



John P. Sheahan Papers (R0203)

Collection Number: R0203

Collection Title: John P. Sheahan Papers

Dates: 1943-1944

Creator: Sheahan, John P., 1916-1944

Abstract: The John P. Sheahan Papers contain a microfilm copy of letters written during World War II by John P. Sheahan Jr. to his wife, Grace. Sheahan served with the 2306th Quartermaster Service Company, training at camps in California, Florida, and Virginia. He died at Slapton Sands in the English Channel on April 28, 1944.

Collection Size: (1 roll of microfilm)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *John P. Sheahan Papers* (R0203); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were loaned for microfilming to the University of Missouri by the Dent County Museum on September 17, 1984 (Accession No. RA0244).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the John P. Sheahan Papers can be found in the following collections:

World War II Letters (C0068)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, December 6, 1984. Revised by Kathleen Seale, May 26, 2021.

Biographical Note:

John P. Sheahan Jr. was born January 10, 1916 in Saint Louis, Missouri to John P. and Vita Modesta *Manning* Sheahan. John married Grace Hawken in 1942. He enlisted in the United States Army on February 3, 1943 and left for training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His basic training took place at Camp Young near Indio California, Camp Haan, and Camp Ono. Sheahan's battalion of quartermaster personnel moved to the Amphibious Training Base at Fort Pierce, Florida, in September 1943. His training there and at Camp Pickett, Virginia, was geared toward the coming invasion of Europe, and included a mock invasion launched off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia, in October. He shipped to England in late January 1944.

John died on April 28, 1944. While taking part in Operation Tiger, a rehearsal for D-Day, off Slapton Sands, England, Sheahan's ship, LST 531, was attacked and sunk by German E-boats. Due to military secrecy Grace Sheahan was not told the details of her husband's death. The 3206th Quartermaster Service Company was decimated, 39 were killed outright, 9 listed as wounded, and 156 listed as missing. John along with other members of his unit are listed on the Tablets of the Missing in the Cambridge American Cemetery. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

Grace Hawken was born September 11, 1908, in Saint Louis, Missouri. She worked as a stenographer from the time she was 20. After her first husband's death in 1944 she enlisted in the Women's Army Corp on March 22, 1945 serving just over a year. She also worked as a medical technician at O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield. Grace married George V. Skelton in 1948 later moving to Salem, Missouri where George died in 1974. Grace died in Ironton, Missouri on June 5, 1986 and was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery near her parents.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

John Sheahan's letters to Grace Hawkins Sheahan begin on 13 February 1943 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Sheahan was en-route to the Desert Training Center at Camp Young near Indio, California. His letters were censored after he shipped to England in 1944, with the names and location of his stations purposefully omitted. The last letter in the collection is dated April 18, 1944, just ten days before Sheahan died in the English Channel. Grace kept the collection of wartime letters from her first husband intact. They were mounted in a scrapbook which was ultimately donated to the Dent County Museum in Salem, Missouri. Except for a few pieces of V-Mail, the letters are in chronological order.

Container List:

Roll 1 v. 1 John P. Sheahan letters, 1943-1944

Index:

Index Term	Medium
Camp Haan (Calif.)	v. 1
Camp Ono (Calif.)	v. 1
Camp Pickett (Va.)	v. 1
Camp Young (Calif.)	v. 1
Fort Leavenworth (Kan.)	v. 1
Fort Pierce (Fla.)	v. 1
Gass (Calif.)	v. 1
Military camps	v. 1
Sheahan, John P., 1916-1944	v. 1
Skelton, Grace Hawken Sheahan	v. 1
Slapton Sands, Battle of, England, 1944	v. 1
United States. Army. Quartermaster Service Battalion, 538th	v. 1
United States. Army. Quartermaster Service Company, 3206th	v. 1
World War II, 1939-1945	v. 1