearing the woods and scratching redbugs. Long rows of identical army barracks have replaced the tents in which the first troops to come here were quartered. The paved streets, named for Army officers, are posted with neat signs identifying them as MacArthur Boulevard, Roosevelt Road, Voss Avenue, and similar designations. Speed limit signs are placed at regular intervals to control the heavy traffic and vigilant MPs check on violations.

A drive through the base shows further evidence of its growth—base headquarters, squadron areas, dayrooms, mess halls, hospital, officers’ quarters, post exchange, theater, service club, chapel, and many other buildings. The base hospital is now fully equipped to care for the men at the field. It even has a maternity ward for wives of men stationed here and several births have been reported in the past few months. When the hospital was first set up its grounds were as barren as the rest of the field. Landscaping is underway, and grass, flowers, and shrubs have been planted to beautify the area. The base headquarters area is also being improved and landscaping is planned for other parts of the base later.

If Lakelanders observe that Drane Field soldiers look considerably better groomed these days than when the field was first established, it is probably due to the showers which have been installed throughout the field, replacing the improvised barrel showers which were the only bathing facilities available to the first troops stationed here.

Additional provisions for the comfort of the soldiers are being made constantly. Dayrooms have been built and furnished in various squadron areas, a service club has just been opened, and the field has its own theater. A chapel with a spire resembling that of an old-fashioned country church has been completed and church services are held here regularly. Now under construction is a new post exchange which will be better equipped than the one being used at present.

When the first troops arrived here, mess halls were unknown and meals were served outdoors. Now completely furnished mess halls are scattered throughout the field. A complete athletic program has been worked out and the special services office is planning additional recreation and entertainment for the men. The field will even have its own newspaper soon. Under the direction of the special services office and the public relations office, the first issue of “The Bombshell” is scheduled for publication next Saturday.

How many men have been trained at Drane Field during its first year and how many of them are now serving overseas is military information which cannot be revealed. But the work which has been done here is undoubtedly giving the Axis [Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan] a few headaches. As improvements continue, there will be more to come.
March 27, 1945

“Drane Field Closing to Be Started Immediately”

Announcement was made today of the temporary inactivation of Lakeland Army Air Field, with the closing of the field and suspension of all but routine administrative functions expected to be accomplished within six or seven weeks, according to Lt. Col. J.L. McBride, base commander. Personnel presently stationed here will be transferred except for the handful necessary to maintain administration at a skeleton level. The field, however, will remain a military installation.

“It is contemplated that the base will remain in the 3rd Air Force for possible future use as a re-deployment field,” Colonel McBride said. “However, use of the field as a training installation for combat flying groups and tactical service groups has been discontinued.” A re-deployment station processes units and troops that have already seen overseas duty, preparing them for new combat assignments in other theaters. Although there is high probability of such a conversion, no definite plans have been formulated. Shipment of equipment and the disposition of records are two problems which require a period of suspension and no final date has been set for the closing of the field.

Lakeland Army Air Field was officially activated in May 1942, as a sub-base of MacDill Field [in Tampa]. On Oct. 1, 1944, when the field became a part of the 3rd Fighter Command, the status of a full base was achieved. The authority for construction of an operational training heavy bombardment station at Lakeland Army Airport No. 2 was granted by letter from the commanding general, Army Air Forces, to the chief of engineers. An initial allocation of $3,275,046 was made to the Corps of Engineers and construction began in May 1942.

Of the 3,880 acres of land which comprise the reservation area, only 475 acres were purchased outright by the government. The remaining acres are leased from private individuals and firms. The cantonment area was constructed to accommodate 3,196 enlisted men and 958 officers, but housing and messing facilities were exhausted on several occasions by a sudden increase of personnel.

Extensive installations, equipment, and buildings now on the field present an interesting contrast to the barren expanse and swamps which confronted the original GI settlers here, who experienced hardships and privations sometimes not experienced by soldiers overseas. Mess was prepared and eaten out of doors, sanitary facilities were man-dug, and tents served as living quarters. All water was transported from Lakeland. Of the thousands of officers and enlisted men who have trained at Lakeland AAF some have gained a paragraph in the world history of the conflict by their intrepidity and ingenuity.

Air traffic at Lakeland Army Air Field has been fairly heavy, the average daily cycle of operations having been in excess of 100. Combat aircraft which have trained here have included B-17s, B-24s, B-26s, P-51s, P-40s, and A-20s, varying in weight from 8,500 pounds to 50,000 pounds. More than 15 groups ranging in type from heavy bombardment to specialized commando units and service groups of the old and new type have trained at Lakeland in the past 34 months.

October 19, 1945

“Drane Field Expected to Close Nov. 1”

Drane Field is expected to be closed by Nov. 1 except for a few firemen and engineers who will keep watch over Army property, Lt. Col. John L. McBride, commanding officer, said today. Meanwhile, the city is taking the first step to regain use of the field and there was a prospect that National Airlines might switch operations there from Lodwick. City Manager Charles Larsen said the field is wanted because of prospects that larger peacetime airliners, freighters, as well as passenger ships will soon be stopping in Lakeland.

Drane Field has longer runways than Lodwick—5,000 feet as compared with 3,500 feet—and will be needed to accommodate the larger ships of the immediate future, Larsen said. Larsen said National Airlines officials had discussed moving to Drane Field but that no definite plans had been submitted. Charles ("Dick") Bentley, National manager in Lakeland, also said there were no definite plans yet for moving.

Larsen said that the possible move was not altogether a result of the fatal airliner crash here two weeks ago; that the motive was more because larger ships are a prospect.

A standing Army force of 10 officers and 73 men are rapidly completing the job of cleaning up Drane Field where as many as 5,000 men once occupied the barracks that now are empty and ghostlike.
November 1, 1945

"Drane Field Is Closed at Midnight"

Drane Field reached the end of its military career last midnight. The post established in May 1942 was officially deactivated by order of the War Department after having served as a training sub-base and base for many thousands of men in the Air Corps.

Lt. Col. John L. McBride, commanding officer at Drane during recent months, announced its deactivation and made ready to report at Drew Field in Tampa. He left behind a detachment of 11 men who will continue on duty here for two weeks attending to details incident to deactivation. Most of the officers and men stationed at Drane when the deactivation order came through are being transferred to fields in Tampa; Sarasota; Savannah, GA; and Rapid City, SD.

Bombing planes figured most extensively in the training activities at Drane, especially during the first two years of operations. Lighter planes were used later, but the runways on the mile-square field were constructed for big bombers. The first troops arrived at Drane in May 1942. The first commanding officer was Col. Hugo P. Rush, and his assistants were Lt. Col. Pelham Glassford and Lt. Col. William R. Grobs. Captain Charles L. Jenette was the first public relations officer.

What civilian use will be made of Drane still is problematical. That has been some indication that National Airlines, now using the Lodwick airport, will shift to Drane, and Chamber of Commerce leaders are studying the possibilities offered by Drane as a shipping point for fresh fruits and vegetables.

December 13, 1945

"Many Soldiers Who Trained at Drane Field Now Residents Here"

When Drane Field was a roaring bomber base, many of its soldiers from northern states vowed they'd return to Lakeland to make their homes after the war. They said they liked the city's friendly spirit and balmy climate, and added that they were looking for a smaller city than New York or Chicago in which to begin their civilian careers. Many of them were just talking, for they went back to the Bronx or wherever they were from, and no one has heard from them since. But a surprising number of others actually did come back. More than a hundred ex-GIs from Drane Field are in Lakeland now, making a home for themselves and settling down to work in Florida industries.

This is on the authority of Miss Grace Pope, a counselor at the U.S. Employment Service office. She has talked to at least that many who were arranging for jobs. Clifford Ruthig is selling insurance, for instance, down here in this lush country, so far removed from Brooklyn, his home before the war. He married a Dade City girl while he was a staff sergeant legal clerk at Drane. Paul Zukowski is another who decided to live here following his marriage to a Floridian. He has started a plant nursery business and employed another veteran to help him. Zukowski married a girl who used to be the librarian at Drane.

Some, however, didn't have marriage as a reason for returning here. Andy K. is simply a former Drane private first class, down here from his home of Foster Mines, PA, and looking for a job. In much the same position is former Technical Sergeant Rex E. LaForest, from Piercefield, NY. One-time Master Sergeant Arthur D. McNaughton is here with his wife and child from Calvin, LA, training to be a supervisor at Lakeland Highlands cannery. An Army man of five years' standing, the sergeant was a line chief at Drane.

Candy salesman is the Lakeland job of William Donkocz, a former New Yorker who was stationed at Dundee and married a Winter Haven girl. Samuel Pace, a former Lodwick School flight officer from Philadelphia, is lining up a job as a flight instructor. Randall F. Gwin of Bowler Springs, VA, lived in Lakeland with his wife while he was a Drane Field sergeant. Now they are back and he is seeking employment. Former Staff Sergeant Andrew DeJulius, husband of a Lakeland girl, is working as a plumber here.

Miss Pope says that these are just a few of the GI Joes from northern states that have become Lakelanders.
The Lodwick School of Aeronautics (now Tiger Town)

The following has been reprinted from http://www.lakelandgov.net/library/speccoll/photographs/aero_hist.html:

An aerial view of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics (modern-day TigerTown)

The Lodwick School of Aeronautics in Lakeland, Florida, and the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy in Avon Park, Florida, were two of the many civilian owned flight schools in the United States under contract to the Army Air Corps in the years before and during World War II. Both of the schools, owned by aviation executive Albert Lodwick, were contracted to provide primary flight training to aviation cadets for service in the Army Air Corps. The Lodwick School of Aeronautics accepted its first students in September 1940 and the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy opened in October of 1941.

The Army Air Corps contracted with the civilian aviation schools in response to the outbreak of war in Europe and the shortage of trained pilots in the Corps. The agreements with the schools stipulated that the army would provide the cadets, the aircraft, and an approved curriculum. Everything else was to be provided by the civilian contractor. Everything else included army approved instructors, flight and ground school instruction, food, office space, recreational facilities, medical facilities, hangars, and an adequate airfield.

The Lodwick Aviation Military Academy closed in August 1944 and the Lodwick School of Aeronautics the following August. During its three years of operation, the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy hosted 5098 cadets, of whom 3418 graduated. The Lodwick School of Aeronautics had nearly 9,000 trainees, of whom 1,327 were British Royal Air Force cadets. More than 6,000 of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics cadets graduated and went on to advanced flight training and service in the Army Air Corps.

What was once the site of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics is now known as Tiger Town, the spring training home of the Detroit Tigers baseball team.

The following was taken from the December 4, 1942, edition of the "Lakeland Tourist News":

“Lodwick School of Aeronautics Now in 3rd Year Here”

The Lodwick School of Aeronautics, now in its third year of operation, has trained flying cadets from the U.S. Army Air Forces from practically every state in the union and many foreign countries, and has spent more than a million dollars in Lakeland, greatly accelerating the economic life of the community.

Graduates of this primary school, which is under the supervision of the U.S. Army Air Forces Southeast Training Center at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama, number in the thousands. Most of them are now flying Uncle Sam’s mighty bombers and speedy pursuit ships on the far-flung aerial battlefields of the world. Before they came to Lakeland they were the keen, alert young men you knew back in your hometown, whether it be in the Great Midwest, the North, the Far West, or the South. Now they are thoroughly trained airmen—defenders of democracy wherever they serve.

From Lakeland, the cadets go on to basic and then advanced schools, where they are graduated with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and receive their coveted wings.
History of School: The Lodwick School of Aeronautics, originally the Lincoln Flying School, has a rich heritage. The Lincoln School, located at Lincoln, NE, is one of the oldest in the country. Moved to Lakeland, it was one of the first nine private schools awarded contracts by the War Department to train pilots for the Air Corps. Eventually the name was changed to the Lodwick School of Aeronautics.

Begun more than two years ago, the flying school has expanded tremendously. So have school and army officer personnel. Two and a half years ago, 34 persons were on the payroll. Today there are more than 400 persons employed. The school facilities have been greatly expanded. The first cadets to arrive for their primary training two years ago were housed in the Thelma Hotel. Two barracks were soon completed and today the school has just finished construction of a third barracks and a new two-story administration and ground building. An additional hangar has been acquired and new additions to the mess hall, kitchen, and storeroom have been built to take care of the ever-increasing number of cadets in training.

British Contingent: Only American cadets are in training at the school at the present time, but a large number of Britishers have learned to fly here. The British contingents included students from such far-away places as South America, New Zealand, Shanghai, and all parts of the British Isles.

Practically all of the school's graduates, both American and British, have expressed a desire to return to Lakeland to make their homes once the war is over. The hospitality extended them by Lakelanders has made them feel at home during their training period.

The more than a million dollars which it is estimated the school has brought to Lakeland during its existence does not include the money paid to Army officers and enlisted men nor does it account for the salary of $75 a month paid to the cadets while they are in training.

Several hundred new families have come to the city from as far west as California and as far north as New Hampshire as a result of the school's locating here. Many of these have purchased homes and are making this their "home town."

Army Supervises: While the school is owned and operated by civilians, the 50th Army Air Forces Flying Training detachment, consisting of a number of Army officers and enlisted men under Major J.G. Merrell, commanding officer, supervise the school's training and operational activities. The flight training department is under the veteran leadership of M.D. Holman, who came to Lakeland from Lincoln. Serving under Holman are eight flight commanders, who with him supervise the work of the instructors.

"Opening the Schools"

Following the move from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Lakeland, the school's original obligation to the Army was still binding. The civilian-operated school was still obliged to provide ground and flight training, housing, board, medical and recreational facilities for the cadets. The Army provided the cadets, the planes, the Army personnel, and the training curricula for both the cadets and the instructors.

The agreement between the city and the school also called for more specific requirements. The city was to lease its entire Municipal Airport to the School. The city with the civilian operator would construct five buildings: two dormitories for 150 cadets; one
Chow time at the mess hall.

Combination recreation hall/hospital; one combination mess hall/kitchen; one academic hall for classes, and all would be ready for a September 14, 1940 opening. The city also agreed to move the original municipal hangar to a new location.

The housing and mess facilities that Lodwick provided were adequate, and the school even included a canteen for snacks and soft drinks. The medical facilities available to the cadets were limited and concentrated medical examinations, minor injuries and airsickness. The contractor provided transportation to the nearby military hospital at Lakeland Army Air Field (now Lakeland Linder Municipal Airport) in the event of emergencies and more extensive needs.

Albert Lodwick retained a professional public relations expert, Stan Hedberg, on his staff most of the time he operated the school. Because of Lodwick’s influential contacts, and a steady stream of important visitors, the national press, newsreel and wire services kept abreast of all the activities at the school. The attending cadets were likely to be on inspection at any time by some important Army officer, a famous politician, or a significant national personality being trailed by a swarm of reporters, photographers, and newsreel crews. The city of Lakeland made the national news more often in the time that the Lodwick School of Aeronautics was operating than any other time in its history.

Lodwick occasionally held “open house” at the school and invited the general public in to see the facilities. Visitors by the thousands turned out to see the planes and to watch the cadets fly. The cadets were often asked to march in local parades for holidays and special occasions, or to take part in other special civic events such as war bond drives. Besides their regular program of training, the cadets of the Lodwick School were kept very busy with a constant variety of things to do.

Training Pictures

“No one told me I’d have to learn how fly a chair first.” Cadets learn how to use the “stick”.

Oops! Some cadets require a little more instruction than others.

Play ball!! Royal Air Force cadets teach cricket to their American counterparts.
Civilian Employees of Lodwick — read the following passages and answer the discussion questions (#9 & #10) on the corresponding handout to gain more insight into the roles that civilians played in the everyday life at Lodwick School of Aeronautics.

During the years that the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy and the Lodwick School of Aeronautics were open, they employed hundreds of civilians. LSA employed more than 500 during its peak periods and LAMA over 300. Most of these were part of the maintenance crews, but many worked in the mess halls, school maintenance, and support services.

After American entrance into the war a general shortage occurred in the work force as more men entered the Armed Forces. This meant that the contractor had to recruit outside of the area for both the skilled and unskilled positions. There were other war industries in the area as well as other military installations which competed for the available work force, and some were able to pay more money. Lodwick was unable to keep wages competitive for some of his available positions because of War Department wage freezes.

Severe housing shortages, particularly in the Avon Park area, also made it difficult to recruit civilian employees. Avon Park eventually built, with federal assistance, 220 new housing units by 1943, and was negotiating to build another 160 more after their completion. The housing problems contributed to large turnovers particularly in the flight maintenance department. Despite these problems, the schools provided certain economic benefits to their respective cities by their consumption of goods and services, thereby generating more revenue into the community. 
Gary Mormino points to an apt symbol for the change brought to Florida by World War II: Cypress Gardens. Before the war, says Mormino, a history professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Cypress Gardens lured people to Florida to enjoy the natural attractions of sun and water and the skiing and diving shows glamorized by Esther Williams movies. "It was the prototypical Florida tourist attraction. And within three decades after the end of the war, you get Disney World," Mormino said.

Florida would never be the same following the technological changes and population growth prompted by the war. "It represents the great transition," Mormino remarks. "Central Florida would have developed much as it has. (The war) accelerated events by a decade or two. It was a great economic jump start."

Even before Pearl Harbor, Polk County, like the rest of Florida, saw money and people begin pouring in. Between 1940 and 1942, there were two Army Air Force bases and two privately run flight training schools established in the vicinity: the Lodwick (originally ‘Lakeland’) School of Aeronautics, Drane Field Army Air Base, the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy in Avon Park, and Bartow Army Air Base.

Lakeland’s population jumped 40 percent during the war years, from 22,000 to more than 31,000. The payroll at the Lodwick School of Aeronautics, now the site of Tigertown, was more than $45,000 a month. One family that came to Lakeland was R.G. and Lucile Beeler. Beeler was a 25-year-old flight instructor at a private school in Lincoln, Nebraska, when the school was purchased by Chicago businessman Albert Lodwick, who promptly moved it to a warmer climate. Lodwick had a contract in his pocket from the Army Air Force to train pilots.

Lodwick knew about aviation. He had managed Howard Hughes’ 1938 flight around the globe. A Harvard MBA, he also “knew where the money was,” in Beeler’s words. Shortly after arriving in Lakeland, Lodwick made Beeler director of flying at a planned second school in Avon Park. Due to urgency and a lack of housing, Lodwick purchased a hotel for the cadets to live in. Beeler says the school was dubbed “Country Club of the Air” because of the plush accommodations. “We just got our feet on the ground when December 7th (the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) hit," Beeler recalls. “After that, things started mushrooming.” Beeler had eight weeks to give his cadets 75 hours of flying time in open-cockpit Stearman biplanes.

Dance Partners The schools were welcome in the county. Articles in The Lakeland Ledger announced dances at area hotels and pleaded for young women to come as dance partners for the cadets. “Young Lakeland matrons” acted as hostesses at a welcome center in Munn Park.

The Lakeland and Avon Park schools saw 8,647 American and British cadets pass through their hangars before they were shut down in late 1945. “No question, they played a big, big role in the war,” Beeler emphasized. In September 1945, Lodwick received a letter from General H.H. “Hap” Arnold, commander of the Army Air Force: “Without the devoted assistance of you and your associates the AAF (Army Air Forces) would have been in a hell of a fix.”

As American GIs fought overseas, there were both sacrifices and abuses at home. Mormino tells how in spite of gasoline rationing and restrictions on travel, the tourism industry and dog and horse tracks barely slowed down. “There was the black market. You could always get a Pullman berth (a luxurious seat on a train). It was a sad chapter. Wives would follow their husbands to Miami where they were stationed and all the hotels were taken by tourists,” Mormino says.

Citrus Flourished The citrus industry flourished. The military was a big consumer of orange juice, and although frozen concentrate wasn’t developed until later, a dehydration process did produce a powder which was sent to England. In 1942-43, Florida’s harvest surpassed California for the first time. But if the citrus truck farms boomed, they did so by employing a new insecticide—DDT—which was used extensively in Polk County. Residents were delighted to find it also killed mosquitoes. Mormino made a
chilling discovery: a notice in the newspaper advising housewives not to hang out laundry due to spraying, placed next to a picture of children playing outdoors.

Citrus farms also benefited from forced labor. “Work-or-fight” laws were enacted, aimed at the chronically unemployed. “You have sheriffs rounding up loafers and putting them to work, cases of peonage. It’s an unsettled history,” Mormino comments.

In Winter Haven, the workforce included German POWs from Camp Blanding. Strangely, given passions and extremist views (on the day after Pearl Harbor, the Winter Haven News Chief declared, “This is a war of extermination”), the Germans were treated well by growers and the populace. In fact, says Mormino, in some cases they were treated better than African-Americans. “There are a couple of poignant stories about black soldiers being forced off trains so POWs could travel.”

Roles Changed The war aggravated already tense race relations. “There was a series of race riots in Florida at military bases,” Mormino says. “Black soldiers were drawing a line and saying they were not going to accept Jim Crow.”

Women, too, were finding a new role in society. In Lakeland, Lois Basel was a 25-year-old wife and mother whose husband, Joseph, was with the Army overseas. A friend talked her into applying for a job at the Lodwick School of Aeronautics. There was a shortage of workers to service the aircraft and, says Basel, “I just wanted to do something for my country.” Basel went to see Don Emerson, the maintenance director at the Lodwick School. “We went out all dressed up and he took one look at us and said, ‘Are you sure you want this job?’” Basel laughs. Hired as a ‘line girl,” Basel and other women fueled the planes, gave them a pre-flight check and started them up by spinning the propellers. “Just before I quit, they were teaching us to pack parachutes,” she recalls.

As troops returned, they often settled in communities where they trained. The population growth accelerated, but with the growth, there were strains on social services such as education and health care. Many more found Florida an ideal vacationland and had the money to go there in faster cars on better roads. And the GI Bill sent many to college. Florida Southern College’s enrollment quickly grew to over 1,000, with men outnumbering women for the first time.

Combined with technological advances which made life more convenient and comfortable, the boom brought by World War II put a modest, underdeveloped county well on the road to its modern condition. Mormino asks, “What would Florida be like today without DDT, air conditioning, and interstate highways?”

### Lakeland’s Post-WWII Growth

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<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>22,068</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>61,350</td>
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<td>Airports</td>
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<td>Drive-in movies</td>
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<td>Hospitals</td>
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<td>Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td># of students</td>
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</table>
1.) Is Mr. Harden a native Lakelander? If not, do you think that he is still a credible source for information about the impact that World War II had on Lakeland? Explain your answer.

2.) Mr. Harden speaks about rationing in his interview. Why would rationing have been enforced during World War II?

3.) Besides rationing, what inconveniences to everyday life does Mr. Harden speak about in this interview? Is there anything in today's post-9/11 world that you can compare this to?

4.) In this interview, Mr. Harden mentions the USO. Use the Internet to find http://www.uso.org/pubs/8_14_19.cfm, http://www.uso.org/pubs/8_14_2480.cfm, and http://www.uso.org/pubs/8_14_34.cfm. Write a brief paragraph or two (on your own notebook paper) on each site to explain what the USO is, what it does, and how that is relevant to this lesson and today.

5.) How many air bases/air training facilities were based in Lakeland? What was the immediate impact of these facilities?

6.) What were the lasting effects of both the Lakeland Army Air Field and Lodwick School of Aeronautics after the end of World War II?
Reading Notes-Handout #2

Introduction Paragraph

1.) What major U.S. air base was the Lakeland Army Air Field at Drane Field a sub-base of?

2.) What natural advantages can you think of that allowed Florida to become a hotbed of air training during World War II?

First Article-May 23, 1943

3.) The first article from The Ledger included in this assignment provides before-and-after information comparing conditions at the Lakeland Army Air Field when it first opened in the spring of 1942 to one year later. Create a T-chart containing this information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lakeland Army Air Field Opens</th>
<th>Lakeland Army Air Field - 1 Year Later</th>
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</table>
Second Article- March 27, 1945

4.) Given that the date of this article coincided with the winding-down of the war in Europe, why do you think the training of pilots in Lakeland was gradually phased out? What purpose was this base to have served after this?

5.) What hardships did the first GIs on this base encounter? How does the author compare their plight to soldiers on the front?

Third Article-October 19, 1945

6.) Once Drane Field was deactivated, where did the men stationed there go? What effect might this have had on their families?

7.) What sorts of planes were mostly used for training at Drane Field?

8.) Besides the displacement of military personnel who had made Lakeland their home, what was also a concern among civic leaders regarding the closing of Drane Field?

Fourth Article-December 13, 1945

9.) Why did so many soldiers from northern states vow to come back and make Lakeland their home? Did they ever come back?

10.) Based on the information in this article, what prediction about population growth and decline can you make about Lakeland in the years immediately after World War II and beyond?
1.) Why did the Army Air Corps contract with Albert Lodwick’s privately-owned aviation schools to train pilots for the war effort? What were the advantages of doing this as opposed to the Army training the pilots themselves?

2.) How many pilots did the Lodwick schools successfully train in the WWII years (in other words, how many graduated?)?

3.) According to the December 4, 1942, edition of the Lakeland Tourist News, what benefits did graduates of the air schools receive?

4.) From where did the Lodwick School of Aeronautics move to Lakeland?

5.) Why did the Lodwick School of Aeronautics need to increase its civilian workforce from 34 to over 400 in two-and-a-half years?

6.) Besides American pilots, what other nationality was trained at Lodwick? About how many pilots from this nation were trained there? How did these pilots, and American pilots as well, feel about Lakeland during their stay?

7.) Describe the obligations that the military school had to follow as a result of its contract with the Army. Do you think that this was a fair arrangement? Explain your answer.
8.) What positives could come from inviting celebrities, heads of government, and the general population to view the Lodwick schools, or from allowing the cadets to march in local parades and be active in the communities? What negatives could there be?

9.) What difficulties did the Lodwick air schools in Lakeland and Avon Park encounter in recruiting and keeping quality workers during the war? How did they counter this in Avon Park?

10.) What economic benefits did the schools provide to their respective cities?
Reading Notes-Handout #4

1.) According to Gary Mormino, what local attraction was a symbol for the progress brought to Florida by World War II?

2.) Does Mormino think that Florida would have experienced tremendous growth without the onset of WWII? If so, then what benefit did the war have on Central Florida’s development?

3.) According to Mormino, what effect did the rationing of gasoline and restrictions on travel have on people? Did everyone adhere to these guidelines? Give an example?

4.) Florida’s citrus industry flourished during WWII, partly due to increased demand from GIs overseas, but also due to technological advances. What two technological advances helped Florida’s citrus industry to prosper? Were there any negatives to these advances?

5.) How did citrus growers find labor for their harvests?

6.) Why do you think that German prisoners-of-war were treated better than African-Americans in some places during the war? How did some African-American soldiers react to this second-class treatment?

7.) What large segment of the population found a new role in society during World War II? What do you think happened to the gains made by this group when the GIs came home from the war?
8.) What were the advantages and disadvantages did Polk County’s post-WWII growth?

9.) What evidence of Lakeland’s growth can you see in the chart included with this reading assignment?

10.) Lakeland’s population increased by 17,962 from 1940 to 1950 (over 81%!!!); however, the number of schools in the Lakeland area remained the same. What do you think were the immediate effects on local schools in the post-WWII years?
Master Note Sheet

Directions: Use the following information to complete your Processing Assignment.

1.) Lakeland’s Drane Field air installation was called Lakeland Army Air Field and was owned and operated by:
   a. The U.S. War Department
   b. Albert Lodwick
   c. The City of Lakeland
   d. MacDill Field in Tampa

2.) The Lodwick School of Aeronautics was different from the Lakeland Army Air Field in that:
   a. Lodwick was privately-owned and operated
   b. Lodwick was contracted by the U.S. Army to train pilots for the war effort, but the school had to provide the housing, facilities, and care for the cadets while the Army provided these amenities for pilots-in-training at the Drane Field base
   c. Lodwick trained several hundred Royal Air Force cadets from Great Britain as well as thousands of American pilots
   d. All of the above

3.) The Lakeland Army Air Field at Drane Field had runways in access of 5,000 feet; the Lodwick School of Aeronautics had runways of 3,500 feet. Which base do you think was able to train pilots of large bomber-type aircraft? Explain your answer.

4.) Which training facility hired the most civilians, Lakeland Army Air Field or Lodwick School of Aeronautics? What effects did this have on the local economy?

5.) Several thousand pilots received training in Lakeland during World War II. Was their Lakeland experience generally a positive one or was it negative? Explain your answer.

6.) Why did Lakeland’s population grow exponentially immediately following World War II?
Processing Assignment: Writing a Letter Home

Directions: Pick one of the following roles: (a) a pilot-in-training who has been sent to one of the two air bases in Lakeland during WWII; (b) the wife of a pilot-in-training that has moved to Lakeland with her husband; or (c) a local resident who has been hired to work at one of the training schools or air bases. If you chose Options A or B, write a letter home to a friend or family member about your experiences in your new hometown; if you chose Option C, write a friend or relative out-of-state. Your letter must include the following:

1. Salutation – 5 points

2. Inclusion of 5 facts about Lakeland (use chart provided in Handout #4; only 1940 figures, please) – 25 points

3. Mention the USO and activities handled by USO for benefit of trainees – 5 points

4. Mention of rationing and the effects on everyday life – 10 points

5. Purpose of training – 25 points

6. Type of aircraft being used for training – 10 points

7. Mention of either Germany or Japan – 5 points

8. Is the letter written in a conversational tone? – 10 points

9. Closing – 5 points

Total points - 100

*EXTRA CREDIT – you will receive ten points extra for including any information about everyday prices of goods during any discussion of rationing in your letter. You will need to do research for this. Old newspapers dating back to this period (which can be found on microfilm at local libraries) often included sales advertisements, just as today’s newspapers do. If you decide to do this, please include the source from which you got your information.
IV. Assessment

1.) Lakeland was used by the United States military as primarily a ________________ during World War II.
   a. weapons development laboratory
   b. center of operations for pilot training
   c. food production center
   d. prisoner-of-war camp

2.) Which of the following were located in Lakeland during World War II?
   a. Lakeland Army Air Field and Lodwick School of Aeronautics
   b. MacDill Field and Lodwick Aviation Military Academy
   c. Homestead Air Force Base and Mayport Naval Station

Matching: Match the following bases with their description.

3.) Lakeland Army Air Field  
   a. now called TigerTown; privately-owned aviation training facility that was used by the U.S. military to train potential pilots for the war effort; the military provided the pilots, planes, and approved curriculum, and the school provided the food, housing, medical care, recreational facilities, offices, etc.

4.) Lodwick School of Aeronautics  
   b. located at Drane Field; owned and operated by the U.S. War Department for the training of pilots for the war effort; more able to train bomber pilots due to longer runways; a sub-base of Tampa’s MacDill Field

5.) The Lodwick School of Aeronautics, originally called the Lincoln Flying School, was first based in ____ before relocating to Central Florida.
   a. Miami  
   b. Jacksonville  
   c. California  
   d. Nebraska

6.) Ultimately, the pilot-training programs in Lakeland were:
   a. successful (thousands of pilots were successfully trained, and money flowed into the local economy through civilian airbase jobs and pilots spending money in local businesses)
   b. unsuccessful (most pilots didn’t pass, and those that did didn’t like living in Central Florida)

7.) What lasting effects did Lakeland’s wartime training facilities have on the city, even if the facilities themselves have changed or no longer exist?
   a. almost immediate economic and population growth
   b. very gradual population growth and not much economic growth
   c. population decline and economic stagnation
   d. WWII had no effect on the Lakeland area

8.) “Even though African-American soldiers were expected to fight with the same courage and tenacity as their white counterparts, they were not treated by their government with the same respect and dignity. Instead, they were treated as second-class citizens. In several instances in Florida during World War II, black soldiers were forced off trains or out of restaurants so that German POWs could travel or eat.” This statement shows that:
   a. African-American soldiers were fighting racism at home and enemies of America abroad;
   b. German POWs were used as needed labor during WWII;
   c. The government was ready to begin treating African-Americans as equal citizens;
   d. African-Americans enjoyed full equality under the protection of the Constitution after the war.
9.) Two advances in technology allowed Florida to surpass California in citrus production for the first time during World War II. They were:
   a. forced labor and German POWs
   b. dehydration process and insecticides
   c. tractors and improved irrigation
   d. improved transportation methods and frozen concentrate

10.) “…the citrus farms boomed, [and] they did so by employing a new insecticide—DDT—which was used extensively in Polk County.” What advantages and disadvantages did this new wartime advance in the citrus industry possess?
V. Resources

http://www.lakelandgov.net/library/speccoll/photographs/aero_hist.html - Lodwick School of Aeronautics Photo and Memorabilia Collection

http://www.lakelandgov.net/library/speccoll/exhibits/lodex_hist.html - The Lodwick School Of Aeronautics: A Photo Exhibit

http://www.airforcebase.net/aaf/schools.html - WWII Army Air Forces Contract Flying Schools

http://www.fsu.edu/~ww2/fl_during ww2/war-timeline.htm

http://www.lakelandgov.net/library/speccoll/manuscripts/military/milair.html - Military/Aeronautics