Global in its breadth, World War II affected millions of lives. For my research assistantship, I read, transcribed, and digitized letters from Lawrence E. Vaughan, a GI stationed in the Philippines and Japan. The relationship between the overseas GI and loved ones back home is seen through Vaughan’s eyes through his letters to his wife and parents. Using other primary source documents and secondary sources, I filled in the holes within Vaughan’s narrative through annotations, which identify and explain the different events and people Vaughan wrote about.

Letters and documents from GIs shed light on how these men, barely out of high school, risked their lives, sometimes by choice, but mostly as a result of being forced through the draft. The Digital History of World War II Project culminates in the publication of Lawrence Vaughan’s letters, allowing researchers, students, and those interested in GI experiences greater access to documents depicting his individual experiences to be kept alive for future generations.

In my digitization efforts, I began in Fall 2015 transcribing over thirty letters from the Lawrence E. Vaughan Collection. After transcribing, I annotated the letters to provide the context of each document; without understanding the context, wider trends within the war or additional information may not be known to outside researchers or the public. For my annotations, I used databases such as JSTOR and Embracing Defeat and Peter “The GI War Against Japan,” to provide a background on the general experience of GIs in the Pacific. After the transcriptions and annotations are complete, the letters will be uploaded through Scripto and onto the Institute on World War II’s website.

**Methods**

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**Results**

While not yet complete, the efforts to digitize the Lawrence Vaughan Collection will culminate in their publication on the Institute for World War II’s website. Though not on the frontlines, Vaughan had an interesting war experience. His letters will allow researchers access to material on the relationship between GIs and the homefront, GI life in non-combatant roles, and American interactions with native peoples in the Pacific.

**Sources**

- Lawrence E. Vaughan Collection. Institute on World War II and the Human Experience, Florida State University, Tallahassee.