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AND

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP:

A STUDY IN COALITION WARFARE

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Jeffrey Harley
Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy (ret.)
Student ID 25831727
Postgraduate Programme in
Politics and
International Relations

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Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Jeffrey A. Harley

ABSTRACT

This is a study in coalition warfare using a historical case study of Admiral William S. Sims in the Great War to reveal a number of coalition lessons and characteristics. Although some characterize the “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain as an outgrowth of the Second World War, this thesis examines the role of Admiral William S. Sims in creating the foundation of that relationship in the First World War and throughout the interwar years. In the naval sphere, a link was forged by personal friendships and shared practices that culminated in effective employment of U.S. naval forces in support of Great Britain in the First World War. Specific structures created by Sims included the “London Flagship,” a Planning Section, an Intelligence Section, as well as other informal mechanisms to enhance cooperation and camaraderie during and after the war. Sims also identified lessons of coalition war at sea about questions including command and control, the use of convoys, civil-military relations, and exploitation of intelligence. Some of these lessons have applicability to modern coalitions and their effectiveness.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 KEY PERSONNEL INTERACTIONS.....	66
FIGURE 2 ALLIED SHIPPING LOSSES.....	86
FIGURE 3 FORCE COMPOSITION OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES OPERATING IN EUROPEAN WATERS.....	105
FIGURE 4 THE LONDON FLAGSHIP ORGANIZATION.....	110

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
A DIFFERENT HISTORICAL OUTCOME?.....	3
MARITIME CHALLENGERS.....	6
THESIS ORGANIZATION.....	9
THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	12
CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP.....	13
LITERATURE.....	13
LITERATURE GAPS.....	39
METHODOLOGY.....	45
CHAPTER 2 PEOPLE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND MUTUAL SUPPORT: THE ROOTS OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP	51
INTRODUCTION.....	51
SIMS' CAREER BEFORE THE GREAT WAR.....	52
SIMS' READINESS FOR COMMAND IN THE GREAT WAR.....	60
STRATEGIC RIVALRY BUT OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION.....	63
KEY INTERACTIONS AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS.....	65
U.S. NAVY DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP & INTERACTIONS.....	66
AMERICAN INTERACTIONS IN EUROPE.....	70
ROYAL NAVY INTERACTIONS.....	73
THE LONDON FLAGSHIP STAFF.....	75
THE ROLE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.....	77
THE VIEW FROM GREAT BRITAIN.....	83
CONCLUSION.....	91
CHAPTER 3 THE STRUCTURES OF WAR	93
INTRODUCTION.....	93
NECESSITY AS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.....	93
THE LONDON FLAGSHIP.....	102
THE AMERICAN NAVAL PLANNING SECTION.....	111
DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION.....	115
OPERATIONAL AND NAVAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATION.....	118
DIPLOMATIC ASSESSMENTS.....	121
PLANNING AND INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION.....	124
THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION.....	130
CONCLUSION.....	135

CHAPTER 4 SIMS IN THE INTERWAR YEARS AND THE LESSONS OF THE MARITIME WAR.....137

INTRODUCTION.....137
SIMS AS THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE PRESIDENT AFTER THE WAR....137
THE JANUARY 7, 1920 LETTER.....142
NO PLANS FOR WAR.....148
LACK OF MATERIAL READINESS.....154
LACK OF A POLICY TOWARDS ALLIES.....158
LACK OF A WHOLEHEARTED EFFORT.....163
ACTING ON INCOMPLETE INFORMATION.....164
AMERICAN FOCUS ON THE WRONG THEATRE.....167
TESTIMONY COUNTERPOINTS.....170
LESSONS FOR COALITIONS.....171
COALITION ALIGNMENT.....171
MANAGING THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY.....177
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL ORDER..180
MODERN COALITIONS: “YOU CANNOT SURGE TRUST”.....181
COALITION TRENDS FOR THE MODERN DAY.....183
CONCLUSION.....187

CHAPTER 5 SIMS AND CONTINUITY TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR...189

INTRODUCTION.....189
OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES TO COHESION.....189
BASEBALL AS AN EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN CULTURE.....194
THE QUEENSTOWN ASSOCIATION.....196
COOPERATION BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR.....199
RELATIONSHIP CONTINUITY TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR.....207
CONCLUSION.....209

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS.....210

INTRODUCTION.....210
ASSESSING THE GREAT WAR COALITION.....211
SIMS’ CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE LITERATURE.....213
GREAT WAR OPERATIONS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY.....216
SIMS AS AN OPERATIONAL COMMANDER.....225
SIMS’ MANAGEMENT OF RAPIDLY CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES.....230
SIMS’ RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.....232
SUMMARY OF NEW INSIGHTS.....239
CONCLUSION.....241

BIBLIOGRAPHY	245
APPENDIX A KEY DATES IN THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL SIMS.....	270
APPENDIX B MARITIME TIMELINE TO WAR.....	275
APPENDIX C THE AMERICAN NAVAL PLANNING SECTION LONDON MEMORANDUMS.....	278
APPENDIX D LETTER FROM ADMIRAL SIMS TO SECRETARY DANIELS DATED JANUARY 7, 1920.....	291
APPENDIX E LETTER FROM PRESIDENT WILSON TO ADMIRAL SIMS JULY 4, 1917 & ADMIRAL SIMS RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT WILSON JULY 7, 2017.....	306
APPENDIX F SOURCES OF RIVALRY AFTER THE GREAT WAR.....	310
APPENDIX G UNPUBLISHED POEM BY ADMIRAL SIMS.....	327

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

I cannot express too strongly my appreciation of the cordial terms in which, on laying down the command of the U.S. Naval forces in European waters, you convey your recognition of the sincerity and zeal with which we have endeavoured to our utmost to assist you in your momentous task. As you say, the harmony and success of this co-operation form a new precedent, and one which is of the highest value to the future in which such vast issues hang on the unity between our two countries in ideals and in action.¹

These words from Winston Churchill to Admiral William Sowden Sims, U.S. Navy, sent on March 31, 1919 during Sims' transit home to the United States after the Great War clearly embody the thanks of a grateful Secretary of State for War and Air. In addition, the statement reflects the unique relationship forged between the United States Navy and Royal Navy.² Understanding this relationship and Admiral Sims' contributions to it is important since it created a pathway to overcoming significant challenges in the interwar years and because it facilitated American support to the Allies in the Second World War. Without this relationship, the history of the United States and the Allies would have been quite different.

It would be too easy to explain the relationship between the two navies by saying that the United States and Great Britain had shared cultures, a shared language, and similar political assumptions. In reality --- a fact that is often forgotten --- the

¹ *Letter from Winston Churchill to Admiral William S. Sims* dated March 31, 1919. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 50. When the letter was sent, Sims was embarked in RMS MAURITANIA returning to the United States.

² See Churchill's address at Westminster College found at "Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech, "Sinews of Peace." March 5, 1946, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, CWIHP archives at <http://digitalarchiv.wilsoncenter.org/document/116180> accessed January 4, 2019.

nations had fought previous wars with one another. More importantly, war between the United States and Great Britain in the First World War was just as likely as a war with Imperial Germany due to differing perceptions of neutral shipping rights, a large and politically powerful German and Irish immigrant population that had a natural bias against Great Britain, and an inherent competition rooted in the rise of the United States as an international power and as a naval power.

During the Great War, the relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy, unlike those of the Armies of the Allied and Associated powers, involved an extraordinary level of cooperation including the first ever command of British naval forces by an American Commander, Admiral Sims, as well as unparalleled intelligence and planning efforts. When Admiral Sims assumed command over Royal Navy forces at Queenstown for a brief period in June 1917, this marked the creation of what today is known as a Combined Force Maritime Component Commander which is common in today's maritime coalitions to provide a unified command structure.³ To this end, Sims created specific "structures" --- meaning American support organizations that were functionally integrated with British equivalents --- such as the "London Flagship," a Naval Planning Section, an Intelligence Section, and other informal mechanisms to enhance cooperation and camaraderie during and after the war. These included baseball and other organizations such as the Queenstown Association designed to perpetuate this "new precedent" and distinctive type of relationship into the future. Despite significant disagreements regarding neutral rights as well as a shipbuilding rivalry in the interwar years leading up to the Second World

³ The Combined Force Maritime Component Commander is a Navy Flag Officer responsible for the command and control of multinational maritime forces. A Supreme Commander gives orders to the commanders of component forces, and Component Commanders can give orders to officers of any nationality within their component.

War, these structures and the personal relationships that they engendered nonetheless facilitated continued partnership after the war and especially in the execution of the Second World War.

A DIFFERENT HISTORICAL OUTCOME?

The development of a unique and lasting relationship between the two navies and the two nations is quite extraordinary given the political conditions and exponential change occurring in that era. In exploring the development of the relationship during the Great War, it should be noted the U.S. entry into the First World War on the side of the Allies was not a foregone conclusion. Liam and John E. Nolan describe the tension between the United States and Germany and Great Britain noting, “Early in the First World War President Woodrow Wilson compared the British to thieves and the Germans to murderers, inasmuch as the British, he said, seized property, whereas the Germans took lives which were lost forever.”⁴ This, of course, suggests Britain was merely the lesser of two evils.

At a strategic level, a conflicted United States remained an insular nation even after the Spanish American War that added overseas possessions, and despite efforts by President Theodore Roosevelt to expand the geostrategic worldview of the United States. Demographics also played a key role in U.S. isolation with large Irish-American and German-American populations that pressured the Wilson Administration to stay out of the First World War. At the start of the First World War, “Germans were the largest non- English speaking minority group in the U.S. at the time,” and the 1910 census in the United States showed more than eight million

⁴ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 37-38.

German-Americans or nearly nine percent of the total population.⁵ For the Irish-Americans, the percentage of the U.S. population was even greater if one counts first and second generation Irish-Americans that totalled thirteen percent of the population in 1890 with further immigration spurts that continued well past the American depression.⁶ With such large percentages of the population exerting political influence, the constituencies simply could not be ignored although “what emerges from the available election data, however, is the clear impression that there was no dramatic swing away from Wilson in the majority of areas with large Irish populations.”⁷ Nonetheless both ethnic minorities had the potential to exert considerable influence in underpinning American desires to avoid war.⁸

In the maritime domain, navies before the First World War also faced enormous challenges in technological adaptation and in logistics. With today’s rapid assimilation of technology, we easily forget the challenges that navies faced in transitioning from sail to steam as well as the logistical burden of acquiring fuel for the new steam-powered ships. The technology of sailing vessels and its motive power

⁵ Robert Siegel, “During World War I. U.S. Government Propaganda Erased German Culture,” Heard on *All Things Considered*, April 7, 2017, at <https://www.npr.org/2017/04/07/523044253/during-world-war-i-u-s-government-propaganda-erased-german-culture> accessed on December 30, 2018.

⁶ Pew Research Center, “From Ireland to Germany to Italy to Mexico: How America’s Source of Immigrants Has Changed in the States, 1850-2013” found at <https://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/from-ireland-to-germany-to-italy-to-mexico-how-americas-source-of-immigrants-has-changed-in-the-states-1850-to-2013/#total> accessed on August 13, 2018.

⁷ See Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 139, but the broader data used by Ward is William M. Leary, Jr., “Woodrow Wilson, Irish Americans, and the Election of 1916,” *Journal of American History*, Volume LIV, Number 1, June 1967, 57-72. For a broader overview, see Edward Cuddy, “Irish-Americans and the 1916 Election: An Episode in Immigrant Adjustment,” *American Quarterly*, Volume 21, Number 2, 1969, 228-243 at JSTOR at www.jstor.org/stable/2711576. The assessment, though uncertain, is that the Irish-American population were staunchly Democrat voting on broadly American issues such as peace whereas German-American population were mostly Republican and that the larger German-American population may have offset the Irish-American vote.

⁸ Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 140.

was essentially stagnant for centuries until steam locomotion changed the face of the maritime world.⁹ The new steel hulls of warships also brought forth an arms race in design as well as in gunnery calibres and ranges which gave a moderniser like Sims a common goal with like-minded British officers. Technological obsolescence was only a day away with the potential for a longer-range weapon or a naval gun with greater firing capacity. Additionally, the new ships were exponentially more expensive and created new geostrategic demands for overseas bases that only a few nations could afford though other nations nonetheless sought to procure these new warships for national prestige or to provide security for their maritime shipping.

As the dominant power of the day, Great Britain was best poised for this naval race but was challenged by a rising though very insular United States and by an Imperial Germany and Japan that sought greater influence in global affairs. With its extensive global empire, the demands upon the Royal Navy were also global, especially in time of war. Great Britain faced resource challenges and an inherent competition between commerce protection and preparation for great fleet engagements that would ultimately require choices within her assertion of sea power and sea control. As Professor Andrew Lambert notes in his recent *Seapower States: Maritime Culture, Continental Empires and the Conflict that Made the Modern World*, “Between 1890 and 1914 the British state created a level of popular navalism unimagined since Pericles’ day, and did so in competition with the rising naval might of Imperial Germany. British sea power was mobilized to deter, not fight, the

⁹ Nicholas A. M. Rodger, “Weather, Geography and Naval Power in the Age of Sail” in Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan, *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), 178-200. Rodger correctly points out that weather and geography were limiting factors in fleet interactions but nonetheless were static for centuries.

ambitions of the latest great power to seek continental hegemony.”¹⁰ One cost of naval planning that focused upon battleships was an inadequate supply of ships to protect commerce.

MARITIME CHALLENGERS

Before the First World War, Britain obviously recognized the challenges posed by the upstart navies of the United States and Imperial Germany. The insular United States deployed its naval assets on a global scale with naval deployments in the Western Pacific and South America. Despite the possessions ceded to the United States in the Spanish-American War and its newly espoused grand strategy of global commerce and a corresponding navy to protect it, the nation nonetheless viewed naval warfare largely as a coastal event most likely to be played out in the waters near the United States.¹¹ Its growing Navy, however, offered potential for something far greater.

Clark G. Reynolds describes this potential in terms of global concerns but hemispheric focus. He notes:

With shared suspicions over Germany in the Caribbean, Britain gradually turned over its policing to the United States, including in 1900-01 the right to build and fortify a canal across Panama...Roosevelt consciously courted British favor, as anti-German feeling mounted in the United States. As a result, Britain between 1904 and 1906 (officially by 1911) withdrew its North American squadron from Bermuda, closed the base at Jamaica, abandoned St. Lucia altogether, and downgraded and turned over the major fleet installations at Halifax and Esquimalt to the Canadian government.

But American naval expansion, becoming global, would soon rival the Royal Navy in overall strength...After the outbreak of war in 1914, many American Admirals presumed that Germany would defeat Britain and then cross the

¹⁰ Andrew Lambert, *Seapower States: Maritime Culture, Continental Empires and the Conflict that Made the Modern World* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018), 300.

¹¹ The U.S. Naval War College credits Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan as the architect of the first grand strategy for the United States and certainly reflects the grand strategy that remains in effect for the United States. See Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783* (Dover Publications, Inc, 1987). First Published in 1890 by Little, Brown, & Co., Boston.

Atlantic to stake out an empire in the Western Hemisphere... So the United States planned to fight Germany alone...[and] the Americans maintained a strong unilateral and independent strategic naval stance for deterring Germany or for fighting its fleet on the open sea.¹²

As for Imperial Germany, it had little choice but to focus its maritime capabilities in the ports of Northern Germany which, fortunately for the Allies, later directly enabled the “distant blockade” of the English Channel and the North Sea northern exits by the Royal Navy’s Grand Fleet.¹³

The rise of new maritime challengers also led to a requirement for Great Britain to protect long sea lines of communications.¹⁴ Halford Mackinder articulated a poignant reminder of the value of navies in peacetime noting:

You free the seas equally for great and small traffic if you destroy or pen down the enemy’s men of war...it must not be thought that power, even power specialised for war, accomplishes results only in wartime...Power is measured in conflict just as values are measured in exchange, but we do not exchange everything whose value we estimate, nor need we fight out every conflict in which powers are compared...In other words, power is essential no less for international friendships than for conflicts and in both ways adequate power makes for peace.¹⁵

Facing challengers such as Germany and with a rising U.S. Navy and Imperial Japanese Navy on multiple naval fronts due to its global requirements, the Admiralty in London stood at the centre of a global network of maritime lines of communications. To offset perceived strategic shortfalls, the Royal Navy progressively developed a collaborative maritime strategy with the United States Navy starting when the United States entered the First World War in April 1917.

¹² Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 427-428.

¹³ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., 2017), 95. Originally published in 1920.

¹⁴ H.J. Mackinder, “Man-power as a Measure of National and Imperial Strength,” *The National Review* 1905, Volume 45, 136-143.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

During the World Wars of the twentieth century, the Anglo-American coalition centred upon global commercial interests, similar liberal aspirations, and cultural connections separated by an ocean and a common language.¹⁶ The economic dimensions of cooperation are deftly explained by Professor Paul Kennedy in his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*.¹⁷ In 1914, Great Britain possessed a warship tonnage of 2,714,000 tons whilst the United States possessed 985,000 warship tonnage although the industrial potential of the United States was nearly double that of Great Britain in 1914.¹⁸

Kennedy also describes the economic ties between the United States and Great Britain during the Great War noting:

By April 1, 1917, indeed, inter-Allied war credits had risen to \$4.3 billion, 88 percent of which was covered by the British government. Although this looked like a repetition of Britain's eighteenth-century role as "banker to the coalition," there was now one critical difference: the sheer size of the trade deficit with the United States, which was supplying billions of dollars' worth of munitions and foodstuffs to the Allies (but not, because of the naval blockade, to the Central Powers) yet required few goods in return. Neither the transfer of gold nor the sale of Britain's enormous dollar securities could close this gap; only borrowing on the New York and Chicago money markets, to pay the American munitions suppliers in dollars, would do the trick. This in turn meant the Allies became ever more dependent upon U.S. financial aid to sustain their own war effort.¹⁹

These elements reflected essential ties between the Royal Navy and U.S. Navy that were enabled by a distinctive relationship between professional naval officers, and these naval relationships are one focus of this thesis.

At the end of the day, the cooperative war fighting structures between the U.S.

¹⁶ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 87-88.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 201-203.

¹⁹ Ibid, 268.

Navy and the Royal Navy created in the First World War reflected partnerships and cooperation formed by a shared need. Despite serious concerns over neutral rights by the United States, the naval alliance between Great Britain and the United States also reflected the personal relationships among individuals serving in positions of strategic influence. A particularly critical tie between the two navies was the relationship between Admiral John Rushworth Jellicoe and Admiral Sims. A special bond also developed between Sims and Admiral Lewis Bayly who commanded the operational Royal Navy forces in Queenstown, Ireland. Together, Jellicoe, Sims, and Bayly pioneered the ties which shaped the naval relationship during the First World War and beyond.

THESIS ORGANIZATION

This thesis is a case study in coalition warfare. Specifically, it examines the role of Admiral Sims in enhancing, and in many cases creating, the foundational and organizational structures that enabled Anglo-American cooperation in the First World War as well as, in some cases, during the interwar years before the Second World War. Sims directly influenced war efforts through his personal relationships with British leadership before the war and then, during the war, he contributed extensive insights in naval operations as well as pressure for convoy operations that helped to alter the path towards victory rather than defeat. The next chapter will therefore explore Admiral Sims' career in more detail as well as the personal relationships and the key individuals with whom Sims interacted in the First World War.

Although the personal interactions were the key enabler to institutional collaboration, Sims also created special organizational structures to operationally support the complex war fighting organization that was required as a function of improved communications, intelligence, and the much broader scale of conflict that

led to the name “world war.” For example, Sims’ creation of an American Naval Planning Section and a separate Intelligence Section in London at the “London Flagship” helped to fulfil the immediate operational and tactical needs between the two navies and ensure operational success. The relative novelty of Intelligence and Planning Sections at that time, particularly at the individual staff level, was a significant part of Sims’ reformist vision. Other structures such as the infusion of American athletics and interwar fraternal organizations like the Queenstown Association helped to bridge the inherent tensions between coalition partners though some argue the wartime relationship dissolved during the shipbuilding rivalry of the interwar years.²⁰ Chapter 3 will therefore explore these organizational structures because they were fundamental to creating a foundation for the special relationship. Although the interwar relationship was strained by concerns over neutral rights as well as the shipbuilding rivalry that is well documented elsewhere, enough of the personal relationships if not the actual organizational foundation remained in place to allow relatively seamless integration with Great Britain once the United States entered the Second World War.

With an understanding of the personal relationships and the new foundational structures in place, Chapter 4 will then explore the lessons of the Great War as seen through the lens of Admiral Sims when he sought to illuminate readiness shortfalls as part of his reformist vision to improve the U.S. Navy and ensure a higher level of naval preparedness in future wars. This research will provide an in-depth look at the maritime lessons of the First World War --- many of them now forgotten or lost in the distant fabric of time --- as articulated by Sims in his 1920 letter to Secretary Daniels

²⁰ See, for example, Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars: Volume I: The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929* (South Yorkshire, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2016). Originally published in 1968.

outlining the failures of naval execution during the conflict.

After the war, and in an effort to exploit a new opportunity to reform his beloved Navy, Sims pursued an opportunity to highlight lessons from the Great War in the hope of avoiding similar mistakes in any future wars. Sims specifically claimed eleven violations of the principles of warfare: lack of planning for the war, a delayed policy in support of the Allies, the lack of wholehearted support, inadequate material readiness, lack of ships in theatre, inadequate staffing, inability to select subordinates, decisions made with incomplete information, misguided plans that were impractical or impossible, and lack of support to the Commander in the field as well as interference with the Commander's actions.²¹ It is worth noting that many of these problems are in some way related to the organizational problem of dividing responsibilities between the theatre commander and higher headquarters. Additionally, chapter 4 will examine the characteristics of modern coalitions to include development of relationships in peacetime, managing new technologies, and the need to understand the Law of the Sea.

Chapter 5 will then explore elements of continuity up to the Second World War. Although peacetime allowed many of the wartime structures to dissolve or fade in the face of a "rising" power rivalry, the elemental ties remained only to be reinvented or reinvigorated in the Second World War. A significant and new contribution of the thesis will be an examination of the structures put in place by Admiral Sims as well as the continuity of the personal relationships forged in the crucible of the Great War that carried over to the Second World War.

With these pieces in place, Chapter 6 will specifically focus on summarizing

²¹ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

the response to the research question as well as an exploration of critical questions that challenge the existing historiography. Finally, this concluding chapter will review Sims' contributions to the maritime coalition and examine new insights derived from the research.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

With this outline in mind, the research question is:

To what extent did Admiral William Sowden Sims through his relationships and the development of new war fighting constructs facilitate the creation of a naval coalition in the First World War, and did this experience benefit relations in the Second World War?

As a subset of this research question, we will examine some critical questions that will also contribute new insights in the study of the Great War and coalition construction. First, we will examine Sims' contributions as reflected in the existing historiography. There are substantial conflicts in the historiography regarding the role of Sims during the war, and we will place ourselves in the existing literature to provide updated interpretations of questions that remain unanswered. Secondly, we will explore whether Sims was an operational commander, or was he running a rapidly expanding naval headquarters overseas? Third, we will explore the extent to which Sims dealt successfully with the rapidly changing technologies that were one of the characteristics of the Great War. Finally, we will examine Sims' tense relationship with his seniors (particularly Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Shepherd Benson). We will review whether this tension was symptomatic of the new communications technologies which offered these higher commanders greatly improved opportunities to communicate with one another, or were there other factors at play? Addressing the broad research question as

well as these subset questions will contribute to new insights.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

After the Second World War, Winston Churchill described the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain noting:

Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of society, but the continuance of the intimate relationship between our military advisors, leading to common study of potential dangers, the similarity of weapons and manuals of instructions, and to the interchange of officers and cadets at technical colleges. It should carry with it the continuance of the present facilities for mutual security by the joint use of all Naval and Air Force bases in the possession of either country all over the world.²²

The term special relationship can thus be characterized by three things: ties of affection, ideological affinities that lead to shared objectives, and compatible working practices and structures that facilitate cooperation.

The exigencies of war and the personal relationships forged before the First World War ensured that the first two features were strongly present in Admiral Sims and many of his British counterparts. A major objective of this thesis is therefore to evaluate the third criterion --- the compatible practices and structures that facilitated integration and war fighting. There are two pathways to this objective: first by providing an account of Admiral Sims' role in this naval coalition and second by showing how this acted as a catalyst for two nation states to overcome political differences.

²² Churchill's address at Westminster College found at "Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech, "Sinews of Peace." March 5, 1946, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, CWIHP archives at <http://digitalarchiv.wilsoncenter.org/document/116180> accessed January 4, 2019.

LITERATURE

Much has been written about the Great War, and centennial memorial events have led to an explosion of new works and research on the subject. None of these works, however, has explored in depth the organizational structures put in place by Admiral Sims or the Senate hearings that took place after the First World War which served to highlight the maritime lessons of the Great War. This thesis will exploit some of the new works but will focus on archival research and original sources in conducting a case study on Sims' contributions to the naval coalition between the United States and Great Britain in the Great War. The amount of archival material on Sims is vast in part because of his prolific writing which includes exhaustive letters and reports. There is a natural tendency to cite Sims' perspective in the absence of other materials, but one must be cautious about a historiography that depicts Sims as either saviour or someone co-opted by British thinking. This thesis will seek to provide a more balanced perspective. Among the many superb archives that provide source documents for Sims, one invaluable source that documents Sims' thinking as well as his many personal interactions is his letters to his wife Anne located in the Naval War College archives.²³ The quality of the letters creates what is essentially a wartime diary for Sims. The letters document in detail Sims' duties and perceived challenges whilst offering private impressions of his personal interactions and decision-making. The other main sources for the thesis research are listed below.

The definitive biography of Admiral Sims remains the biographical work of his son-in-law Elting E. Morison. Morison's *Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy* offers a thorough treatment of Sims' entire life and, despite a familial

²³ *Admiral Sims letter to his wife Anne, April 30, 1917*. Naval War College Archives, Sims Collection. These very personal letters are a treasure trove of historical information and Sims' reactions to his engagements whilst overseas.

association, Morison is arguably balanced in noting all sides of the controversial life that sought significant reform and change in such dynamic times.²⁴ In addition to biographical details, Morison provides exhaustive detail regarding the U.S. Navy organization as well as the internal politics that influenced naval readiness before and after the First World War. A significant flaw in Morison's work that limits historians, however, is that the book frequently references "the Sims papers" (located in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the U.S. National Archives, and the U.S. Naval War College) but without providing enough annotation to be useful in replicating the research.

Admiral Sims' own work, *The Victory at Sea*, was a 1920 Pulitzer-Prize winning book that was "written in response to a demand for some account of the generally misunderstood submarine campaign of the Great War and, particularly, of the means by which it was defeated."²⁵ The book was principally authored by Burton Hendrick of Doubleday, Page & Company, but it amounts to an autobiographical sketch of the maritime challenges faced by the Allied navies. Hendrick and Sims, whose collaboration on the book began in April 1919, produced a series of articles in the monthly magazine *The World's Work* --- a pro-business but anti-immigration journal --- that were completed by April 1920 with the articles being the foundation of the book that was published in September 1920.²⁶ The release of the book postdates the Senate hearings between March and May 1920 in which Sims was highly critical of naval leadership during the war. Interestingly, Sims gave credit to Hendrick for his

²⁴ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942).

²⁵ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

²⁶ David S. Trask, Introduction to William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), xxi.

assistance in writing though they exchanged letters as to whether Hendrick's robust role in drafting the book warranted Hendrick's name appearing on the cover.²⁷ In the end, the book cover includes only Sims' name and is written in the first-person. Hendrick and Sims, however, were constrained in part by the need to sell books and to be less controversial than was natural to Sims as one of the U.S. Navy's most recognized agitators for reform. The book thus achieves the goal of detailing the war against the submarine threat, but Sims' broader goal of showing American lack of preparedness was pursued through Senate testimony in early 1920 rather than through the publication of this volume later in the year.²⁸

Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly offers a fascinating account of the maritime fight in his *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* written just before his death in 1938.²⁹ Bayly served in Queenstown as Senior Officer on the Coast of Ireland in 1915 and then Commander-in-Chief Coast of Ireland in 1917. He assumed command in July 1915 from Vice Admiral Charles Henry Coke after the sinking of *Lusitania*.³⁰ The book details Bayly's long involvement in the anti-submarine campaign as well as providing extraordinary illumination on the Queenstown Command and particularly the integration of the Royal Navy with the U.S. Navy. His efforts toward building a maritime coalition are best highlighted by his niece Miss Violet Mary Annesley Voysey in her short preface to the book in which she notes, "It

²⁷ *Letter from Sims to Burton Hendrick, August 3, 1920*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 63.

²⁸ Despite the Senate Hearings on naval unpreparedness in 1920, Sims left the publishing of the controversial details of unpreparedness to his former subordinate and friend Tracy Barrett Kittredge who in 1921 published *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticisms by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 202-203. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

²⁹ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939).

³⁰ *Coke, Charles Henry*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 196/138.

is no secret that Admiral Bayly's dream, for which he worked during all the years following the Armistice, was to bring together the United States and the British Empire in a closer unity."³¹ The details of Admiral Bayly's efforts in defending the Western Approaches and leading a combined force of Royal Navy and U.S. Navy created an almost seamless amalgamation --- that is, U.S. forces operating under command of Allied Commanders, and a unity of effort that ultimately contributed to a special relationship.

Admiral John Rushworth Jellicoe also offers his own comprehensive review of the strategic and tactical problems faced while serving as First Sea Lord in his *The Crisis of the Naval War*.³² Like Sims' book, it includes an analysis of the defeat of Germany's submarine campaign as well as an explanation of Royal Navy policy upon the entry of the United States into the war. The book also offers a concluding chapter on Jellicoe's perspective on the future to include the role of technology upon the profession of naval arms which is relevant in the understanding of how coalitions manage technological change. Jellicoe also published *The Grand Fleet, 1914-1916: Its Creation, Development and Work* in 1919 providing a detailed overview of the organization of the Royal Navy in the years before American entry into the War.³³ A more focused volume was also published in 1934 titled *The Submarine Peril: The Admiralty Policy in 1917* which provides insights into the crisis of the submarine challenge in 1917.³⁴ This book offers a detailed perspective on convoy operations

³¹ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939), 11-12.

³² John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., 2017). Originally published by Cassell and Company, Ltd., in 1920.

³³ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Grand Fleet, 1914-1916: Its Creation, Development and Work* (Houston, Texas: Sextant Press, 2017). Originally published in 1919 by George H. Doran Co.

³⁴ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Submarine Peril: The Admiralty Policy in 1917* (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1934).

which Jellicoe notes was considered several times but was unable to be fully supported due to lack of sufficient escort ships.³⁵ Additionally, the book provides a chapter dedicated to “Naval Co-operation with the United States” in which Jellicoe details his strong relationship with Admiral Sims noting, “He was an old friend of mine, and realizing the difficulty that the naval authorities in the United States might feel in appreciating at a distance of 3,000 miles the situation caused by the unrestricted submarine warfare, I gave Admiral Sims the fullest details...as to our efforts to combat the growing menace.”³⁶

Prime Minister David Lloyd George offers a richly detailed multi-volume set of war memoirs that provided extraordinary detail on the decision-making during the Great War. Especially revealing is a riveting account of civil-military relations and the challenges he faced as Prime Minister in dealing with the Admiralty and Admiral Jellicoe. In his Volume III of *The War Memoirs of David Lloyd George 1916-1917*, Lloyd George also recounts the challenges in countering the German threat and unrestricted submarine warfare in a chapter titled, “The Peril of the Submarines.”³⁷

All of these memoirs and biographies of figures who were central to naval cooperation in the Great War offer personal though sometime conflicting details on the execution of the war but, with the exception of perhaps David Lloyd George’s memoirs, are often unable to transcend to the diplomatic stage and thus leave the reader to choose from several interpretations of how events transpired. Nonetheless, Sims’ book and Bayly’s memoirs coupled with Sims’ biography provide an enhanced understanding of the relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy at least

³⁵ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Submarine Peril: The Admiralty Policy in 1917* (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1934), 121-122.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁷ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916-1917, Volume III* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934).

in Europe.

Vice Admiral Henry B. Wilson, who served as Commander, United States Naval Forces in France as a Rear Admiral, provides a detailed history of U.S. operations in France in his *An Account of the Operations of the American Navy in France During the War with Germany*.³⁸ Admiral Wilson documents the organization and methods used to coordinate convoy operations to the harbours of France and details the command arrangements with the French naval leadership.

American Vice Admiral Albert P. Niblack completed an extensive and newly rediscovered essay on convoy operations from his experience as Commander of the U.S. Patrol Squadrons based in Gibraltar and as Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Mediterranean during the Great War. Niblack's essay *Putting Cargoes Through: The U.S. Navy at Gibraltar During the First World War 1917-1919* was lost in the archives of the Naval Institute Proceedings until recently discovered and edited for publication by Professor John Hattendorf of the U.S. Naval War College in 2018.³⁹ Although focused on Gibraltar, Niblack provides an excellent summary of convoy operations in the Mediterranean in general as well as the Atlantic crossings required by merchant ships.

Edward Keble Chatterton, who served as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, offers a detailed maritime history based on his first-hand experiences and augmented by research and personal accounts from fellow

³⁸ Henry B. Wilson, Vice Admiral, Commander United States Naval Forces in France. *An Account of the Operations of the American Navy in France During the War with Germany* at www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/a/account-operations-american-navy-france-during-war-germany.html accessed December 25, 2020.

³⁹ Albert P. Niblack, *Putting Cargoes Through: The U.S. Navy at Gibraltar During the First World War 1917- 1919* (Gibraltar: Calpe Press, 2018). Niblack was a Rear Admiral when he commanded forces in Gibraltar and ultimately retired as a Vice Admiral.

mariners.⁴⁰ Chatterton served as a commanding officer in the Auxiliary Patrol, essentially small craft used for minesweeping and anti-submarine patrols.

Chatterton's work offers a sweeping history of the maritime war and is particularly valuable for understanding the evolution of convoys from the French coal trade in February 1917 and the "protected sailings" for the Scandinavian trade in December 1916.⁴¹ Specifically, Chatterton tells us:

Before the end of 1914 the Auxiliary Patrol had been divided into twenty-one areas embracing the entire British Isles... This arrangement, with a Senior Naval Officer in charge of each area, made for efficiency, and the number of units was regulated by the nature of the coast --- e.g., inlets, bays, shoals, on or off the trade routes, etc. --- and by the temptation which was held out to mine-layers or submarines. For instance, it needed the loss of *Lusitania* to show the importance of auxiliary patrols off the south-west of Ireland.⁴²

Additionally, Chatterton recalls the secret voyage of Sims to London in late March 1917 which was designed to ensure neutrality whilst establishing an American liaison to examine the Allied war effort.⁴³

For a more focused history of the merchant navy, Sir Archibald Hurd's three volume *The Merchant Navy* provides a well-researched official history written "by direction of The Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence."⁴⁴ In Volume III, Hurd details the submarine campaign, patrol work, defensive arming, the Auxiliary Patrol, and, ultimately, the success of the convoy system. Of particular note, the volume documents the efforts of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron providing the official history of the squadron. Unfortunately, this official history, like those identified

⁴⁰ E. Keble Chatterton, *The Auxiliary Patrol* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1923).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 216-217.

⁴² E. Keble Chatterton, *The Auxiliary Patrol* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1923), 216-217.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Archibald Hurd, *The Merchant Navy, Volume III: History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: John Murray, 1929).

below, reflected a natural bias towards documenting heroism and success since they were written close to the end of the war and were also subject to Admiralty influence.

Another three volume official history directed by the Committee of Imperial Defence is C. Ernest Fayle's *Seaborne Trade, Volume III, The Period of Unrestricted Warfare*.⁴⁵ This volume of 554 pages details the "history of seaborne trade during the war, [and] covers the period from the opening of the "unrestricted" submarine campaign to the Armistice."⁴⁶ Of particular value is the comprehensive analysis from a global perspective of the shipping losses and how convoy operations enabled a turn-around of the dire circumstances facing Great Britain in April 1917.⁴⁷

Sir Henry John Newbolt wrote Volume IV and V of *Naval Operations* as part of the History of the Great War series based on original documents.⁴⁸ The first three volumes were written by Sir Julian Corbett, however Newbolt's Volume V covers the Submarine Campaign and includes operations in the Mediterranean. This volume is invaluable for its appendices which document the volume of trade escorted under the convoy system as well as Allied and enemy losses. There is a separate case with extraordinary maps that show the anti-submarine campaigns as well as convoy routes and mine barrages. Newbolt also quotes original documents extensively providing a rich understanding of the historical points being made.

Unfortunately, the official histories provide little insight into the role of Sims

⁴⁵ C. Ernest Fayle. *Seaborne Trade, Volume III: The Period of Unrestricted Warfare. History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: John Murray, 1924).

⁴⁶ Ibid, preface. Fayle also notes the dramatic economic impact upon the belligerents after the war in a chapter titled, "The Legacy of the War."

⁴⁷ C. Ernest Fayle. *Seaborne Trade, Volume III: The Period of Unrestricted Warfare. History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: John Murray, 1924).

⁴⁸ Henry John Newbolt, *Naval Operations, Volume V: History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1931).

or his staff. American Flag officers are listed merely as “representatives” as they attended various conferences. At a strategic level, the official histories give credit to the American navy for a spirit of cooperation.⁴⁹ For example, Newbolt notes:

Meanwhile, conferences had been taking place in the United States. On April 10, Admirals M.E. Browning and Grasset, the Allied Commanders-in-Chief of the North American and West Indies Station, met the American naval authorities at Hampton Roads. After a preliminary discussion they went on to Washington, and a conference was held in the Navy Department buildings, with Mr. J. Daniels, the Secretary of the Navy, acting as Chairman. In his opening remarks Mr. Daniels said that the American navy wished to cooperate with the Allies “to the utmost of its power,” and both he and the American Admirals made good their promise.⁵⁰

Interestingly, in Senate testimony in early 1920, Sims denied that the U.S. Navy did its utmost, and instead claimed there was a “lack of wholehearted effort” which may indicate that official sources have a tendency to gloss over tensions that may exist in a relationship.⁵¹

Despite this, the operational processes between the two navies during the First World War are largely neglected in historiography. One exception is that the U.S. efforts to integrate U.S. naval forces under Admiral Bayly are clearly recognized with a detailed account in Newbolt’s *Naval Operations* which documents Sims’ temporary assumption of command when Admiral Bayly took a brief period of rest in June 1917. The official history shows the Admiralty concurrence with Sims commanding Royal Navy ships as well as the influential role Sims played in the American convoy debate. Newbolt, interpreting original message cables, notes:

⁴⁹ Henry John Newbolt, *Naval Operations, Volume V: History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1931), 34.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920* paragraph 78 (3). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

On June 18, Admiral Bayly left Ireland for a week's leave, and the Admiralty agreed that, during his absence, Admiral Sims should take command of the British and American naval forces. At the time, Queenstown was by far the most important of the local commands....One of the first requests made of Admiral Sims, after he assumed command, was that he should detach three destroyers to meet three troop convoy groups on June 23 and 25. Admiral Sims knew that the authorities at Washington were very doubtful about the Admiralty's new policy; and he seized the opportunity of urging them to raise no further objections to the convoy system.”⁵²

In truth, American leadership including President Wilson was supportive of the convoy system though there was still hesitation in June 1917 because the Navy Department believed submarines would be defeated by arming merchant vessels.⁵³

One official history that shows continuity between individuals and organizational structures is *The Administrative History United States Naval Forces in Europe 1940-1946*.⁵⁴ This three volume history was written by Tracey Barrett Kittredge and offers detailed insights into the evolution of American naval support to the Allies in the Second World War. The author served on Sims' intelligence staff in the First World War and in the Naval Forces Europe command during the Second World War. This continuity of personnel like President Roosevelt, Admiral Stark, and Tracey Barrett Kittredge, and the resurrection of operational structures in the Second World War will be one focus of this thesis.

As a comprehensive global history of the First World War, the three volume *Cambridge History of the First World War* edited by Professor Jay Winter offers a

⁵² Henry John Newbolt, *Naval Operations, Volume V: History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1931), 55-56.

⁵³ *Secretary Daniels letter to Admiral Sims received June 24, 1917*. Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington D.C., General Plans and Naval Policies, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

⁵⁴ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*, Volumes 1-3. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe. These volumes may also be found in the Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Tracey Barrett Kittredge Papers.

“fourth generation” exploration of the many facets of the Great War.⁵⁵ In a chapter titled “The war at sea,” Professor Paul Kennedy examines why “sea power played a relatively limited role in the Great War” and how geography had forced Germany into an inferior position.⁵⁶ Kennedy also argues that the American contribution would be found in troops and war loans to the Allies and, in particular, he credits the U.S. destroyer force, American minefields, and troop escorts for supporting the war effort.⁵⁷ Kennedy also contributes a superb bibliographical essay that serves well as a checklist for understanding the existing literature --- official histories (“poor, apologetic, and dull”), memoirs, interwar biographers, original documents, broad surveys, focused surveys --- on the war at sea during the First World War.⁵⁸

To examine the lessons of the Great War at sea, the two volume 3,445 page testimony in *Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* published in 1921 provides an exhaustive review of the maritime lessons of the war.⁵⁹ These hearings, conducted between March 9, 1920 and May 28, 1920, had a curious origin fourteen months after the war when Admiral Sims testified before Congress on the matter of military awards or decorations. Sims was outspoken as usual and testified before the Senate in January 1920 that he believed that medals awarded to naval personnel were inappropriate because of undue influence by Secretary Daniels who had dissolved the review board for the decorations in favour of

⁵⁵ Jay Winter, ed., *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁵⁶ Paul Kennedy, “The war at sea,” *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War* Jay Winter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 321, 330.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 343.

⁵⁸ Paul Kennedy, “The war at sea bibliographical essay,” *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War* Jay Winter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 667-669.

⁵⁹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921).

his personal viewpoints.⁶⁰

The testimony provided by Sims on the medal controversy grew into a much broader set of hearings based upon the revelation of a detailed letter from Sims to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels dated January 7, 1920 that Sims conveniently pulled from his pocket during the Senate hearings on decorations.⁶¹ The letter outlined Sims' complaints as to how the Navy Department had mismanaged the war. Sims harboured grave concerns regarding the lack of readiness and planning for the war, and his cables to the Navy Department stressed the need for greater urgency and planning for in-theatre execution. Though Sims' public account of the war in his book *Victory at Sea* focused on the many contributions of the U.S. Navy in winning the war, Sims, ever the reformer, thought that the lessons of the war's execution must be brought to light to ensure better preparedness for any future conflict. Sims' frustration with the media and public relations during the war is also reflected in an unpublished poem titled "Let's Get on With the War" (see Appendix G) in which Sims called out the need to focus on the war and not be concerned with who gets the credit.⁶²

The Senate testimony also provides interesting insights into the perspective of essentially all the U.S. Navy's senior military leadership as well as a comprehensive review of the pre-war state of the U.S. Navy and its striking unpreparedness. At the end of the day, however, the hearing failed to achieve Sims' objective of naval reform and instead the hearings concluded with limited tangible output other than a rich

⁶⁰ *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the Second Session of the Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 59, Part 4.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, January 1920), 3997.

⁶¹ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920.* U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁶² The poem is an uncatalogued item from recent donations by the Sims' family to the U.S. Naval War College in 2018. It is part of the "Sims Family Papers" from the collection of Anne H. Sims. Interestingly, the family was hesitant for many years about releasing the poem out of fear that Admiral Sims would be characterized as arrogant.

historical record of the maritime execution of the Great War. The hearing vote split on party lines probably as a function of the upcoming national elections. Sims had hoped, of course, for much more given his claims of the enormous loss of life and unnecessary costs. Sims, for his part, was simply part of a reformist faction within the Navy that wanted better alignment and reorganization of the responsibilities of the Navy Department as well as long-term readiness improvements for the Navy.⁶³

Compilations of primary references are also available to enable research in this era. Michael Simpson, in his *Anglo-American Naval Relations 1917-1919*, offers a superb compendium of archival materials, and especially letter extracts.⁶⁴ This book is a nine-part compilation of letters and references covering the period of January 1917 to May 1919 with each of the sections having a brief introduction by the author. In addition to the introductions, the compilation offers a rich resource for analysis. Other printed compilations include Arthur S. Link's sixty-nine volume *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* and David E. Cronon's *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921*, which offer insights into the maritime conflict and high-level decision-making through the eyes of President Wilson and his Secretary of the Navy.⁶⁵ These two compilations of documents show Sims' influence in shaping decision-making at the strategic level. Although Sims was privately criticized by Admiral Benson and President Wilson as being co-opted by the British Admiralty, one can also see the desire by naval leadership to obtain Sims' concurrence, and Sims' cables were

⁶³ William Sims, "The Inherent Tactical Qualities of All-Big-Gun, One-Caliber Battleships of High Speed, Large Displacement, and Gun Power," *Naval Institute Proceedings* Volume 32, Number 4 (December 1906), 1337-1366. See also William Sims, "Military Conservatism," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Volume 48 Number 3 (March 1922), 347-363.

⁶⁴ Michael Simpson, ed., *Anglo-American Naval Relations 1917-1919* (Worcester, Great Britain: Scolar Press for the Navy Records Society, 1991).

⁶⁵ Arthur S. Link et al, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985-88) Volumes 51-58. David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963).

frequently forwarded by Secretary Daniels directly to the President.⁶⁶ The compilations also included direct correspondence between President Wilson and Sims (included as Appendix E).

Another compilation of illuminating documents includes the (U.S.) Navy Department Office of Naval Intelligence's Historical Section Publication Number 7 *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923* which compiles the documents created by Sims' Planning Section in London between the end of 1917 through 1918.⁶⁷ The various reports of the American Naval Planning Section are broadly reviewed in Chapter 3 and are listed in Appendix C.

Among the many secondary sources including broader surveys of the First World War, Professor David Trask's writings are particularly valuable in that he details Anglo-American cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy in his *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo American Naval Relations, 1917-1918*.⁶⁸ Trask details the supportive role played by the United States as a function of British primacy in planning and as reflected in the late entry into the war by the United States. The book focuses principally on U.S. Navy cooperation with the Royal Navy but offers limited insights into the constructs of integration which require more historical assessment. Trask also provides a focused coalition assessment in his *The AEF & Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* in which he details the policy and strategic decisions of Allied and Associated powers after the American entry into the war.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921), 1,972.

⁶⁷ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923: Publication Number 7*. Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923).

⁶⁸ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972).

⁶⁹ David F. Trask, *The AEF & Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press

Specifically, Trask details General John J. Pershing's vehement opposition to "amalgamation" --- that is, U.S. forces operating under command of Allied Commanders --- in the employment of the American Expeditionary Forces. This opposition is in striking contrast to Sims' highly cooperative amalgamation into the Queenstown Command.

An edited volume that is insightful about the role of the American Admirals in the Great War is James C. Bradford's *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930*.⁷⁰ This book has detailed chapters dedicated to Admiral Benson, Admiral Mayo, and Admiral Sims. These chapters are significant in that they offer an updated perspective on these leaders. For example, Mary Klachko offers an essay titled "William Shepherd Benson: Naval General Staff American Style" that suggests that Benson's role was more significant than historiography maintains. Klachko (with David Trask) also wrote a comprehensive biography *Admiral William Shepherd Benson: First Chief of Naval Operations* that codifies Benson's achievements as Chief of Naval Operations.⁷¹ Additionally, David F. Trask, in his essay "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" suggests that it is appropriate to re-evaluate the role of Sims in London. Trask tells us that Sims' post-war reputation was aided by historiography including the aforementioned biography by his son-in-law Elting Morison.⁷² Unfortunately, Trask does not evaluate the constructs created by Sims to execute the war, and, more significantly, fails to give

of Kansas, 1993).

⁷⁰ James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990)

⁷¹ Mary Klachko with David F. Trask, *Admiral William Shepherd Benson: First Chief of Naval Operations* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1987).

⁷² David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 296-297.

credit to Sims for properly assessing the realities of the war in theatre. The war fighting constructs and Sims' many other contributions will be explored in this thesis, and the main historiographical differences will be reviewed in chapter 6.

The best single book for an overall history of the maritime war, however, is Paul Halpern's *A Naval History of World War I*.⁷³ Halpern provides a masterful work documenting the navies of all the participants in the Great War, and his bibliography and detailed maps are unmatched providing another useful guide for scholars studying this era. In addition to broad strategic overview, Halpern provides a detailed look at the war from a global perspective with an emphasis on the Mediterranean. One criticism of the book, though it may be unreasonable for a general survey, is that Halpern does not use his extensive knowledge to draw unified conclusions or lessons that would have been beneficial to the reader.

Despite historical reviews of amalgamation, there is a paucity of books that deal with coalitions or alliances other than from the perspective of national interests or the mutual pursuit of an object. Richard L. DiNardo, in *Coalition and Alliance Warfare*, identifies this paucity when he notes:

Arguably coalition warfare is as old as civilization itself...The nature of coalition warfare often skews the degree of attention given in studies of coalition or alliance warfare. For example, attention aimed at the Napoleonic Wars is often focused on the object against whom the coalition was directed, namely the French Emperor...The 20th century, in contrast, provides a much greater number of studies focused on coalition warfare, although, here again, more attention has been devoted to the Anglo-American side of the two world wars.⁷⁴

As an example, the David F. Trask books described above are an example of coalition

⁷³ Paul Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

⁷⁴ Richard L. DiNardo, *Coalition and Alliance War*, Oxford Bibliographies, April 22, 2013, at <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791279/obo-9780199791279-0108.xml> accessed January 20, 2020.

surveys that examine the diplomatic goals of a coalition, but they do not explore in detail the operational structures or role of long-standing relationships in perpetuating the alliance. Additionally, the examination of coalition structures and other considerations is limited in modern writings except in articles that focus on one historical conflict or event.

One book that is invaluable in understanding coalition warfare, however, is Professor Bruce A. Elleman and Professor S.C.M. Paine's *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*.⁷⁵ This edited volume combines case studies from the most accomplished maritime historians and, more importantly, offers a scholarly review of coalitions written by the editors using topical tables based on sixteen case studies covering the last two centuries of warfare. This book analyzes naval coalitions "by examining such factors as coalition type, theater of operations, membership stability, duration, command relationships, naval strategy, operational and strategic objectives, and enemy response." This analysis moves the reader past isolated case studies and offers a broader review of characteristics that can be assessed in the context of future conflicts.

Theses and case studies also offer relevant scholarship on modern coalitions. One thesis that is particularly germane is Peter C. Hunt's *Coalition Warfare: Considerations for the Air Component Commander*. In his thesis, Hunt explores three modern-era airpower coalitions "based on the fundamental premise that commanders try to maximize the coalition-unique benefits while minimizing the coalition-unique problems."⁷⁶ Another book that looks at the elements of a successful coalition is Gary

⁷⁵ Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, eds. *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge Press, 2008).

⁷⁶ Peter C. Hunt, *Coalition Warfare: Considerations for the Air Component Commander* (Maxwell, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 51. Hunt offers twelve lessons including cultural awareness,

E. Weir and Sandra J. Doyle's *You Cannot Surge Trust*.⁷⁷ This book explores combined naval operations between 1991 and 2003 and offers modern lessons in human networking, constant interaction, and liaison and personnel exchanges.⁷⁸ These references will be examined as we look at the characteristics of effective coalitions drawn from consideration of the Anglo-American naval alliance in the Great War.

The best series of books on the operational naval history of the Great War from a British perspective is by the American historian Arthur J. Marder who completed a five-volume history *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* of which *Volume IV 1917: Year of Crisis* is most germane for this thesis.⁷⁹ The books are richly detailed throughout with unmatched scholarship though archival mining was limited by restricted access at the time Marder's books were written. The series is augmented with an introduction to each volume by the Canadian maritime and naval historian Barry Gough who offers modern insights and commentary on Marder's conclusions. Marder's books, though dated by limited archival access, offer the most comprehensive history of the maritime operations of the First World War.

To understand the interwar years and the rivalry that existed between the United States and Great Britain, the best reference remains Captain Stephen Roskill's *Naval Policy Between the Wars I: The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-*

command and control network needs, and the need for operational-level liaisons (p. 52).

⁷⁷ Gary E. Weir, principal investigator, and Sandra J. Doyle, editor, *You Cannot Surge Trust: Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, 1991-2003* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013).

⁷⁸ Sarandis Papadopoulos, "Conclusion" in Gary E. Weir, principal investigator, and Sandra J. Doyle, editor, *You Cannot Surge Trust: Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, 1991-2003* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013), 295-305.

⁷⁹ Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume IV 1917: The Year of Crisis*, Introduction by Barry Gough (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2014).

1929.⁸⁰ In this volume, Roskill details an account of antagonism between the two nations in the interwar years noting:

...the fires of Anglo-American antagonism, which had actually begun to smoulder before the end of the 1914-1918 war [because the U.S. General Board had called for “a Navy second to none”], were fanned into flames by zealots on both sides as soon as the guns stopped firing. And they quickly spread beyond the comparatively simple issue of the relative strength of the two nations’ navies.

Intense disagreement soon became apparent over such matters as the interpretation of International Maritime Law and the rights of neutrals in time of war; and rivalry soon extended over the whole field of mercantilist enterprise.⁸¹

Roskill expertly details the “antagonism” between the two nations, and the rivalry is evident in the U.S. Colour War Plans that included U.S. military options in the event of a war with Great Britain.⁸² The Colour War Plans and their role in the interwar years are detailed in Appendix F.

The geostrategic importance of Ireland, which was still an integral part of the United Kingdom, played a pivotal role in the development of the Anglo-American coalition. The basing of U.S. naval ships in Queenstown and other locations in Ireland was critical to exercising sea control and sea denial in the Western Approaches. A comprehensive review of Anglo-Irish relations is found in Professor Geoffrey R. Sloan’s *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the 20th Century*.⁸³ Sloan’s chapter on “Geopolitics, the Western Flank and the First World War” offers a

⁸⁰ Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars I: The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929* (South Yorkshire, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 1968).

⁸¹ Ibid, 20-21.

⁸² See Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1980). Vlahos offers a detailed account of the genesis and meaning of the Colour War Plans with a chapter dedicated to planning against Great Britain after the First World War called, “The Callimorphosis of the Enemy Red.”

⁸³ G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the 20th Century* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997).

geopolitical analysis of Great Britain's strategic policy in Ireland during the Great War which is particularly valuable in understanding Ireland's key geography in this theatre. Another invaluable reference regarding Irish politics in the decades leading up to the First World War and the immediate aftermath is Alan J. Ward's *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921*.⁸⁴ Ward's chapters on "The United States on the Eve of War" and "The United States Enter the War, 1917-1918" offer a detailed perspective of Irish-American influence in American politics.

A new offering on the culture of the special relationship is David G. Haglund's *The U.S. "Culture Wars" and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* in which Haglund, of the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada, asserts a counterintuitive idea that the Irish and German ethnicities in the United States ultimately became a catalyst to U.S. entry into the First World War rather than an inhibitor.⁸⁵ Haglund suggests, "the combined and robust assaults made during the [U.S.] neutrality period against England and *English civilization* by the anti-Allied lobbyists from the German-American and Irish-American communities had the assuredly unintended consequence of making English-descended Americans (the majority of the population a century ago) more disposed toward a security "union" with Great Britain than they had been at any time since the rupture of 1776."⁸⁶ Most historiography suggest that the ethnic minorities played a political role in ensuring American neutrality before the U.S. entered the war, and Haglund's argument is revealing although the consequences were not known at the time. Interestingly, Haglund also suggests that the special relationship between the United

⁸⁴ Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

⁸⁵ D.G. Haglund, *The U.S. "Culture Wars" and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (London: Palgrave, 2019).

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, preface.

States and Great Britain had its origins “between the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 and the American entry thereinto in April 1917” but nonetheless concludes the relationship was temporary in light of interwar antagonism.⁸⁷

Professor William T. Johnsen of the U.S. Army War College has contributed a new book on the special relationship, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*.⁸⁸ Johnsen argues the roots of the special relationship trace to the years before the Second World War and offers a thoughtful though brief history of American contributions in the Great War. Johnsen, quoting David Trask, fails to see the importance of Sims’ contributions and instead suggests that Sims was co-opted by British thinking and merely facilitated the adoption of British views.⁸⁹ Johnsen gives credit to Sims for gaining access to British intelligence and planning but notes:

Although the British initially were reluctant to share information, Sims argued that neither he nor the United States could be effective partners without such access. The British soon included him in all their naval planning, and as Sims later noted, “sitting in conference with them every morning, I became, for all practical purposes, a member of their organization.” Sims worked so closely with his British counterparts that he [initially] operated out of an office in the Admiralty [before leasing a building at Grosvenor Gardens] rather than following U.S. naval tradition of maintaining his headquarters afloat. Indeed the degree of cooperation between Sims and the Royal Navy was such that David Trask concludes, “The United States never developed a distinctly independent naval strategy or set of tactics during 1917-1918. Sims helped bring about the acceptance of British ideas.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ D.G. Haglund, *The U.S. “Culture Wars” and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (London: Palgrave, 2019), 3.

⁸⁸ William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2016).

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

⁹⁰ William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 22. The Sims quotation is from William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 11. David F. Trask’s quotation is from his introduction to *The Victory at Sea*, xviii.

Johnsen's book is extensively researched based on original sources but nonetheless concludes the First World War was but an episodic example of cooperation whereas this thesis argues that the personal relationships and some of the structures created by Sims were more foundational in the perpetuation of the relationship forged in the First World War.

Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan provide a detailed examination of the role of Ireland and especially Cobh (then Queenstown) in their *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918*.⁹¹ In addition to the role of Irish bases, this book, part of an "Irish Publisher-Irish Story" series, examines the integration between Sims and Bayly as well as providing a tutorial on Irish politics including the role of the Catholic Bishop in supporting rescued mariners and the risks of uprising, including German support, against the British authorities. Since the book is published in Ireland, the book offers fascinating accounts of events particularly germane to Ireland's history to include a detailed account of the German support for the Easter Rising in 1916. In a chapter titled "The Gunrunner," the book offers an account of the captured British Tramp Steamer SS *Castro* renamed *Libau* when captured by the Germans and then *Aud* under a false Norwegian flag for the gunrunning mission to provide 20,000 rifles to Irish nationalists in support of the Easter Rising.⁹² Additionally, the book is a

⁹¹ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 278.

⁹² Ibid, 134-139. The book details the failed rendezvous between the *Aud* and *U-19* carrying Irish nationalist Sir Roger Casement who was captured and executed for treason. Of particular interest was the role of Room 40 in warning Admiral Bayly of the expected gunrunning which enabled the *Aud* to be directed into port although the crew sank the vessel and was captured by British forces thus reducing the German support for the uprising. Although the Nolan and Nolan book presents a popular account of the German gunrunning in support of the Easter Rising, a highly detailed and scholarly account of the role of intelligence in the Easter Rising is provided by Professor Geoffrey Sloan, "The British State and the Irish Rebellion of 1916: An Intelligence Failure Or a Failure of Response?" *Intelligence and*

detailed exploration of the execution of the war at sea and quotes countless original sources but unfortunately contains no footnotes or endnotes to enable additional research. It is nonetheless a fascinating account of the war through Irish eyes.

Steve R. Dunn offers a new book on Admiral Bayly's leadership, detailing his Queenstown Command, the role of the American Navy under Admiral Bayly's purview, and the life of Admiral Bayly after the war. Based on original resources in the United Kingdom, his *Bayly's War: The Battle for the Western Approaches in the First World War* is a tribute to Bayly's wisdom and the evolution of the Queenstown forces in the fight against unrestricted submarine warfare.⁹³ Dunn also offers a superb analysis of the Admiralty's reluctance to employ convoys as a response to submarine attacks noting:

With the advent of America into the war, the safe transport of troopship, soldiers and supplies was a key priority. Many in the Admiralty thought convoys unworkable as they believed that merchant masters would not be able to maintain the necessary sailing discipline and keep station. Others felt that it was an entirely defensive approach, out of keeping with the tradition and proper use of British warships. Yet another faction was misled by an erroneous interpretation of shipping movement statistics into believing that the Navy had insufficient vessels to make convoys work.⁹⁴

The resolution of this convoy issue will be explored in later chapters, but the need for convoys was brought into focus for U.S. and Royal Navy leaders as a result of the extraordinary shipping losses in 1917 and the urgency to try something new. An

National Security, Volume 28, Number 4, 453-494. In this highly detailed article, Sloan rejects the historiography that the Rising was an intelligence failure and "provides a number of new insights into the dissemination of intelligence prior to the rebellion. The most significant insight is the fact that the Cabinet and Asquith, the then Prime Minister, were both in receipt of intelligence warnings from Room 40 before the rebellion... The Royal Navy was running a human intelligence network inside Ireland that had been in part responsible for the arrest of Sir Roger Casement. The Admiralty was not isolated from intelligence operations in Ireland." (354)

⁹³ Steve R. Dunn, *Bayly's War: The Battle for the Western Approaches in the First World War* (Croydon, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018).

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 150-151.

additional puzzle to be explored is why the value of convoys was repeatedly rejected especially since the Royal Navy formed and routed successful troop convoys starting in 1914 as well as coal convoys in the short distance from England to France starting in February 1917.⁹⁵

A large number of secondary sources provide extraordinary detail on the evolution of intelligence organizations in the United States and Great Britain. Patrick Beesly's *Room 40: British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918* stands as a primary reference in telling the story of the exploitation of German codes in the First World War with a special focus on maritime events such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the defeat of German unrestricted warfare at sea as well as the broader code-breaking success in decoding the infamous Zimmermann telegram.⁹⁶ More importantly, however, Beesly offers a detailed chapter on "A Special Relationship" showing how Captain Reginald "Blinker" Hall, Great Britain's Director of Naval Intelligence during most of the Great War, shared critical intelligence with Admiral Sims and with the U.S. Second Secretary to the Court of St. James, Edward Bell.⁹⁷ A more detailed exploration of the life and contributions of "Blinker" Hall is found in David Ramsay's *'Blinker' Hall: Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I*.⁹⁸ This book provides additional contemporary focus on naval issues as well as political intelligence. An updated assessment of Room 40 intelligence activities based on newly declassified archival materials is provided by Paul Gannon's *Inside Room 40:*

⁹⁵ Paul E. Fontenoy, "Convoy System," *The Encyclopedia of World War I: A Political, Social and Military History, Volume I*, Spencer C. Tucker, ed. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO Publishing, 2005), 312-314.

⁹⁶ Patrick Beesly, *Room 40; British Naval Intelligence, 1914-1918* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich Publishers, 1982).

⁹⁷ In 1918, Hall was promoted to Rear Admiral and granted a knighthood.

⁹⁸ David Ramsay, *'Blinker' Hall: Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I* (Gloucestershire, Great Britain: Spellmount Ltd. Publishers, 2008).

*The Codebreakers of World War I.*⁹⁹ Finally, Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and British Naval Command* provides extraordinary insights into a maritime arena marked by real time intelligence as well as being a work that "enters into the mental universe of those naval leaders who found 1914-18 naval warfare so difficult to understand."¹⁰⁰ The work is invaluable on several levels with an exploration of the role of new technologies but also their impact on the warfighters.

When looking at the threads that created the foundation for the special relationship, one must also look at baseball as a bridge of cultural understanding. Several modern books provide a detailed explanation of the role of baseball in the Great War, but Robert Elias' *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* offers an interesting if not compelling perspective as to how exporting baseball influenced foreign policy and contributed to the evolution of American "empire."¹⁰¹ Newspapers from the era also highlight the role in bridging cultural gaps and generating good will towards U.S. Servicemen.¹⁰²

Finally, references for an understanding of the "Law of the Sea" are critical to analysing the emerging relationship and the tension between the United States and Great Britain during and after the First World War as well as challenges in forming

⁹⁹ Paul Gannon, *Inside Room 40: The Codebreakers of World War I* (Kent, Great Britain: Ian Allan Publishing, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Gordon, *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and British Naval Command* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2013). The quotation is attributed to Paul Kennedy, "The war at sea bibliographical essay," *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War*, Jay Winter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 669.

¹⁰¹ Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

¹⁰² Ibid, 93 citing Ed Goewey, "World's Series Commanding Attention," *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, October 6, 1917), 483, noting that Goewey "claimed the U.S. military had revived sports worldwide and that baseball had always "followed the flag" around the globe...[and] that "the big war" had implanted the game into Europe in particular, where its popularity reflected the "increased good will towards [Americans]."

coalitions today. Current books on the subject are numerous, but a particularly valuable work that provides an American historical perspective from 1798 to the present is James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo's *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation*.¹⁰³ Appendix B provides a timeline of the maritime events that culminated in the Great War and is based, in part, upon this work. For a more in-depth review of sovereignty issues and the factors contributing to U.S. entry in the First World War, Rodney Carlisle's *Sovereignty at Sea: U.S. Merchant Ships and American entry into World War I* offers a comprehensive review of the merchant crisis as seen through the lens of neutral rights.¹⁰⁴ It is worth noting, however, that the British experience of naval warfare required the establishment and enforcement of blockades (a practice regarded by other nations as a war crime). Unrestricted submarine warfare inverted this traditional British way of war.

LITERATURE GAPS

In a 2011 Corbett Paper by Royal Australian Navy Admiral James Goldrick (ret.), Goldrick bemoans "The need for a New Naval History of the First World War" arguing "it will be important that the story of the war at sea be recognised as profoundly significant for the course and outcome of the conflict."¹⁰⁵ In this conclusion is found the perennial debate about the role of sea power and its ability to influence the outcome of a war with the historical stance being a navy can lose a war but cannot win it. Interestingly, Paul Kennedy praises Goldrick's Corbett paper as expertly identifying the critical gaps in existing literature but notes that Goldrick

¹⁰³ James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Rodney Carlisle, *Sovereignty at Sea: U.S. Merchant Ships and American entry into World War I* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ James Goldrick, "The need for a New Naval History of the First World War," *Corbett Paper Number 7* (Corbett Centre for Maritime Studies, King's College London, November 2011), Key Points.

“does not appreciate the cruel fact that the First World War was not a good war for the influence of sea power upon history.”¹⁰⁶ Despite the global nature of maritime events, the Great War proved that navies cannot win wars, but they can significantly impact events on land. The war again proved Sir Julian Corbett’s thesis that naval strategies are a subset of a larger strategy. Corbett notes:

By maritime strategy we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone. Unaided, naval pressure can only work by a process of exhaustion. Its effects must always be slow, and so galling both to our own commercial community and to neutrals, that the tendency is always to accept terms of peace that are far from conclusive. For a firm decision a quicker and more drastic form of pressure is required. Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided --- except in the rarest cases --- either by what your army can do against your enemy’s territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.¹⁰⁷

The Great War was won on the land once combined arms --- infantry, tanks, aircraft, and artillery --- and the infusion of American soldiers enabled the Allies to overcome the previous stalemate of trench warfare. Professor Hew Strachan in his *The First World War* provides a superb assessment of the “tools of victory” and how they were used in a combined way to bring about battlefield results.¹⁰⁸ Strachan notes:

[By the Spring of 1918, there were now twenty-five American divisions in France...The effect of these numbers, and the prodigious effort that had produced them, was above all psychological...]

The [Renault] tank was the most striking evidence of a number of points: that the Entente tackled the integration of science, technology and tactics with

¹⁰⁶ Paul Kennedy, “The war at sea bibliographical essay,” *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War*, Jay Winter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 669.

¹⁰⁷ Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 15. Originally published in 1911 by Longmans, Green and Co., London.

¹⁰⁸ Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004), 310.

greater success than the Germans...and that the ultimate benefit was on the battlefield, in the reintegration of fire and movement.

The exponential growth in the numbers of aircraft during the course of the war illustrated similar arguments...At the start of the war, their role was reconnaissance; by the middle fighters were contesting control of the air above the battlefield; by the end bombers were targeting positions on the ground and interdicting lines of communication...

Neither of them, however, was the true artisan of victory: that was the artillery. The biggest single intellectual shift in making war between 1914 and 1918 was that the combined-arms battle was planned around the capabilities of the guns [to create "local concentration" of fire] rather than of the infantry.¹⁰⁹

Although the battleship fleets did not engage other than at Jutland, the Royal Navy battleships served to keep the High Seas Fleet in a stalemate that was unlikely to be broken. Corbett's thesis again proved true. However, the role of navies based on Mahanian doctrine was changed by the scale of warfare and the introduction of disruptive technologies such as the U-boat and aircraft. Without this fleet-in-being the other elements of the war would have not been able to operate as effectively as they did. In fact, Sims recommended to President Wilson on July 7, 1917 that the United States modify its shipbuilding programme of 1916 to meet the demand for smaller ships capable of providing critical anti-submarine warfare support.¹¹⁰ Sims was able to clearly see the shift in the strategic environment despite the inculcation of Mahanian doctrine globally, and he accordingly made strategic recommendations that were accepted, and which enabled critical U.S. Navy influence in the Great War.

Warfare was also changed by the evolution into total warfare, and the First World War was certainly prolonged by the inability of the armies to force a conclusion until the application of combined arms warfare. Nonetheless, when armies are temporarily stalemated, the role of navies is arguably heightened. Sims

¹⁰⁹ Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004), 310-315.

¹¹⁰ *Letter from Sims to President Woodrow Wilson, July 7, 1917*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Box 91.

foreshadowed this idea in his definition of sea power noting:

For the second great resource of sea power is the blockade. If the enemy is agriculturally and industrially dependent upon the outside world, sea power can transform it into a beleaguered fortress and sooner or later compel its unconditional surrender. Its operations are not spectacular, but they work with the inevitable remorselessness of death itself.¹¹¹

The theoretical implication is that the nature of one's economic underpinnings can be directly influenced by naval forces in a blockade that would thus allow a navy to have a great impact in influencing events on the land.

New works offer a fresh perspective on the role of sea power in the First World War. Author Jim Ring in *How the Navy Won the War: The Real Instrument of Victory 1914-1918*, argues that navies can win wars but the examples offered show a great role for the navy but *not* an ability to win the conflict outright without an army.¹¹² Ring argues that because the armies on land had essentially become “fixed” in place by trench warfare, the effects that could be achieved on land were effectively neutralized thereby creating a new and dominant role for navies. Rear Admiral Dr. Chris Parry, Royal Navy, differentiating between “strategic and tactical effect,” notes:

The criterion for strategic success would be the imposition of a stranglehold on the Central Powers' maritime communications by 'far distant, storm-beaten [predominantly British] ships of the Allies' and the suppression of Germany's attempts to break that stranglehold, while Allied armies, once the battle-lines had stabilised, fixed the enemy in position, as modern doctrinal thinking has it, until enough fighting power was available to drive the enemy from France and Belgium.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 20. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company. The “first great resource” of sea power noted by Sims was the ability to develop and protect one's own commerce.

¹¹² Jim Ring, *How the Navy Won the War: The Real Instrument of Victory 1914-1918* (Barnsley, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018), 202-203.

¹¹³ Admiral Dr. Chris Parry's forward in Jim Ring, *How the Navy Won the War: The Real Instrument of Victory 1914-1918* (Barnsley, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018), vi-vii. Parry references “the famous expression of Alfred Thayer Mahan, writing of the British blockading ships in the war against Napoleon.”

Ring and Parry acknowledge the key role of armies, but they suggest the role of the navies in the First World War may have been the dominant one and, ultimately, the one responsible for bringing success in winning the war. It is an interesting argument although the examples provided ultimately show how the navy enabled a land war. In contrast to Ring's argument, Paul Kennedy in his *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945* notes:

...in both world wars the security of the sea routes to Britain was clearly London's first objective, without which little else could be done. Yet two points counted against the navy here. In the first place, this aim was essentially a negative one. The Senior Service could lose the war, but it could not win it: that had to be done by the Army, which garnered all the credit thereby. In the second place, this war against the U-boats was a continuous series of small-scale actions which were hardly capable of exciting a public which had been brought up to expect glorious fleet battles and did not understand that these were not necessary to achieve that basic negative aim. In this respect, it would be no exaggeration to state that the course of the First World War substantially discredited that mighty host of great grey battleships, swinging on their anchors in the distant harbour of Scapa.¹¹⁴

In truth, it was the effectiveness of combined arms warfare in 1918 that broke the stalemate on land thus driving a conclusion to the war, however, the potential to lose a war at sea makes the role of a navy more impactful when victory is delayed on land.¹¹⁵

The role of navies effectively remains unchanged however the global demands placed upon leading navies can be enhanced by coalitions. The U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy *Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power*

¹¹⁴ Paul M. Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 66.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

rightly extols the need for achieving sea control.¹¹⁶ This naval mission, as well as providing maritime security and humanitarian assistance, are best achieved through naval coalitions. The effectiveness of Coalition Task Forces to counter piracy off the Horn of Africa, for example, achieve an end that arguably cannot be met by any one nation alone. In addition to the re-emergence of global competitors, non-traditional actors such as transnational terrorists and pirates also require coalitions to counter the ill-willed forces at sea and to create naval forces capable of operating in the littorals to counter the flow of illegal trafficking of people, monies, and illegal and dangerous cargoes. In addition to enhanced abilities seen in coalitions, recognizing the role of navies and coalitions in the modern era is important. New factors like nuclear capabilities and non-kinetic factors have changed how wars are fought as well as changing the strategic calculus for what defines winning a war.

Equally important to understanding the role of sea power, Admiral Goldrick tells us “that there are important similarities between the globalised world of 1914 and that of 2011 and some potential parallels in the difficulties navies faced in managing technological change and emergent threats and understanding how maritime power should be applied.”¹¹⁷ This thesis aims to partially fill this gap by reviewing the lessons of the First World War as identified by Sims and then exploring the characteristics that can be applied to today’s maritime coalitions. In doing so, we will also explore the role of sea power in the First World War and how that role continues to evolve. Historiography tends to focus on trench warfare and sees the maritime role

¹¹⁶ U.S. Navy, *Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Navy, December 17, 2020). This strategy defines sea control as “the condition in which has freedom of action to use the sea for one’s own purposes in specified areas and for specified periods of time and, where necessary, to deny or limit its use to the enemy.” 32.

¹¹⁷ James Goldrick, “The need for a New Naval History of the First World War,” *Corbett Paper Number 7* (Corbett Centre for Maritime Studies, King’s College London, November 2011), 1.

as impotent because of the failure of Jutland to prove decisive, and, in part, because of our fascination with World War II which is seen as a natural extension of the Great War.¹¹⁸

Goldrick also identifies the operational problems of coaling, navigation, communications, formation keeping, and internal organization of ships. I suggest a parallel gap that exists in the literature is the understanding of the organizational structures put in place by Admiral Sims and their impact on the execution of the war. This thesis will explore and detail several of these structures and their contributions in winning the maritime fight.

Finally, historiography focuses on the antagonism between the United States and Great Britain in the interwar years with little emphasis on cooperative efforts. This thesis will show that there was demonstrable cooperation and compromise in addition to the already well-documented antagonism. I argue there was antagonism *and* cooperation, and the cooperative efforts and personal relationships enabled the *foundation* of a special relationship that was pioneered in the First World War.

METHODOLOGY

As a methodology, a qualitative research design will be employed to examine the thesis and provide illumination in providing a proposed outcome to the dilemma or puzzle at hand.¹¹⁹ Within the domain of qualitative research, and within the five main qualitative research designs, this thesis will provide a historical case study of Admiral William Sims and his contributions to establishing an effective maritime coalition.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Paul Kennedy, "The war at sea bibliographical essay," *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I Global War*, Jay Winter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 667-669.

¹¹⁹ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ells Ormond, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 7th edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001).

¹²⁰ The five Qualitative Research Designs are case study, ethnography, phenomenological study,

Robert R. Sherman and Rodman B. Webb, in their *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods* suggest that “Qualitative research is interested in the motives and aims, not just the behavior, of those who are studied.”¹²¹ It is this “human dimension” that makes qualitative research so valuable in looking at the lessons of a conflict and the evolution of relationships between individual people and their nations.

Within qualitative research methodologies, case studies, defined as examination wherein “a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time”...with an eye to “make comparisons, build theory, or propose generalizations...” are a valuable means to review complex historical issues.¹²² Through a focused examination of the contributions of Admiral Sims during the Great War, we will explore how his efforts and interwar structures created the foundation of the special relationship that is generally attributed to the Second World War. Sims’ personal efforts specifically include fostering amalgamation with Royal Navy forces, implementing the flotilla doctrine he created before the war, cultural indoctrination through competitive baseball, and the push for convoy trials and adoption.¹²³ Although the Intelligence and Naval Planning Section structures resident in the London Flagship were not maintained by the U.S. Navy in London after the war, similar planning and intelligence structures did survive as new naval constructs

grounded theory study, and content analysis.

¹²¹ See Robert R. Sherman and Rodman B. Webb “Qualitative Research in Education: A Focus” in their edited volume, *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods* (London: Falmer Press, 1988), 4.

¹²² Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormond, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 7th edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 149.

¹²³ Steve R. Dunn, *Bayly’s War: The Battle for the Western Approaches in the First World War* (Croydon, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018). Sims’ efforts in creating new destroyer tactics before the war can be found in U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *Hearing before the Select Committee of Inquiry into Operations of the United States Air Services* (United States House of Representatives) Sixty-Eighth Congress, Part 4 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), 2959-3015.

in staffs such as that of the Chief of Naval Operations which enabled integration once again in the Second World War.

In the Great War, the British integration with the London Flagship Intelligence Section provided the U.S. an example of how to fuse strategic intelligence with tactical operations. Although the General Board of the Navy continued its advisory role for war planning, the Room 40 efforts in 1918, when it started serving as an operational intelligence centre, provided the example of planning efforts and intelligence fusion that was, in part, replicated within the U.S. Navy Staff (OPNAV) that included the War Plans Division, Office of Naval Communication, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. The American Naval Planning Section in London also offered suggestions on how to organize a more robust Planning Section within the Navy Department in Washington. However, in the fledgling staff of the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, much of the planning and intelligence efforts were in response to Admiral Sims' cables and requests. Although intelligence activities were often shunned by uniformed personnel resulting in manning that was essentially civilians in uniform and reservists as well as reorganizations throughout the interwar years, the sinews held together in 1940 when President Roosevelt re-established "a close co-operation with the Admiralty covering both technology and intelligence, thus restoring the association between ["Blinker"] Hall, [Edward] Bell, and Admiral Sims that had proved so successful in World War I."¹²⁴

Finally, it is fortunate that informal organizations such as the Queenstown Association, among others, persisted to maintain cross-cultural understanding and personal connections. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was an honorary member of

¹²⁴ David Ramsay, *'Blinker' Hall: Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I* (Gloucestershire, Great Britain: Spellmount Ltd. Publishers, 2008), 309.

the association because he had visited Queenstown in July 1918 with the First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Eric Campbell Geddes on a tour of Ireland bases when Roosevelt was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy.¹²⁵ The tour included a visit to Admiral Bayly and his Chief of Staff Captain Joel R.P. Pringle at the Admiralty House in Queenstown.¹²⁶ Interestingly, Commander Ernest J. King and Commander William S. Pye accompanied Secretary Roosevelt as part of the American delegation, and they would later collaborate on efforts to reform naval education in the Knox-King-Pye report.¹²⁷ After the visit, Roosevelt noted, “I shall always think of my visit to Queenstown in July 1918 as the high-spot of my round of inspections of American naval activities in European waters during the World War.”¹²⁸ Roosevelt’s affiliation with the Queenstown Association and friendship with Bayly later allowed the President to host Bayly and his niece Violet during a visit to the United States in May 1934.¹²⁹ In the aggregate, these structures were the foundation of the naval aspect of the special relationship that was articulated in the Second World War but, I suggest, had its foundation that was forged in the Great War.

With the historical case study of Sims’ key relationships and organizational structures complete, we will analyse the eleven “charges” made by Sims against the Department of the Navy in January 1920 regarding the direction and execution of the war. A historical case study will then be used in chapter 4 to explore key attributes for coalitions in the modern era. Additionally, we will review historical content narrowly

¹²⁵ Admiral Bayly letter to Secretary Roosevelt, July 15, 1919. U.S. National Archives, Washington D.C., Sims papers, Box 91.

¹²⁶ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 278.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt foreword in Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George C. Harrap & Co., 1939), 5.

¹²⁹ Steve R. Dunn, *Bayly’s War: The Battle for the Western Approaches in the First World War* (Croydon, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018), 265.

like a historian would in order to derive the intent of key actors in what can otherwise be a body of potentially conflicting ideas. One example of this dilemma of sorting the veracity of conflicting ideas can be seen in Sims' book *The Victory at Sea* in which he highlighted the great success of the United States Navy whilst later condemning the U.S. Navy's inadequate preparations, manning, and bureaucracy in formal letters to the Secretary of the Navy and in his Congressional Testimony.¹³⁰ Despite this, a historical case study will broaden both the scope and depth of analysis.

To achieve this broadening, and particularly for the application of lessons to the current day, I will apply a methodology noted in Harold D. Lasswell's *The Future of the Comparative Method* where he asserts the need for three distinct intellectual tasks to include providing a requirement for "contextuality" (i.e., to continually scan the entire context that includes the phenomena to be investigated) as well as "the projection of future events...and the invention, evaluation, and selection of policy options..."¹³¹ Accordingly, we will review the context of the historical structures --- such as the American Naval Planning Section and Intelligence Section of the London Flagship --- put in place by Sims that become reinvented in the Second World War.

The primary archival resources will be amplified by secondary sources and will constitute the core materials for our historical case study, and these include many archival materials that are available for research for the first time. A comparison of the principal maritime lessons of the Great War may yield insights for modern day coalition-building. The methodology that will be used in building and developing the

¹³⁰ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company, as compared to *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

¹³¹ Harold D. Lasswell, "The Future of the Comparative Method," *Comparative Politics*, October 1968 (Volume 1), 3-18.

thesis is thus based upon a historical case study.

Finally, this thesis will make an original contribution to knowledge. First, new archival material provides an updated assessment of Sims as a Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters and as an amalgamated force alongside and often subordinate to Royal Navy forces. Second, the thesis will provide an analysis of the planning integration between the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy as well as an analysis of the lessons of the Great War based on original sources. Finally, there will be an assessment of how the relationship between the two navies provides a model to increase the operational effectiveness of naval coalitions in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 2

PEOPLE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND MUTUAL SUPPORT:

THE ROOTS OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

People and their interactions are a key component in the development of any relationship. This thesis suggests that Admiral Sims was uniquely positioned, as a function of his past experiences in the U.S. Navy, to develop and exploit the professional and personal relationships that he made prior to the Great War, and these relationships became a part of the eventual forging of the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. In this chapter, we will see that the special relationship between Great Britain and the United States was pioneered by Sims in his role as an operational Commander during the First World War establishing a professional relationship between the two navies. Sims directly contributed to the three characteristics of a special relationship --- ties of affection, ideological affinities that lead to shared objectives, and compatible working practices and structures that facilitate cooperation --- although this thesis will focus on the specific structures put in place by Sims to enable the prosecution of the war.

Admiral Sims had enormous impact on the history of the United States Navy, and the chronology of his contributions is important. Key dates in the life of Admiral Sims are provided in Appendix A, but this thesis will chronologically detail pre-war relationships, wartime contributions in the form of organizational structures and cultural contributions, and post-war contributions from his time as U.S. Naval War College President and in testimony before the U.S. Senate. This chapter provides a broad overview of his career up to the Great War with an emphasis on the personal relationships that played a critical role in creating an effective naval coalition.

Additionally, it will examine Sims' readiness for command because of his experiences as well as his role as a reformer within the United States Navy.

SIMS' CAREER BEFORE THE GREAT WAR

Sims was born in Canada in 1858 and moved to Pennsylvania with his parents in 1872. Although an American, his birthplace added to the criticisms that Sims was an Anglophile.¹³² Sims became an 1880 U.S. Naval Academy graduate with a nomination from his home state of Pennsylvania though his attendance was not guaranteed as he initially failed the entrance examination in 1876.¹³³ This experience forced him towards a life of self-learning including a mid-career sabbatical from his navy duties to develop fluency in French by choosing to live in Paris on personal leave from January through November 1889.¹³⁴ He also applied himself to being a technical expert throughout his career whether it be navigation, seamanship, or intelligence functions.

As a naval officer, Sims also deployed all over the world and his numerous assignments in Asia allowed him to gain experience in the new field of "naval intelligence" where Sims submitted voluminous and exhaustive reports on the capabilities and platforms of other nations in the region.¹³⁵ During Sims' first tour at the China Station in USS CHARLESTON (November 1894 - July 1896), Sims compiled 400 pages of detailed intelligence reports that included port reports and

¹³² David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 282. Trask calls Sims birth in Canada an "unfortunate accident of birth."

¹³³ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 11, 12 and 15. During the re-take of the exam in June 1876, Sims "barely passed."

¹³⁴ Ibid, 48.

¹³⁵ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 37-47.

comprehensive gunnery comparisons.¹³⁶

Sims carried his new-found knowledge and practice of intelligence reporting into his role as the Naval Attaché serving in Paris and as representative to the legations in Spain, and Russia (1897-1900) where he established a record for the quantity of reports and played a significant role in intelligence collection and reporting during the Spanish American War.¹³⁷ Sims was commended with a Navy Department letter of recognition endorsed by Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt for his superb reporting on ship construction and gunnery practices.¹³⁸

After his Attaché tour, Sims returned to the China Station in USS KENTUCKY and USS MONTEREY (1900-1901). Believing that U.S. naval gunnery was woefully inadequate to the needs of the day, Sims took the unprecedented step of writing directly to President Theodore Roosevelt to express his concerns. In a letter to President Roosevelt dated November 16, 1901, Sims notes:

I have within the past few months submitted to the Navy Department a number of reports on foreign target practice, and on other matters in connection with the fighting efficiency of our vessels; and, after as exhaustive a study of these subjects as my opportunities would afford, I have, in the last of these reports, been forced to the very serious conclusion that the protection and armament of even our most recent battleships are so glaringly inferior in principle as well as in details, to those of our possible enemies, including the Japanese, and that our marksmanship is so crushingly inferior to theirs, that one or more of our ships would, in their present condition, inevitably suffer humiliating defeat at the hands of an equal number of an enemy's vessels of the same class and displacement.¹³⁹

Although this act was professionally dangerous as this might have been viewed as

¹³⁶ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 43.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 55. Sims is credited with over 11,000 pages of intelligence reports.

¹³⁸ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 49.

¹³⁹ *Sims letter to President Roosevelt, November 16, 1901*. National Archives, Sims Papers, Washington D.C., File Sims Correspondence.

overreaching one's chain of command, Roosevelt responded to Sims' admonition, and this created a lifelong relationship between the two men.

At the China Station, Sims' also forged a close relationship with Captain John Rushworth Jellicoe, commanding HMS CENTURION in the Boxer Rebellion, when both first met in 1901.¹⁴⁰ The relationship flourished when both exchanged gunnery innovations when Sims served as Inspector of Target Practice from 1902 to 1909 which included letter exchanges and annual visits to London to see Jellicoe.¹⁴¹ Sims also met and established a personal and professional relationship with Captain, later Admiral, Percy Scott whom he had met in 1901, and the relationship with Scott and Jellicoe was perpetuated later with numerous personal and technical exchanges in London to pursue improved gunnery techniques and technology.¹⁴² Sims' reputation and technical expertise led him to be assigned as Inspector of Target Practice from 1902-1909 where he became known as the "gun doctor" and where his initiatives resounded in the highest levels of the Navy Department and the White House.¹⁴³

Sims' reputation as a reformer also grew during this period. Throughout his career, Sims sought to create change in what he perceived as an inadequate navy for the emerging power of the United States.¹⁴⁴ His consistent push for reform included efforts at enhancing shipboard ventilation, improving gunnery, rectifying ship design

¹⁴⁰ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 7. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

¹⁴¹ A.T. Patterson, ed., *The Jellicoe Papers: Selections from the Private and Official Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe* (London: Navy Records Society, 1966), 155-156.

¹⁴² William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 81. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company. Sims worked closely with Sir Percy Scott on enhancing continuous aim firing.

¹⁴³ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 155.

¹⁴⁴ Benjamin F. Armstrong, ed., *21st Century Sims: Innovation, Education, and Leadership for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2015) provides a detailed assessment of Sims' "insurgent" reforms and includes numerous articles written by Sims.

flaws, and, probably most significantly, pushing for reforms to create a viable head of navy with substantial power aside the Navy Department's civilian leadership. Sims' desire for reform was bolstered by his technical aptitude and a degree of self-confidence that some might call arrogance. He was always ready to challenge others with little regard to his own reputation or that of others. One stark example of his self-confidence was his successful effort to challenge the world-renowned Alfred Thayer Mahan. In June 1906, Mahan wrote an article titled *Reflections, Historic and Other, Suggested by the Battle of the Japan Sea* in which he argued against the all-big-gun ship by citing the lessons of the Battle of Tsushima where Japan defeated the favoured Russian Fleet in May 1905.¹⁴⁵ Sims favoured the all-big-gun ship and wrote a rebuttal to Mahan noting however, "that if, when Captain Mahan wrote his article, he had been in possession of certain important information that has since become available, his conclusions would have been considerably modified."¹⁴⁶ Sims, while sensitive to the issue of taking on an iconic sea power figure, nonetheless provides a detailed attack upon Mahan's key arguments in order to push for the building of all-big-gun ships. Sims' capabilities and fearlessness made him somewhat unique in a navy marked by conservatism.

The reputation of Sims as the Inspector of Target Practice even created a rare opportunity for Sims to secretly tour Admiral John "Jacky" Fisher's new battleship DREADNOUGHT on December 17, 1906 upon completion of the secret construction programme for that ship.¹⁴⁷ During a visit to London in December 1906 to see Percy

¹⁴⁵ Alfred T. Mahan, "Reflections, Historic and Other, Suggested by the Battle of the Japan Sea," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Volume 32 Number 2 (April 1906), 447-472.

¹⁴⁶ William Sims, "The Inherent Tactical Qualities of All-Big-Gun, One-Caliber Battleships of High Speed, Large Displacement, and Gun Power," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Volume 32, Number 4 (December 1906), 1337-1366.

¹⁴⁷ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Scott and Jellicoe, Sims visited Admiral Fisher and shared an article he wrote on all-big-gun ships, and, “in return the American asked if he could see the DREADNOUGHT. Fisher told him it was impossible, but to talk with Jellicoe about it. After some discussion an elaborate subterfuge was devised. On December 17, Sims visited the Portsmouth Navy Yard, where the DREADNOUGHT lay, and told the Admiral commanding that he had been refused permission to see the ship. A week later, the day before Christmas, he [Sims] returned to Portsmouth in civilian clothes. At that time he was taken secretly over the whole ship.”¹⁴⁸ This example demonstrates the close personal relationship that existed between Sims and Jellicoe, but it also marks an obvious parallel with the cult of gunnery among Admiral Fisher’s proteges.

Sims’ relationship with President Theodore Roosevelt next led to his assignment as Naval Aide to the President (1907-1909) during the last two years of his tour as Inspector of Target Practice. Sims was then assigned command of the Battleship USS MINNESOTA (as of March 1, 1909) whilst serving as a Commander which was unprecedented for the time.¹⁴⁹ Aside from being allowed to select a Captain command as a Commander, Sims violated traditional navy etiquette by choosing a ship that was currently deployed thus truncating the career of MINNESOTA’s current Captain.¹⁵⁰ This is a representative example of Sims’ personal ruthlessness.

Whilst in command of USS MINNESOTA during a U.S. Fleet visit to England, Sims delivered a controversial speech at Guildhall in which Sims, at a

Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 172-173.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 156.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of London on December 2, 1910, remarked "...if ever the integrity of the British Empire should be seriously threatened by an external enemy, they might count upon the assistance of every man, every ship, and every dollar from their kinsmen across the seas."¹⁵¹ Sims was publicly censured in a naval message sent to the entire United States Navy for his comments at Guildhall although his career progressed quite well in spite of the unusual professional censure.

In 1911, Sims attended the U.S. Naval War College as a student of the first "16-month long course" where he developed a broader understanding of the potential for education in improving naval operations which served him well in his later operational assignments and as president of the college briefly before the Great War and then again after the war.¹⁵² At the college, Sims developed an extensive understanding of the "estimate of the situation methodology." Professor John Hattendorf notes the estimate of the situation methodology was created by Commander W. L. Rodgers in 1907 and "was only the first of three fundamental steps in dealing with a military or naval problem: (1) analyzing or estimating the situation to determine the plan of action and decisions to be made; (2) translating the decisions to be made into orders, and (3) translating the orders into action."¹⁵³ The methodology was used extensively by Sims and the officers assigned to the London Flagship during the Great

¹⁵¹ *Admiral Sims letter to his wife Anne, December 4, 1910.* Naval War College Archives, Sims Collection, letter dated *December 4, 1910*. The quotation provided to the Navy Department when word reached Washington of inappropriate political comments being made by one of its Commanding Officers was, "If the time ever comes when the British Empire is seriously menaced by an external enemy, it is my opinion that you may count upon every man, every dollar, every drop of blood, of your kindred across the sea."

¹⁵² John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 76.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 70.

War.¹⁵⁴

Sims was also steeped in sea power theory as a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College. His views on sea power are clearly explained in his *The Victory at Sea* where he notes:

The advantages which the control of the sea gives the nation which possesses it are apparent. In the first place, it makes secure such a nation's communications with the outside world and its own allies, and, at the same time, it cuts the communications of its enemy. It enables the nation dominant at sea to levy upon the resources of the entire world; to obtain food for its civilian population, raw materials for its manufactures, munitions for its armies; and, at the same time, to maintain that commerce upon which its very economic life may depend. It enables such a power also to transport troops into any field of action where they may be required. At the very time that sea power is heaping all these blessings upon the dominant nation, it enables such a nation to deny these same advantages to its enemy.¹⁵⁵

Like Mahan, Sims saw the grand strategy of sea power enabling a control and underpinning of commerce. Interestingly, however, this definition of sea power implies a powerful navy but not the Mahanian ideal of fleet on fleet combat action.

After completing his assignment as a student at the War College followed by a year as an instructor, Sims served as Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Torpedo Flotilla from July 1913 to October 1915. Sims used his time in command to develop a doctrine for the employment of destroyers that would be employed during the Great War. Sims described the doctrine noting:

Now, we had worked out what we called a doctrine of attack that must be carried out, almost necessarily in war, by the men themselves. Briefly it was this: The first destroyer of the line [that found an enemy force]...would not

¹⁵⁴ John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 77-80.

¹⁵⁵ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 20. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

attack, but keep in touch. The destroyer on the side was to come in and also keep in touch...and the [third] ship here was to go and take a position ahead of the fleet...

...I sent out a single word, and that word was 'position,' meaning I am in position to attack; because it is a military principle if you attack you want to attack with all your force at the same time, and not give them a chance to get your force killed like rats coming out of a hole. I kept them in that position [of coordinated contact] until...the word went down the line that we had successfully attacked.¹⁵⁶

Sims and his staff had created the first destroyer tactics for the United States Navy that required coordinated search, massing of force, and simultaneous attack that was later employed in the Great War albeit for submarines rather than opposing surface ships.¹⁵⁷

After commanding the Flotilla, Sims was given command of the battleship USS NEVADA (March 1916-January 1917) until he was given a short-lived assignment as President of the Naval War College when Sims took command on February 16, 1917.¹⁵⁸

A month later, Sims was directed to secretly travel to London as a liaison in the event war was declared by America upon Imperial Germany. Sims described the directions he received for the voyage in his *The Victory at Sea*, noting:

In the latter part of March, 1917, a message from the Navy Department came to me at Newport, where I was stationed as president of the Naval War College, summoning me immediately to Washington. The international atmosphere at that time was extremely tense, and the form in which these instructions were cast showed that something extraordinary was impending. The orders directed me to make my visit as unostentatious as possible; to keep all my movements secret, and, on my arrival in Washington, not to appear at the Navy Department, but to telephone headquarters. I promptly complied with these orders...It seemed inevitable, I was informed, that the United States would soon be at war with Germany. Ambassador Page had cabled that it

¹⁵⁶ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *Hearing before the Select Committee of Inquiry into Operations of the United States Air Services* (United States House of Representatives) Sixty-Eighth Congress, Part 4, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), 2965.

¹⁵⁷ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 302.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 333.

would be desirable, under the existing circumstances, that the American navy be represented by an officer of higher rank than any of those who were stationed in London at that time.¹⁵⁹

The mission was secret because of American neutrality but was designed “to study the naval situation and learn how we could best and most quickly cooperate in the naval war.”¹⁶⁰ War against Germany was declared by the United States on April 6, 1917 whilst Sims was embarked in SS *New York* en route to Liverpool.

Sims was thought to be an excellent choice for the “liaison” position in London before war on Imperial Germany was declared by the United States although Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels would later say that Sims was “selected for this mission not because of the Guildhall speech, but in spite of it.”¹⁶¹ In Great Britain, however, Sims was seen as an ardent supporter, and this no doubt facilitated trust in the early days of U.S. integration into the maritime arena of the war. Even so, Sims’ obvious sympathy for the British cause led the British to trust him although it led some of his American leaders to distrust his recommendations.

SIMS’ READINESS FOR COMMAND IN THE GREAT WAR

Despite the role that Sims played in the Great War as the operational Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, Sims is little remembered in U.S. history. This may be due to a natural focus on trench warfare in the First World War as well as a natural proclivity to study the Second World War, but this may also be in part a function of Sims’ overbearing personality in his quest for reforms. In his own lifetime, however, Sims was well known in the U.S. Navy despite his acerbic nature.

¹⁵⁹ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 3. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 167.

He achieved a sort of notoriety for his reformist vision as well as for his extraordinary technical competence. In fact, his reputation was so well known that William Veazie Pratt's autobiography described a sense of awe in working with Sims, and that being around him was "excitement itself" thus contributing to the idea that Sims led a "band of brothers."¹⁶² Sims was also a master seaman and had a superior capability to inspire others, yet he was also feared for his sharp tongue and his desire to tell the truth even if it created political and professional challenges to his goals.

In any event, Sims was very well suited to his posting in London at the start of the Great War. He possessed a wealth of professional naval experience including a number of commands in which his leadership abilities and technical brilliance enabled the creation of a new tactical doctrine for navy destroyers consisting of how to manoeuvre in company to effectively employ torpedoes in support of the Fleet.¹⁶³ At a time when all navies were confronting technological innovations --- a challenge addressed by Admiral Jacky Fisher in Great Britain --- Sims' critical eye also enabled him to push for technical reforms on shipbuilding, armaments, and naval gunnery that certainly enhanced American naval readiness for the First World War.¹⁶⁴

Perhaps the best qualification for the liaison role and then operational commander position that was offered to Sims in London was his extraordinarily organized and open mind. Sims possessed the ability to see through the most demanding of challenges and then distil the way forward. Sims was a standout from

¹⁶² William Veazie Pratt, *Autobiography* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division Operational Archives, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., 1939), 170. The broader context of a band of brothers is seen in Gerald E. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy: A Sailor's Life* (Washington D.C.: Naval History Division, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), Chapter 3.

¹⁶³ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 295-298.

¹⁶⁴ Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher, *Memories* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 113-133.

his peers because he was a fearless reformer who sought to improve his Navy through conventional and unconventional means. In his career, he submitted hundreds of documents through his chain of command outlining the need for various reforms ranging from ship's armour protection to the need for a powerful Chief of Navy to overcome a disjointed and stove-piped Bureau system, created in 1842 and expanded during to American Civil War, consisting of eight separate and independent Bureaus --- that is, the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Bureau of Steam Engineering, Bureau of Ordnance, Bureau of Equipment, Supplies and Accounts, Bureau of Construction and Repair, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Navigation, and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.¹⁶⁵ If the bureaucratic character of the U.S. Navy failed to drive change, Sims would unhesitatingly seek Congressional hearings or write directly to the President of the United States to illuminate the urgency of a particular situation.

In exploring the attributes that made Sims so successful, one must look at his style of learning and other personality characteristics. Sims was effectively trapped in a system that was not a meritocracy. Promotion through the field grades of the U.S. Navy was based on time in Service rather than any particular merit, and, in fact, one of the reforms that Sims was later able to achieve, and that is still in use in the U.S. Navy today, is a promotion system based on merit.¹⁶⁶ A key characteristic of Sims was his learning style that marked him as a voracious reader and writer. His gifted intelligence, self-confidence, and outgoing personality were well known, and some of his reform effectiveness may be attributable to the way he pushed the organizations he led into what would today be called "dual loop learning." Professor Emeritus Chris

¹⁶⁵ John T. Kuehn, *America's First General Staff: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of the General Board of the Navy, 1900-1950* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 11.

¹⁶⁶ Benjamin F. Armstrong, ed., *21st Century Sims: Innovation, Education, and Leadership for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 137.

Argyris of Harvard offers an explanation of learning theories based on single and dual loop learning.¹⁶⁷ Argyris suggests:

Whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values of the system (be it individual, group, intergroup, organizational or interorganizational), the learning is single-loop. The term is borrowed from electrical engineering or cybernetics where, for example, a thermostat is defined as a single-loop learner. The thermostat is programmed to detect states of “too cold” or “too hot,” and to correct the situation by turning the heat on or off. If the thermostat asked itself such questions as why it was set at 68 degrees, or why it was programmed as it was, then it would be a dual-loop learner.¹⁶⁸

Sims sought to empower his personnel, and Argyris’ theory on dual loop learning helps us to understand Sims’ approach to reform. Sims also challenged the underlying assumptions of the decisions that affected the U.S. Navy through his writings, congressional testimony, and correspondence with his seniors.

STRATEGIC RIVALRY BUT OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION

In the maritime arena, and despite the natural *strategic* rivalry between the dominant Royal Navy and the newly emerging U.S. Navy, personal relationships forged before the war as well as mutual support organizational structures enabled an extraordinary level of cooperation during the First World War despite a significant political divide in the interpretation of neutral rights at sea. The divide that existed between Great Britain and the United States stemmed from the U.S. demand that belligerent navies honour the neutral rights codified in the historic “cruiser rules” granting flow of certain goods in wartime and establishing rules for the boarding of neutral vessels.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Chris Argyris, *On Organizational Learning* (Oxford, UK, Blackwell, 2000).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Argyris credits the understanding of the two types of learning to W. Ross Ashby’s *Design for a Brain* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), 68.

¹⁶⁹ Tony Booth, *Admiralty Salvage in Peace and War 1906-2006: ‘Grove, Grub, and Tremble’* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Great Britain: Pen and Sword, 2007), 4, and Schmidt, Donald E., *The Folly of War: American Foreign Policy, 1898-2005* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005).

The cruiser rules date to the 17th century when privateers were issued letters of marque and defined honourable obligations in managing neutral shipping during a time of war.¹⁷⁰ The foundation of an international order based on “Mare Liberum” (freedom of the seas) formulated by the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in the early 1600s, coupled with the cruiser rules that defined interactions with neutral vessels in time of war, survived essentially intact for centuries and was later effectively codified in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of December 10, 1982 which provides a clear international basis for maritime claims that is in force today.¹⁷¹ The cruiser rules were also codified in the London Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War in 1909 wherein article 50 of the declaration requires that “Before the vessel [as a neutral prize] is destroyed all persons on board must be placed in safety, and all the ship’s papers and other documents which the parties interested consider relevant for the purpose of deciding on the validity of the capture must be taken on board the warship.”¹⁷² The signatories of the Declaration included the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany as well as Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Russia, and Japan.¹⁷³

These rules, of course, did not align with Great Britain’s strategic need for a blockade of Imperial Germany or with the emergence of new technologies and legal limitations inherent in submarine warfare. Despite the rivalry over the issue of neutral

¹⁷⁰ Tony Booth, *Admiralty Salvage in Peace and War 1906-2006: ‘Grove, Grub, and Tremble’* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Great Britain: Pen and Sword, 2007), 4. See also Donald Petrie, *The Prize Game: Lawful Looting on the High Seas in the Days of Fighting Sail* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 143. A letter of marque was a government-issued licence that authorized private individuals to capture ships of an enemy nation, but the practice was effectively abolished by the Paris Declaration of 1856.

¹⁷¹ Chris Parry, *Super Highway: Sea Power in the 21st Century* (London: Elliot and Thompson, Ltd, 2014), 17-18.

¹⁷² University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, *Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War*, 208 Consol. T.S (1909) www.hrlibrary.umn.edu accessed August 5, 2018.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

rights, the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy meshed well. With limited historical focus on amalgamation of naval forces --- that is, how forces are employed as integrated units as was done in the maritime domain --- and mutual cooperation between the U.S. and Royal Navies, and bounded by the natural rivalry in the interwar years, many believe that naval cooperation in the Great War was but a “transient moment” rather than the foundation for cooperation after the war.¹⁷⁴ In fact, however, a number of structures and organizations persisted *after* the war that influenced the creation of the special relationship between Great Britain and the United States as well as their navies.

KEY INTERACTIONS AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS

As Sims assumed his duties as a liaison officer in London on April 10, 1917, he faced a complex situation in integrating with a British naval partner that was on the brink of economic collapse caused by the German U-boats. His previously established relationships with Royal Navy leaders enabled him to access critical information to enable his assessment of the status of the war. Additionally, his technical expertise, personal charm, and natural intelligence were infused with a planning and intelligence expertise that equipped him well for the job at hand.

The importance of personal and professional relationship is timeless and creates a trust between individuals and organizations that enables greater mission success. The United States was fortunate that Sims had previously established key working relationships with the maritime leaders in Great Britain as this likely facilitated a more rapid assimilation of the U.S. Navy into existing Royal Navy bases and facilities. The individuals in the naval coalition as experienced by Sims are seen in Figure 1 with the font size indicating an approximation of the importance of the

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Gordon, “The Admiralty and Imperial Overstretch, 1902-1941,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 17, Number 1 (1994), 65.

interactions seen in the constellation of relationships:¹⁷⁵

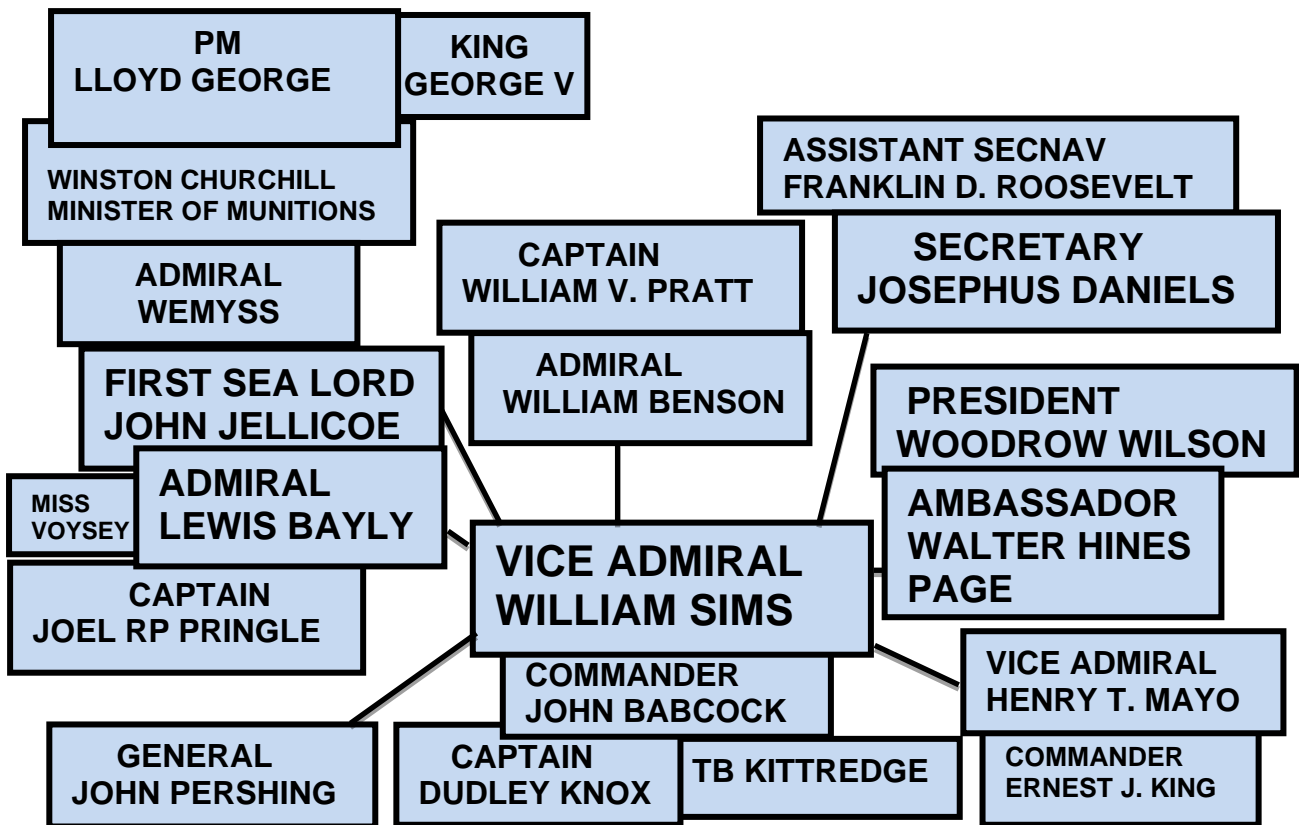


Figure 1. Key Personnel Interactions

Figure 1 shows the main personnel interactions for Sims while assigned in Europe and consist of U.S. leadership, U.S. interactions in Europe, interactions with the leadership of Great Britain, and interactions with his headquarters staff.

U.S. NAVY DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP & INTERACTIONS

Although initially sent to serve a liaison function in London, Admiral Sims arrived there shortly after the United States declared war on Imperial Germany. Sims would later complain that his instructions were unclear although there was an admonition by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Benson to not be co-opted by the British. Sims

¹⁷⁵ For example, Sims' staff would likely have daily interaction but since they represent more of an execution arm for the commander they are not depicted as larger in the scope of their interactions.

notes in his January 7, 1920 letter to Secretary Daniels:

Brief orders were delivered to me verbally in Washington. No formal instructions or statement of the Navy Department's plans or policies were received at that time, though I received the following explicit admonition: "Don't let the British pull the wool over your eyes. It is none of our business pulling their chestnuts out of the fire. We would as soon fight the British as the Germans."¹⁷⁶

Sims' efforts therefore were initially focused on a review of the maritime situation and developing the organization he would need to understand the maritime war. Sims was granted command of the American ships operating from British bases on April 28, 1917, and then command of all U.S. Forces Operating in European Waters on June 14. The geographic extent of Sims' command is detailed in the next chapter. Given a lack of preparedness in the U.S. Navy Department and a fledgling office for the relatively new Chief of Naval Operations, the ability to achieve tasks would be based on Sims' interactions with the U.S. Navy Department leadership.

Sims' immediate reporting link would naturally be the new Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Shepherd Benson. Benson became the first American Chief of Naval Operations in May 1915 reflecting a long-held belief among naval officers of the time that a naval officer and not a civilian must unify the functions of the otherwise independent Navy Bureaus in order to create greater efficiency through a unified command construct.¹⁷⁷ Benson was promoted to the rank of Admiral in 1916, and had an expanded role in the First World War to provide for the operations in Europe as well as the requirement for the transport of the American Expeditionary

¹⁷⁶ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels January 7, 1920*, paragraph 7. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

¹⁷⁷ Mary Klachko, "William Shepherd Benson: Naval General Staff American Style" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990).

Forces to France in support of ground operations in the European theatre.

Admiral Benson was a highly competent naval officer, but he was handicapped by a lack of bureaucratic apparatus and a yielding personality compared to that of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels.¹⁷⁸ His deference to Daniels likely impeded the initial efforts of his office at the U.S. entry into the war in April 1917. Benson was also reliant on a small staff that was forced to integrate complex operations with limited planning experience.

Despite the professional but tense relationship between Sims and Benson, much of the correspondence between the two was ultimately managed by Benson's Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, Captain William Veazie Pratt. A dedicated naval officer known for his tireless work ethic, Pratt received most of Sims' correspondence and fed him the Department's interpretation of his requests as well as any outcomes spawned by the cables that were received in Washington. A Sims acolyte who served with Sims when Pratt was an instructor at the U.S. Naval War College, Pratt also served as Sims' Flag Aide in the Atlantic Torpedo Flotilla where Pratt was instrumental in developing new tactics for U.S. Navy destroyers.¹⁷⁹

Pratt had an extraordinary career including later service as President of the U.S. Navy War College, promotion to Admiral, and service as Chief of Naval Operations under President Herbert Hoover and for several months under Franklin Roosevelt.¹⁸⁰ Pratt was a graduate of the Army War College, and due to his later affiliation with the Naval War College he also learned to think at the strategic level

¹⁷⁸ Mary Klachko, "William Shepherd Benson: Naval General Staff American Style" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 310.

¹⁷⁹ Gerald E. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy: A Sailor's Life* (Washington D.C.: Naval History Division, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), 72.

¹⁸⁰ William Veazie Pratt, *Autobiography* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division Operational Archives, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., 1939).

using an “estimate of the situation” methodology --- that is, analysing the factors of a naval problem to determine a way forward --- that served him well in his shore and staff assignments.¹⁸¹

During the war, Pratt desired an overseas assignment with Sims in London, but his service to Sims and the U.S. Navy was perhaps greater whilst assigned to Admiral Benson. It was through Pratt, and because of Sims’ vast technical capability and professional ability, that Sims was able to achieve the required actions in Washington, D.C. to execute most of his operational wartime tasks. Pratt’s biographer, Gerald Wheeler, notes:

In the Office of Naval Operations Captain Pratt was forced to see the war from a different perspective. He early accepted the Sims’ strategy for defeating the U-boat, but he was unable to give his full attention to answering Sims’ demands. Because there were few senior officers available for duty in Operations, Pratt’s energies were devoted to a variety of study, coordinating, and operating committees as well as carrying out his duties as Admiral Benson’s chief assistant....With the institution of a Plans Division in the Office of Naval Operations, a development he urged the year before [in 1916], Pratt became the director. Finally, of course, as assistant to Admiral Benson and later (August 1918) Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, he had a mountain of daily communications to digest, order, and present to his chief for action.¹⁸²

Pratt thus became the planning and intelligence voice in support of Admiral Benson whilst attempting to achieve the desires of Admiral Sims.

Sims also had direct communications with the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. In terms of his naval influence as Secretary of the Navy, however, Daniels was most known for his overly deliberate and slow decision-making. Curiously, in

¹⁸¹ William Veazie Pratt, *Autobiography* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division Operational Archives, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., 1939).

¹⁸² Gerald E. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy: A Sailor’s Life* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 100. The Plans Division created in 1917 and led by Pratt is not the same as Sims’ Planning section but would be closest to what is today called “future operations.” The Division focused on resource allocation and operational decisions.

modern Navy circles, Secretary Daniels is remembered today for his decision to eliminate the “wine mess” on U.S. Navy ships thus making the U.S. Navy a “dry” navy.¹⁸³

As we have seen with an overworked Benson and an indecisive Daniels, much of the required decision-making fell to other men. In the background to Secretary Daniels was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt who was not afraid to be decisive on naval matters. Roosevelt often disagreed with Daniels, though his service as Assistant Secretary enabled an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. Navy which would serve him well as President of the United States during the Second World War. Roosevelt was much more aggressive than Daniels and established contact with British authorities as early as January 1917 without the knowledge of Daniels.¹⁸⁴ Daniels may have been balancing complex political calculations, but Roosevelt nonetheless made operational decisions, including changes to readiness postures and even offering thirty destroyers to Britain in April 1917, where possible to overcome Daniels’ decision-making style.¹⁸⁵ Roosevelt also created a small class of vessels known as submarine-chasers which were sent forward to work in the Western Approaches.¹⁸⁶

AMERICAN INTERACTIONS IN EUROPE

Of equal importance to the U.S. “chain of command” in Washington, D.C., Sims’ interactions in London were critical to achieving the wartime ends. Whilst assigned in

¹⁸³ In mockery, U.S. Naval Officers would toast the Secretary using coffee instead of wine thus creating the phrase “a cup of Joe.”

¹⁸⁴ *British Embassy letter to the Foreign Office, March 25, 1917.* ADM 137/1436, National Archives at Kew, Admiralty Papers.

¹⁸⁵ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2007), Chapter 8. See also Stanley Weintraub, *Young Mr. Roosevelt: FDR's Introduction to War, Politics, and Life* (Boston, Massachusetts: De Capo Press, 2013), 129.

¹⁸⁶ *Admiral Sims to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Characteristics Common to all United States Submarine Chasers, June 29, 1918.* ADM 137/1622, Admiralty Papers, National Archives at Kew.

London, Sims frequently enlisted the support of the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of Saint James, Walter Hines Page, who was a key figure in communicating Sims' needs through State Department channels and was particularly valuable because of his direct communications pathway to President Woodrow Wilson.¹⁸⁷ Page was a "cultured southerner, born in North Carolina, opinionated, used to expressing his views forcefully and elegantly, in writing as well as in conversation."¹⁸⁸ Page and President Wilson had struck up a friendship when Wilson was President of Princeton University, but their friendship was severely eroded if not destroyed by the countless letters and cables sent by Page that bemoaned the lack of U.S. participation in the war.¹⁸⁹ After the sinking of *Lusitania*, Page was particularly resentful of American inaction that was highlighted by President Wilson's speech in Philadelphia in which Wilson said, "There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right."¹⁹⁰ Ambassador Page's effectiveness may also have been reduced by his reputation as an Anglophile and his perceived criticism of President Wilson, but Sims did not hesitate to enlist the support of Ambassador Page to highlight the need for urgency in the early days after the U.S. entry into the war.¹⁹¹

Sims also had limited professional interactions with the Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Vice Admiral Henry Thomas Mayo who was overall responsible for all battle squadrons and divisions. Mayo coordinated ship assignments to the European

¹⁸⁷ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 353.

¹⁸⁸ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 47.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

¹⁹⁰ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 84 for a summary of this speech.

¹⁹¹ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 337.

theatre at the direction of the Secretary of the Navy. Mayo also visited London in August and September 1917 to review Allied naval cooperation. After his visit, Mayo --- who also supported convoys operations --- had an enhanced understanding of the operational issues and he increased naval support to Sims.¹⁹² Interestingly, Admiral Mayo's Naval Aide was Commander Ernest J. King whose experiences and relationships in the Great War prepared him for his significant leadership role as Commander in Chief, United States Fleet (COMINCH) as well as Chief of Naval Operations during the Second World War.

Finally, Sims had cordial though limited personal interactions with General John Pershing who commanded the American Expeditionary Forces. Sims interacted with Pershing at a few meetings in London, in June 1917, and later in Paris but had extensive communications with Pershing by correspondence. The Senate hearing in 1920 quotes Sims as saying, "I never saw Gen. Pershing much over there. I never was at the front at all, because I forbade all my officers to go to the front. I saw him when he came through there [London] the first time. I saw him once when he came up to London for a conference. I saw him once or twice down in Paris, but I never was at the front and I never had any extended conversations with him, although we had considerable correspondence about various affairs."¹⁹³ Through these interactions Sims confirmed his understanding of the role of a navy to support land forces and particularly through the escort of troop ships, but the interactions were later used to

¹⁹² Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 202-203. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

¹⁹³ *The Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 332.

develop criticisms of how the war was handled by the Navy Department.¹⁹⁴ Sims even banned visits to the Western Front to preclude British forces from being required to serve as escorts to American visitors which, in Sims view, reduced war fighting effectiveness.¹⁹⁵ Sims' restraint in resisting the temptation to visit the front is noteworthy as it shows his focus on winning the war.

ROYAL NAVY INTERACTIONS

Whereas Sims' interactions with his American counterparts and chain of command can be seen as supporting the execution of the war, Sims' interactions with the Royal Navy and political leadership not only enhanced wartime execution but helped to shape the special relationship through immediate access, shared professional values, and, later, structures of mutual support. Sims' main interface with the Royal Navy during the war was the First Sea Lord Admiral John Rushworth Jellicoe. As we have seen, their personal relationship was established well before the war, and both were experts in the evolving gunnery technologies and improvements of the day.¹⁹⁶ When Jellicoe was removed as First Sea Lord in December 1917, Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss became Jellicoe's successor. Sims developed a similar intimacy with Wemyss and, although Wemyss had a different leadership style that was less detail-focused than Jellicoe, Sims was able to maintain a close working relationship.¹⁹⁷

Sims' direct access to the First Sea Lord also created interactions with Minister of Munitions Winston Churchill, Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and King

¹⁹⁴ In Sims' letter of 1920 criticizing the execution of the war by Josephus Daniels, Sims makes specific reference to the extensive personnel support provided to Pershing.

¹⁹⁵ Lieutenant Francis T. Hunter, "American Admirals at War: Glimpses of American Personality on the Sea," *The World's Work*, Volume 38, May-October 2019, 35-39.

¹⁹⁶ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., republished 2017), 88. Originally published in 1920 by Cassell and Company, Ltd.

¹⁹⁷ *Letter from Sims to Wemyss, December 29, 1917*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C., Box 90.

George V. Many of these interactions were purely social with the obvious exception of the First Sea Lord but nonetheless they served to build trust. King George graciously attended a baseball game between the U.S. Army and Navy teams on July 4th, 1918 designed to enhance cultural awareness of America and His Majesty signed a baseball for the Team Captain.¹⁹⁸

Sims' main counterpart in executing the operational level of war, however, was Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly in Queenstown, and they shared a critical relationship built after Sims' arrival into the theatre of war. Bayly was the Commander of the operational British naval forces in which Sims would be required to integrate the U.S. Navy forces. Bayly was renowned for being aloof and difficult to work with, and Sims documented his first meeting noting that Bayly "was as rude to me as one man could well be to another."¹⁹⁹ After a few days in Queenstown, Sims was able to pierce Bayly's demeanour with Sims noting "...it is not too much to say that we became really sincere friends and this friendship has increased as time goes on."²⁰⁰ Sims' charm, poise, and interpersonal skills rather easily calmed Bayly's cantankerous demeanour with the assistance of Admiral Jellicoe and Bayly's niece, Violet Voysey.²⁰¹ Voysey was a mainstay at Admiralty House in Queenstown and often conspired with Sims in support of her uncle's health and later was an honorary member of the Queenstown Association founded after the war to maintain fraternal ties. After meeting with Sims in Queenstown in mid-May 1917, Bayly grew to appreciate the candour and professional competence of Sims, and soon they were

¹⁹⁸ Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval Heritage and History Command, 2017), 24.

¹⁹⁹ *Admiral Sims letter to William Veazie Pratt, August 30, 1917.* W.V. Pratt Papers, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Admiral Sims letter to William Veazie Pratt, August 30, 1917.* W.V. Pratt Papers, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

working closely to integrate the American naval forces into the Queenstown Command.

After writing to Admiral Sims on July 16, 1917, Bayly appointed American Captain Joel Roberts Poinsett Pringle as Joint Chief of Staff.²⁰² Pringle also represented Sims in his absence. Pringle was highly competent and so well respected by the Royal Navy forces for his even-handedness and common sense that Admiral Bayly had Pringle's name placed in the Royal Navy Register --- the first American ever --- recognizing the role Pringle played on Bayly's staff. This extraordinary level of staff integration served both navies well and helped bridge complex wartime problems.²⁰³ To recognize the amalgamated efforts of the operations in the Western Approaches, Bayly also insisted that the composition of Courts of Inquiry --- used to investigate collisions at sea --- would alternate with the first composed of a "British naval officer as President, a U.S. naval officer as second member, and a British naval officer as third. The second court would consist of a U.S. naval officer as president, a British naval officer as second member, and a U.S. naval officer as third."²⁰⁴ The integrated courts of inquiry marked an extraordinary level of cooperation.

THE LONDON FLAGSHIP STAFF

The American staff at the London Flagship enabled positive relationships with their British counterparts and were particularly valuable in creating the structures of mutual support that will be explored in the next chapter. Sims' staff at the London Flagship

²⁰² Bayly's letter to Sims requesting Pringle can be found at <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/publications/documentary-histories/wwi/july-1917/vice-admiral-lewis-b-3.html> and Sims' response can be found at <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/publications/documentary-histories/wwi/july-1917/vice-admiral-william-20.html>

²⁰³ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1939), 223.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

included his Aide, Commander John Vincent Babcock, who worked to exhaustion in support of his Admiral. Tracy Barrett Kittredge, a civilian was later given a reserve commission, was also a part of the staff recruited by Commander Harold R. Stark to be the intelligence liaison to the British Admiralty within the London Flagship.²⁰⁵ Through his personal connections with Frank Birch and Alfred “Dilly” Knox who served in the Naval Intelligence Division’s Subsection 25, Kittredge was “given access to [already decrypted] high-grade sources...and filtered information to the Operations Subsection of the London Flagship...[who] in turn... supplied the information to the Atlantic Fleet headquarters of Adm. Henry T. Mayo.”²⁰⁶ After the war, Kittredge served at the U.S. Naval War College as an archivist and statistician where he also wrote a volume on the *Naval Lessons of the Great War* in support of Sims’ testimony before the Senate defending Sims’ criticisms of Secretary Daniels’ conduct of the war.²⁰⁷ Kittredge later became a key intelligence figure in the Second World War working on the staff of Admiral Harold R. Stark, American Naval Headquarters, London as head of the Political Warfare Section of the Intelligence Division.²⁰⁸

Finally, Commodore Dudley Wright Knox served under Sims at the Atlantic

²⁰⁵ *Tracy Barrett Kittredge Papers, 1910-1957*, Box 8 Oxford and Early Essays, Folder 2. Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Kittredge was a doctoral student at the University of Oxford, and he had also worked in wartime Belgium under Herbert Hoover at the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

²⁰⁶ David Kohnen, ed., *21st Century Knox: Influence, Sea Power, and History for the Modern Era*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 10.

²⁰⁷ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017). Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

²⁰⁸ *Tracy Barrett Kittredge Papers, 1910-1957*, Box 19. Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Also, *Office Files of Captain Tracy B. Kittredge, 1941-1950*, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. Also, Wyman H. Packard, *A Century of U.S. Naval Intelligence*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, A Joint Publication of the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Naval Historical Center, 1996), 418.

Torpedo Flotilla before the war and, during the war, in the American Naval Planning Section of the London Flagship. He then served on the staff of the U.S. Naval War College after the war as a historian before serving as the head of the Office of Naval Records and Library in addition to the Historical Section as Curator of the Navy.²⁰⁹ He is also notable for his participation in the “Knox-King-Pye” report written with Captain Ernest J. King and Commander William S. Pye advocating for education reform for U.S. naval officers in the Summer of 1920.²¹⁰ In the Second World War, Knox was recalled to service to integrate U.S. planning efforts at the request of the Chief of Naval Operations Ernest J. King.

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sims’ personal relationships before the U.S. entered the war ensured Sims’ relatively seamless integration, and, in the first instance of its kind, direct command of Royal Navy ships from June 18-23, 1917, which required Admiral Sims to travel to Queenstown to monitor the command. As described by Admiral Bayly:

In the summer of 1917 the Admiralty wrote suggesting that as I had not had leave during the War I should take some now. I wrote back that I would go on leave provided that I was within telephone communication with Queenstown, and on condition that Admiral Sims should hoist his flag in place of mine during the week I was away. This the Admiralty agreed to. On the morning of my departure my flag was hauled down and Admiral Sims’ Admiral flag took its place and he made Queenstown his headquarters.²¹¹

Bayly and Sims had a unique but effective view of amalgamation --- meaning how

²⁰⁹ “Commodore Dudley Wright Knox, U.S. Navy, Deceased, September 13, 1960” *Dudley Knox ZB File*, Navy Department Library, Office of Naval Records and Library, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.

²¹⁰ Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye, “Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation Regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Volume 46, Number 210 (August 1920), 1265-1293.

²¹¹ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1939), 234.

one integrates operational forces --- to include mixed groups of ships at sea with the senior officer of either Service “taking charge” as well as using a mixed group of Royal Navy and U.S. Navy officers to sit courts of inquiry in cases involving collisions at sea.²¹² Given the British experience since the war began in 1914, the British role as the leading sea power in the world, and Sims’ perspective that the Allied cause was more important than national pride or formality, the amalgamated efforts worked exceedingly well.²¹³

On April 28, 1917, Sims was designated as commander of forces operating from Britain, and later on June 14, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels officially designated Admiral Sims as the Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters completing the transition from what was originally a liaison role.²¹⁴ In that capacity, and during the period of United States participation in World War I from April 1917 to the Armistice in November 1918, Sims’ personal relationships enabled significant operational support and policy recommendations such as convoying of merchant shipping that helped turn the tide against previous German U-boat successes.²¹⁵ Recognizing the unique attributes of the strategic environment of the day, Sims concluded that “controlling the operations of extensive and widely dispersed forces in a campaign of this kind is quite a different proceeding...” from those that characterized naval warfare in ages past.²¹⁶ Accordingly, Sims set about to

²¹² Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1939), 223.

²¹³ The concerns with amalgamation are seen in *Captain Pringle letter to Admiral Sims, April 24, 1917*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C.

²¹⁴ David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963) entry of May 24, 1917, 156.

²¹⁵ A.T. Patterson, ed., *The Jellicoe Papers: Selections from the Private and Official Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe* (London: Navy Records Society, 1966), 155-156.

²¹⁶ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

create a functional command organization that integrated with existing parallel structures within the Royal Navy, and, in spite of delays caused by relative disorganization in Washington, D.C., he created a more viable path to success in concert with the Allied forces.

After the war, Admiral Jellicoe credited Sims with the cooperation of the two navies citing the integration of command relationships when he notes:

As is well known, Admiral Sims, with the consent of the United States Navy Department, placed all vessels which were dispatched to British waters under the British Flag officers in whose command they were working. This step, which at once produced unity of command, is typical of the manner in which the two navies, under the guidance of their senior officers, worked together throughout the war....The relation between the officers and men of the two navies in this Command were of the happiest possible nature, and form one of the pleasantest episodes of co-operation between the two nations.²¹⁷

Sims' decision to subordinate U.S. Navy ships to British Admirals was only for operational tasking and was based on the experience of the Royal Navy before the U.S. entered the war and the lack of U.S. bases in theatre. In theory, Sims held supreme authority over the U.S. ships in theatre and could recall them if necessary.

Sims noted in his *The Victory at Sea*:

I early took the stand that our forces should be considered chiefly in the light of reinforcements to the Allied navies, and that, ignoring all question of national pride and even what at first might superficially seem to be national interest, we should exert such offensive power as we possessed in the way that would best assist the Allies in defeating the submarine....If we had adopted this course [of an independent naval force], we should have been constructing naval bases and perfecting an organization when the armistice was signed; indeed, the idea of operating independently of the Allied fleet was not for a moment to be considered.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., 2017). Originally published in 1920.

²¹⁸ William Sowden Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 45. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Co.

The decision to subordinate U.S. Navy ships to the Royal Navy Flag Officer in Queenstown was reflected at the beginning of U.S. Navy deployments as seen in the orders from Secretary Daniels on April 14, 1917 to Commander J.K. Taussig who led the destroyers sent to Queenstown. The desire for cooperation was seen in Daniels' orders to "Proceed to Queenstown, Ireland. Report to Senior British Naval Officer present, and thereafter cooperate fully with the British Navy," but it was Sims who made the decision to subordinate American ships under British command --- arguably his major strategic decision.²¹⁹ Sims amplified the expectation of subordination telling Taussig to "cooperate with, and *operate under* (italics added), direct command Vice Admiral Commanding British forces based on Queenstown."²²⁰ This level of integration was an extraordinary achievement for Sims because of his longstanding relationship with Jellicoe and because of his extraordinary insights into the challenges faced by the Allied navies.

Despite the challenges of the war, Jellicoe was unceremoniously and without explanation removed from his position as First Sea Lord in December 1917 by the First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Eric Geddes. Although Lloyd George provides a sense of dissatisfaction with the Admiralty's entrenched ways, Geddes was also disappointed with Jellicoe. This was in part because Jellicoe voiced his disapproval of Geddes' organizational changes and leadership style. Robert K. Massie, in his *Castles of Steel*, describes the tension noting, "It fell to Jellicoe to tell Geddes that his new methods were not working."²²¹ Massie cites Jellicoe:

²¹⁹ *Secretary Daniels letter to Commander J.K. Taussig, April 14, 1917.* Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, File TD, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Taussig was Commander, 8th Division, Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet.

²²⁰ *Sims letter to Commander Taussig, April 29, 1918.* Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, File TD, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²²¹ Robert K. Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea*

I said the organisation set up by him [Sir Eric Geddes] had failed to produce better results --- if as good results --- as the old organisation in the hands of naval officers and Admiralty officials. I mentioned that the shipbuilders could not work with the new officials...that their methods caused great and avoidable delays. I also found the armament firms very dissatisfied with the new organization which delayed matters and was much inferior to working direct with the Director of Naval Ordnance.”²²²

Nonetheless, the personal relationship between Jellicoe and Sims enabled a smoother relationship, particularly in the sharing of critical intelligence, at the critical juncture of the U.S. entry into the war and in assessing the complex issues at hand.²²³ Additionally, the personal relationship also enabled a professional and close personal relationship with a sometimes gruff Admiral Bayly at Queenstown and provided a greater voice for Sims in the debate regarding the convoy experiment that turned the tide of the war at sea despite the Admiralty’s and Jellicoe’s resistance. Sims’ role in influencing the debate over convoys will be explored in Chapter 6.

There are a number of reasons traditionally cited against using a convoy system to protect merchant shipping. These include the misperception that convoys are defensive in nature although this view is disconnected from the past including the age of sail. The inclination of First World War military leaders to be more on the “offensive” equally applied to anti-submarine warfare, and this led many leaders to believe that active patrolling by destroyers would yield greater results than through the mere escorting of merchant ships. Prime Minister David Lloyd George in his *War Memoirs* recounts four other objections to the convoy system offered by the Admiralty including the slower speeds in which to complete crossings, overloading of

(New York: Random House, Inc., 2003), 742.

²²² Robert K. Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2003), 742.

²²³ *Office Memorandum Secretary of the Admiralty Sir W. Graham Greene, April 20, 1917*. ADM 137/1436, Admiralty Papers, National Archives at Kew.

port facilities as all ships arrive at once, lack of skilled merchantmen who could maintain formation, and an inadequate number of escorts to conduct the convoys.²²⁴ In the end, all of these objections were overcome through experimentation with the possible exception of the required number of escorts to conduct convoy operations. It was Prime Minister Lloyd George and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Andrew Bonar Law, who would succeed Lloyd George after the war, who pushed the Admiralty for convoys and evoked a convoy trial for shipping between “Britain and the Norwegian Ports and the other between British and French ports.”²²⁵ Although the disorganized and flawed Norwegian convoys operations were deemed a failure, the convoys to France were quite successful.²²⁶ Lloyd George describes the success of the coaling convoys during the experiment:

The coal shipments from England to France had been very severely attacked during the latter part of 1916, and the French asked us to arrange for their escort. It was a great piece of luck for Britain that the task of organising the control was entrusted to a very intelligent young officer who had not been afflicted with hardening of the professional arteries. The Allied cause owes much to Commander (now Admiral) Henderson. With the aid of a small force of armed trawlers he carried out a scheme of daily convoys along three routes, making for Brest, Cherbourg, and Havre. The first experiments in this method began on February 7th, 1917, and during the three months, March, April, and May, 4,013 ships were convoyed across those dangerous waters with a total loss of nine vessels --- only one in every 446.²²⁷

With the experimental success of the convoy system proven for the coal transports between Britain and France, and with an emphasis on convoy operations being pushed

²²⁴ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916-1917, Volume III* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 87-88, 92.

²²⁵ Ibid, 100.

²²⁶ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916-1917, Volume III* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 100. Lloyd George specifically notes “The fact that the experiment was not a systematic convoy, was imperfectly organised and was therefore not given a fair chance, was not taken into account. It was not a success and the Admirals ‘had told us so.’”

²²⁷ Ibid, 101.

by Sims, the Royal Navy was finally compelled to adopt the system that would turn the tide against merchant shipping losses.

THE VIEW FROM GREAT BRITAIN

In the years before the First World War, all nations dealt with the complexities of naval innovation leading to larger ships and exponential improvements in gunnery capabilities. The major powers and especially Great Britain made the leap into large capital ships and retained a primacy that was being challenged by emerging U.S. and Imperial German and Japanese Navies. To maintain primacy and deter emerging maritime rivals, Great Britain adopted its two-power standard in 1882 that was later formalized in the Naval Defence Act of 1889 requiring the Royal Navy to maintain battleships equal to the combined numbers of its two nearest rivals --- then Japan and Russia.²²⁸ Despite the new challengers, Great Britain nonetheless imposed its definition of the law of the sea, to include wartime blockade of neutral vessels, through the Royal Navy. For the foreseeable future, Great Britain anticipated the ability to use its Navy to avoid or minimize expeditionary needs.

As a nation built upon sea power, Great Britain naturally clung to a maritime-focused strategy although the political entente with France in 1904-05 foreshadowed the theoretical willingness to commit to a land-based strategy, and Great Britain's commitment of large numbers of land forces to the European continent during the war marked a shift in strategy from the historical norm of a maritime-focused strategy.²²⁹ In any event, as storm clouds loomed in the years before the war, the Royal Navy still expected to play a large role in the First World War through a major Fleet action

²²⁸ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 178- 179.

²²⁹ Ibid, 240.

against Germany's High Seas Fleet and through traditional commerce and supply interdiction using a sea-enforced blockade.²³⁰ There was also a recurring discussion on the potential for Amphibious operations in an effort to open new fronts "along the German North Sea or Baltic coastlines" to support lines of communications or divert German troop strength where possible.²³¹

When the war first broke out, Great Britain exerted economic pressure on Germany and attempted to limit neutral shipping on the European Continent thereby angering American sensibilities. This anger in the United States, however, was quickly overshadowed by Germany's implementation of unrestricted submarine warfare. Sims' first cable to the Secretary of the Navy on April 14, 1917 was abundantly clear on the threat of losing the war because of submarine warfare as well as the need for immediate action by the U.S. Navy. The cable shows Sims' adroit understanding of the complex situation and is remarkable for its clarity and detailed understanding of the challenges considering that it was written just days after Sims arrived in London:²³²

To: Secretary of the Navy
Sent April 14, 1917
Through: State Department
File No. 25-9-2
The situation is as follows:

The submarine issue is very much more serious than the people realize in America. The recent success of operations and the rapidity of construction constitute the real crisis of the war. The morale of the enemy submarines is not broken, only about fifty-four are known to have been captured or sunk and no voluntary surrenders have been recorded. The reports of our press are greatly in error. Recent reports circulated concerning surrenders are

²³⁰ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 241.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² *Cable from Admiral Sims to Secretary Daniels, April 14, 1917*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Box 91.

simply to deprecate enemy morale and results are [not] very satisfactory.

Supplies and communications of forces all fronts, including the Russians, are threatened and control of the sea actually imperiled...

The amount of British, neutral and Allied shipping lost in February was 536,000 tons, in March, 571,000 tons, and in the first ten days of April 205,000 tons. With short nights and better weather these losses are increasing...

On account of the immense theatre and the length and number of lines of communication, and the material destruction resulting from three years' continuous operation in distant fields with inadequate base facilities, the strength of the naval forces is dangerously strained... To accelerate and insure defeat of the submarine campaign immediate active cooperation absolutely necessary.

The issue is and must inevitably be decided at the focus of all lines of communications in the Eastern Atlantic, therefore I very urgently recommend the following immediate naval cooperation. Maximum number of destroyers to be sent, accompanied by small anti-submarine craft; the former to patrol designated high seas area westward of Ireland, based on Queenstown, with an advance base at Bantry Bay, latter to be an inshore patrol for destroyers: small craft should be of light draft with as high speed as possible but low speed also useful. Also repair ships and staff for base. Oil and docks are available but I advise sending continuous supply of fuel. German main fleet must be contained, demanding maximum conservation of the British main fleet. South of Scotland no base is so far available for this force...

The chief other and urgent practical cooperation is merchant tonnage and a continuous augmentation of anti-submarine craft to reinforce our advanced forces. There is a serious shortage of the latter craft. For towing the present large amount of sailing tonnage through dangerous areas sea-going tugs would be of great use.

The cooperation outlined above should be expedited with the utmost dispatch in order to break the enemy submarine morale and accelerate the accomplishment of the chief American objective.

It is very likely the enemy will make submarine mine laying raids on our coast or in the Caribbean to divert attention and to keep our forces from the critical areas in the Eastern Atlantic through effect upon public opinion. The difficulty of maintaining submarine bases and the (sic) focussing of shipping on this side will restrict such operations to minor importance, although they should be effectively opposed, principally by keeping the Channel swept on soundings...

So far all experience shows that submarines never lay mines out of sight of landmarks or lights on account of danger to themselves if location is not known. Maximum augmentation merchant tonnage and anti-submarine work where most effective constitute the paramount immediate necessity.

Mr. Hoover informs that there is only sufficient grain supply in this country for three weeks. This does not include the supply in retail stores...
[Signed] SIMS

The British naval forces of course bore the main burden of the anti-submarine war, and cargo ships sustained the greatest damage, but, as noted in Sims' cable, few in the British public or in America understood the severity of Allied shipping losses in 1917. Allied shipping losses from the beginning of the war in 1914 to the Armistice are depicted in Figure 2 below. By April 1917, Allied ships losses were more than double than when Germany declared unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917. Coupled with shortfalls in the capacity to replace lost shipping, this created a genuine potential for economic collapse if the trends continued.

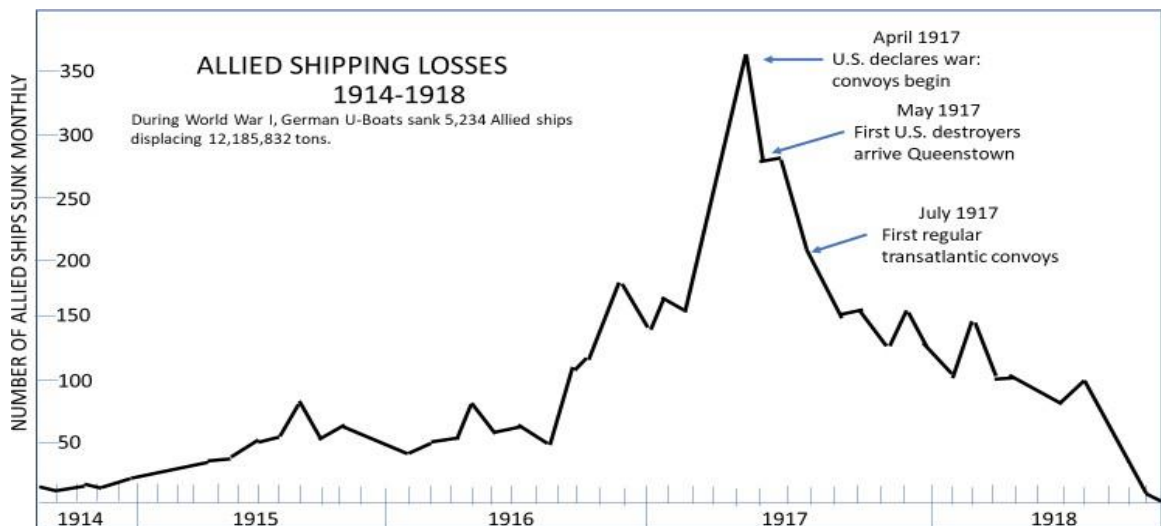


Figure 2. Allied Shipping Losses²³³

The First Sea Lord Admiral Jellicoe also saw and, more importantly, articulated to his civilian leadership (the First Lord of the Admiralty) the severe

²³³ This chart was derived from Professor Craig L. Symonds, *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy* (London: Airlife Publishing Ltd., 1995), 129. Professor Symonds is currently the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History at the U.S. Naval War College, and he has granted permission for use of this graphic.

impact of the submarine war in April 1917. On April 27, 1917, Jellicoe wrote in a memorandum “most secret and personal”:

The real fact of the matter is this. We are carrying on the war at the present time as if we had absolute command of the sea, whereas we have not such command or anything approaching it. It is quite true that we are masters of the situation so far as surface ships are concerned, but it must be realised – and realised at once – that this will be quite useless if the enemy’s submarines paralyse, as they do now, our lines of communication.

History has shown from time to time the fatal results of basing naval or military strategy on an insecure line of communications. Disaster is certain to follow and our present policy is heading straight for disaster. It is useless and dangerous in the highest degree to ignore that fact.

I must, therefore, advise that the Government should so shape its policy as to recognize that we have neither the indisputed command of the sea nor even a reasonable measure of that command. If we do not recognize this it is my firm conviction that we shall lose the war by the starvation of our people and the paralysing of our allies by failing to supply them with coal and other essentials.²³⁴

Jellicoe and Sims were of course in constant communication, and Sims was certainly aware of Jellicoe’s sense of the serious nature of situation. Sims then drafted a letter to President Wilson (through the Secretary of State) that was rendered even more dire and then sent by U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Walter Hines Page, on the same date as Jellicoe’s memo to the First Lord of the Admiralty, expressing the great urgency of the situation.²³⁵

From: Ambassador Page
To: Secretary of State

²³⁴ *First Sea Lord to First Lord of the Admiralty letter, April 27, 1917*. ADM 1/8480/36, Submarine Menace, National Archives at Kew.

²³⁵ *Ambassador Walter Hines Page Cable to Secretary Daniels, March 24, 1917*, Papers of Josephus Daniels, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Daniels’ awareness of the submarine threat is documented in David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963). See the entries April 21 and April 28, 1917, 143, 145.

Sent: 27 April 1917

Very confidential for Secretary and President.

There is reason for the greatest alarm about the issue of the war caused by the increasing success of the German submarines. I have it from official sources that during the week ending 22nd April, eighty-eight ships of 237,000 tons Allied and neutral were lost. The number of vessels unsuccessfully attacked indicated a great increase in the number of submarines in action.

This means practically a million tons lost every month till the shorter days of autumn come. By that time the sea will be about clear of shipping. Most of the ships are sunk to the westward and southward of Ireland. The British have in that area every available anti-submarine craft, but their force is so insufficient that they hardly discourage the submarines.

The British transport of troops and supplies is already strained to the utmost, and the maintenance of the armies in the field is threatened. There is food enough here to last the civil population only not more than six weeks or two months.

Whatever help the United States may render at any time in the future, or in any theatre of the war, our help is now more seriously needed in this submarine area for the sake of all the Allies than it can ever be needed again, or anywhere else.

After talking over this critical situation with the Prime Minister and other members of the government, I cannot refrain from most strongly recommending the immediate sending over of every destroyer and all other craft that can be of anti-submarine use. This seems to me the sharpest crisis of the war, and the most dangerous situation for the Allies that has arisen or could arise.

If enough submarines can be destroyed in the next two or three months the war will be won, and if we can contribute effective help immediately it will be won directly by our aid. I cannot exaggerate the pressing and increasing danger of this situation. Thirty or more destroyers and other similar craft sent by us immediately would very likely be decisive.

There is no time to be lost.

[signed] Page

Despite organizational delays within the U.S. Navy Department, the U.S. provision of destroyers starting in May 1917 was essential to turning the tide of merchant sinkings as was the commencement of convoy operations. The start of the convoy experiments and then implementation of regular convoys between April and August 1917 drove the shipping losses down to sustainable levels parallel to those that occurred before the German declaration of unrestricted warfare.

Although mythology in the United States suggests the Americans almost singlehandedly won the Great War including the Battle of the Atlantic, the British essentially conducted approximately eighty percent of the anti-submarine warfare efforts in a conflict ranging from the North Sea to the Mediterranean.²³⁶ Summaries of naval participation show that “there were 1,474 convoys of troops and cargo ships, composed of 18,633 ships, which crossed the Atlantic, of which 70 per cent were British, 27 per cent American and 3 per cent French, but we did not realize that only 15 per cent of the ships carried passengers or troops and 85 per cent were in the service of supply.”²³⁷ Escorting this large volume of ships was problematic given the submarine threat. The Royal Navy suffered, however, from a shortage of anti-submarine capable ships. Although the Royal Navy had some 200 destroyers in the inventory, the great majority was allocated to the protection of the Grand Fleet Battleships and other global responsibilities.²³⁸ The Royal Navy’s global distribution in January 1917, for example, included the Mediterranean, Egypt, East Indies, West Indies, White Sea, North America, South America, West Africa, Cape of Good Hope, East Africa, China, and Australia.²³⁹ This left “but a meagre two dozen (destroyers) to patrol the waters West of the United Kingdom, the Irish Sea, and to the South and North of Ireland, etc.”²⁴⁰

The principal contribution of the United States to anti-submarine warfare was

²³⁶ John Langdon Leighton, *SIMSADUS: LONDON, The American Navy in Europe* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), 5.

²³⁷ Albert P. Niblack, *Putting Cargoes Through: The U.S. Navy at Gibraltar During the First World War 1917-1919* (Gibraltar: Calpe Press, 2018), 3.

²³⁸ John Langdon Leighton, *SIMSADUS: LONDON, The American Navy in Europe* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), 3.

²³⁹ *Ships of the Royal Navy – Location/Activity Data, 1914-1918* at <https://www.naval-history.net/WW1NavyBritishShips-Locations6Dist.html> accessed January 18, 2021.

²⁴⁰ John Langdon Leighton, *SIMSADUS: LONDON, The American Navy in Europe* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), 3.

therefore the influx of destroyers to the Allied cause at a critical time. For the United States, “between May 1917 and the Armistice, there were 92 U.S. ships in the Queenstown Command” placed under the command of Admiral Bayly to mainly patrol the Western Approaches and assist in convoy operations.²⁴¹ Bayly’s command “stretched from the Sound of Mull to Ushant, covering all of the George’s Channel, the Bristol Channel, and the entrance to the English Channel.”²⁴² It is worth noting that when Admiral Bayly assumed command in Ireland, the name of the command was changed to Senior Officer, Coast of Ireland and was elevated to Commander-in-Chief Coast of Ireland in 1917 as a reflection of Ireland’s geostrategic importance as a result of the conflict in Europe and the disruptive technology that the German U-boats represented.²⁴³ The U.S. Navy forces ultimately assigned to counter the German threat “included two destroyer tenders and 47 destroyers at Queenstown, plus 30 small submarine chasers and three tugs stationed at other British navy bases as needed.”²⁴⁴ The number of active U.S. Navy ships assigned to Queenstown compared favourably to the Royal Navy ships which in January 1918 included two scout cruisers, four torpedo boats, one carrier, and nine minesweepers.²⁴⁵

During the conflict, the cooperation at sea between the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy was clearly effective in that the combined navies staved off the U-boat guerre

²⁴¹ Vice Admiral Walter S. Delany, *Bayly’s Navy* (Naval Historical Foundation Publication Series II, Number 25, Fall 1980) at <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/b/baylys-navy.html> accessed on January 27, 2019.

²⁴² Steve R. Dunn, *Bayly’s War: The Battle for the Western Approaches in the First World War* (Croydon, Great Britain: Seaforth Publishing, 2018), 51.

²⁴³ P.G. Halpern, ed., *The Keyes Papers: Volume I, 1914-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin for the Navy Records Society, 1979) letter from Commodore Tyrwhitt to Admiral Keyes, 134.

²⁴⁴ William H. Langenberg, “Pull Together”: The Queenstown Naval Command of World War I.” *Sea History*, Winter (2001-2002). The article’s title is a reference to Admiral Bayly’s memoirs of that same name.

²⁴⁵ *Ships of the Royal Navy – Location/Activity Data, 1914-1918* at <https://www.naval-history.net/WW1NavyBritishShips-Locations6Dist.html> accessed October 23, 2020.

de course.²⁴⁶ By facilitating secure lines of communication through imposition of a convoy system for the transport of critical commercial goods, the combined navies reversed the shipping losses that were threatening defeat of Great Britain in the Spring of 1917 through potential starvation of the British Isles. The role of the U.S. contribution of destroyers at a critical time during the war enabled the success of the anti-submarine efforts. Moreover, after the U.S. entry into the war, the Sea Lines of Communications were effectively secured to allow the insertion of the American Expeditionary Forces into Europe allowing relief on the stagnant land fronts and enabling later offensive pushes that helped to change the course of the war on land.

CONCLUSION

The role of Admiral William Sims was fundamental in establishing a wartime naval coalition with Great Britain based in part on the personal relationships explored in this chapter. Sims' relatively unique exposure to intelligence functions while in Asia and his reformist expertise in the technological growth of ship design and gunnery gave him significant international exposure and allowed him to build the personal relationships with Royal Navy officers that allowed for a relatively seamless integration into British decision-making at the most important time of the Great War. Moreover, Sims' naval organizational structures --- detailed in the next chapter --- created during the war generated *mutual* support that enabled a strong foundation that allowed continued evolution and sustainment of the naval coalition.

These organizational structures, such as the London Flagship as well as planning, intelligence, and fraternal organizations that are *not* as well documented,

²⁴⁶ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 125-126. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company. The book provides a detailed account of Sims' contribution to anti-submarine warfare and the adoption of the convoy system.

will be explored in the next chapter. Additionally, we will examine the overall war fighting contributions that made Sims so effective and the key figure in the pioneering of the special relationship. Sims' vision and the U.S. Navy's contributions were indeed critical in building the lesser-known structures of war fighting that helped to mature the wartime naval coalition during the Great War while also creating the foundation for cooperation between the wars and upon U.S. entry into World War II.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRUCTURES OF WAR

INTRODUCTION

In addition to personal relationships between U.S. Navy and Royal Navy officers, the role of Admiral Sims is particularly noteworthy because of the structures of war he created to execute his operational duties during the Great War. Although some structures to support the war would have obviously existed in some form, Sims applied his unique experiences in doctrinal development, operational and naval intelligence application, and diplomatic assessments in creating and exploiting the structures that he put in place. Moreover, the organizational structures proposed and implemented by Sims were developed in a comparatively short period of time which is remarkable given the new character of many of them. In fact, the U.S. Navy's London Headquarters itself, known as the "London Flagship," reflected a change in directing and commanding naval forces from ashore on a much larger scale than had been seen before. To effectively control large numbers of naval forces across a wide theatre required a more centralized facility than the traditional Flagship at sea, and for the first time, wireless communications enabled theatre-wide control of forces rather than a Fleet controlled by an individual Fleet Commander.²⁴⁷

NECESSITY AS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

To best understand the important innovations in how Sims managed his command, we must explain the basis of the claims that Sims was the creator or architect of many of the structures that he put into place. To achieve this end, we will look at (1) exactly

²⁴⁷ Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 226-232.

what Sims did in support of creating the advance headquarters structures and when he did it, (2) how we know Sims was responsible or provide an explanation of his role, (3) how these structures compare with previous U.S. practice, (4) and whether Sims was exercising a choice between well-understood options, trying something new, or modelling after a British practice. Understanding the evolution of the thinking regarding the creation of an advance headquarters will also allow us to understand the chronology and even judge for ourselves if the time required was appropriate or excessive.

When Sims departed the United States for Great Britain in March 1917, one must remember that Sims “was being sent abroad to confer with the Admiralties on the other side, and to use the cable freely in advising them [the Navy Department] as to how best they could cooperate with the allied navies, in case we were unfortunately drawn into war.”²⁴⁸ Because war was declared whilst Sims was en route to Great Britain, the demands for information and the burdens placed on both the Navy Department and Sims grew exponentially. In his Senate testimony in 1920 after the war, Sims notes the inadequacy of his staff upon arrival observing:

I went abroad with one aid. When I arrived in London I found in the naval attaché’s office one line officer, the naval attaché, one officer of the Supply Corps, and one officer of the Medical Corps. These officers had been for some time in London, and each of them was already fully occupied before I arrived with a variety of tasks which precluded their giving me any great degree of assistance....In a very few days I found myself literally overwhelmed with the task that faced me, with every department of the British Admiralty and likewise the French Ministry of Marine, thrown open to us, and with insistent requests from many sections of the Navy Department at home for technical information of many descriptions. It was physically impossible for me and my

²⁴⁸ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 268. These remarks are from Admiral Sims’ testimony and he is describing the instructions given to him by the Secretary of the Navy before departing the United States for Great Britain.

one aid merely to collect the information requested, to say nothing of maintaining constant touch with the heads of the allied admiralities, and later directing the operations of our own forces in Europe, looking out for their supplies, etc. To complicate matters still further, all communications had to be converted into intricate codes, which was a tremendous task in itself, and involved hours of purely routine labor on the part of my aid, assisted by the small staff of the naval attaché; and this purely mechanical detail was added to the task of collecting, digesting, and collating the information to be sent to the Navy Department.²⁴⁹

The small staff provided to Sims limited his ability to direct operations, and Sims made urgent appeals for additional personnel in order to execute his mission. On April 16, 1917, Sims asked for an officer (Naval Constructor McBride by name) to support a repair section as well as an “engineer and gunnery officer.”²⁵⁰ Clearly, Sims saw the requirement for technical experts to facilitate his mission. Even after Sims received direction on April 28, 1917 that he will command the destroyers en route to Ireland, Sims still did not have a sufficient staff for the tasks assigned and countless requests for information. The implementation of convoy operations also created a significant drain on Sims’ resources:

...in spite of all the recommendations which I had made, I had up to 7 July, three months after my arrival in England, received only three additions to my staff. One of these officers had necessarily been detailed to duty at Queenstown; the other two were assistants to the naval attaché, ordered to additional duty to me. In the meantime, after the convoy system was put into effect and our troops began to move on the high seas, and my responsibilities were thereby greatly increased, almost daily it became necessary that I should have a competent officer for the handling of these convoys.²⁵¹

Accordingly, in a message on June 11, 1917, Sims requested “a United States naval

²⁴⁹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 205.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 211-212.

officer be assigned to me for exclusive duty in Admiralty in connection with convoys and selection of rendezvous and similar important duties concerning movements our Government ships as affected by submarine campaign.”²⁵² With no reply to this message, and in spite of additional appeals in letters and dispatches on June 20th, July 1st, July 3rd, July 5th, July 9th, and July 14th, Sims took matters into his own hands and “was compelled to order the Commander of one of the Queenstown destroyers to duty in London, in order to take charge of this important work, upon which the lives of our troops, as well as losses of valuable cargoes, was dependent.”²⁵³ The trade-off between combat readiness of the American ships and the need to accomplish a growing volume of work was significant. Sims noted in his January 7, 1920 letter to Secretary Daniels that,

As it gradually became apparent that support in this matter need not be expected, I began slowly building up a staff by detaching officers from some of the ships. This was of course regrettable, as many of the ships were at that time short of officers, but it was necessary on pain of the whole force becoming ineffective through the rapidly growing and essential administrative work getting beyond the capacity of the headquarters’ force.²⁵⁴

Although Sims’ complaints were arguably overstated, he simply organized his small number of resources around the tasks required of him.

Despite the evolving architecture for a staff, the idea for an advance (i.e., in theatre) headquarters was not articulated by Sims until July 16th, 1917, in response to the Navy’s July policy statement, when he writes a letter to Secretary Daniels noting:

...The Department’s policy refers to willingness to extend hearty cooperation to the Allies, and to discuss plans for joint operations, and also its readiness to

²⁵² *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 212.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 211-212.

²⁵⁴ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

consider any plans which may be submitted by the joint allied Admiralties. ...I submit that it is impossible to carry out this cooperation, to discuss plans with the various Admiralties, except in one way – and that is, to establish what may be termed an advance headquarters in the war area, composed of Department’s representatives, upon whose recommendations the Department can depend.

I refer to exactly the same procedure as is now carried out in the Army [reflected in General Pershing’s order from May 8, 1917]: that is, the general headquarters in the field being the advance headquarters of the War Department at home, and the advance headquarters must of necessity be left a certain area of discretion, and freedom of action as concerns the details of the measures necessitated by the military situations as they arise...

If the above considerations are granted, it then becomes necessary to decide as to the best location in which to establish such advanced headquarters, or what may be called an advance branch war council at the front; that is, an advance branch upon whose advice and decisions the War Council itself largely depends...

From the naval point of view, it would seem evident that London is the best and most central location in the war area for what I have termed above the advance branch of our Naval War Council.

The British Navy, on account of its size alone, is bearing the brunt of the naval war, and hence all naval information concerning the war reaches and centers in London.²⁵⁵

It is evident that Sims was first to suggest an advance headquarters based upon the large volume of requests for information and the number of taskings emanating from Washington, D.C. In the interim, the small staff limited Sims’ ability to perform independent planning resulting in a policy of maximized integration out of necessity rather than desire. The same letter details Sims’ minimum requirements for such as staff, noting:

I consider that a very minimum staff which would be required is approximately as follows:

(1) One chief of staff, who would be free to carry on a continuous estimate of the situation, based upon all necessary information. He would be given the

²⁵⁵ *Letter from Admiral Sims to Secretary Daniels, July 16th, 1917.* Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, 1911-1927, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Sims is articulating that the location of the headquarters should be based on the greatest availability of information.

- freedom of the operations department of the British and French admiralties.
- (2) An officer, preferably of the rank of commander, for duties in conjunction with shipping and convoy, to handle all the numerous communications in relation to the movements of American shipping, particularly military shipping, and also other shipping carrying American troops.
 - (3) An officer, at least a lieutenant commander, for duties in connection with anti-submarine division operations in order to insure perfect cooperation in that field of work between our service and other allied services.
 - (4) An officer, of all around ability and discretion, for duties in connection with general military intelligence. He should be in constant touch with the secret service departments of the admiralties, in order to insure that all military intelligence which in any way affects the Navy Department or our forces is properly and promptly acted upon.
 - (5) At least two lieutenants, or lieutenant commanders of the line, in my own office, in connection with general administrative questions, in addition to the one now available. The necessity for these additional officers is imperative.
 - (6) One communication officer to take general charge of codes and communications, both with the department at home, the allied admiralties, and with the various bases of our forces in the war area (at present Queenstown, Brest, Bordeaux, St. Nazaire, London, and Paris).
 - (7) A paymaster, to have complete charge of all financial matters connected with our naval organization abroad. This officer should be in addition to Paymaster Tobey, who is performing necessary and invaluable service on my staff in connection with all logistical questions.²⁵⁶

This detailed letter requesting an advance headquarters as well as the list of minimum requirements is important because we can see Sims as the architect and first proponent of such an organization. We can also see the outline of the numerous sections that later come into being in the London Flagship including the chief of staff, the Planning Section (in the form of an individual or individuals who constantly maintain an estimate of the situation), an Intelligence Section, a Convoy Operations Section, a Communications Section, a Repair Section, and, using the Attaché's medical officer, a Medical Section. Coupled with the previous requests for technical experts in engineering (material) and gunnery (ordnance) one can see the clear

²⁵⁶ *Letter from Admiral Sims to Secretary Daniels, July 16th, 1917*, Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, 1911-1927, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

contours of the future London Flagship organization.

Unfortunately, the Navy Department did not act upon the multiple requests for personnel and by the end of October 1917 Sims functioned with only “six regular officers, sent abroad by the department for staff duty, and two officers whom I had ordered up from the forces afloat. In addition there were four officers in the naval attaché’s office who were assigned additional duty on my staff.”²⁵⁷ This is remarkable in that “on October 1, 1917, there were in European waters 73 naval vessels and 15 shore stations, comprising 652 officers and 9,500 men” with the requirement to “administer these forces, to control operations, and at the same time to keep in constant touch with the allied admiralties, and to acquire information for the department about all allied war experience...”²⁵⁸

Sims again amplified his request for additional personnel in a letter dated October 23, 1917, noting:

...6. The immediate needs for increase are as follows:

- (a) An officer to relieve the chief of staff of the major portion of his administrative work and leave him free to fulfil his more important function of military advisor and chief of the planning staff.
- (b) An officer to take charge of all aviation matters that must be handled in this office, and act as the liaison officer between myself and the British Admiralty in these matters.
- (c) An additional assistant to the intelligence officer. A vast amount of military information comes into the office, and much more could be secured, if my staff were large enough to permit of its being properly examined and digested.
- (d) An officer to whom all personnel matters may be entrusted...

7. For the planning staff, I believe that it will be necessary that not less than five officers be made available in addition to the chief of staff, who should be the head of this organization. Such a staff could, and would, work in close cooperation with a recently established planning staff of the British Admiralty.

²⁵⁷ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 223.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

By this means close cooperation between the two services could be secured, and facilities furnished for impressing our views on the British Admiralty to a much greater extent than has been possible in the past.²⁵⁹

In this letter we see the recommendation for the Aviation Section and, again, the Planning Section which became a defining element of the London Flagship. The American Planning Section was designed to work closely with the Admiralty's planning staff. The Admiralty planning staff evolved from within the Operations Division in the Royal Navy and was formalized as a separate Division of the Admiralty in December 1917.²⁶⁰

Despite the seemingly rational pleas for additional staff in the face of overwhelming and growing requirements, the approval of an advance headquarters did not officially occur until the visit by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Benson in November 1917 followed by his direction to create the headquarters and an embedded Planning Section on November 19th as an essential means of ensuring U.S. influence upon the conduct of operations.²⁶¹ In a cable from Chief of Naval Operations Benson to the Secretary of the Navy dated November 19, 1917 Benson states:

I have gone over the situation fully with British Admiralty, and outlined what I believe to be best plans for future Naval Operations...From my observations, and after careful consideration, I believe that such plans, satisfactory to both countries, cannot be developed until we virtually establish the strict planning

²⁵⁹ Force Commander letter to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), October 23, 1917. Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, 1911-1927, record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁶⁰ Shawn T. Grimes, *Strategy and War Planning in the British Navy, 1887-1918* (Rochester, New York: Boydell Press, 2012). For a listing of Admiralty leadership of the Divisions see Gordon Smith, *World War I at Sea* July 6, 2020 at www.naval-history.net/WW1NavyBritishAdmiraltyPart01.htm#c accessed July 6, 2020.

²⁶¹ See *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 227.

section for joint operations here, in order that the personnel thereof may be in position to obtain latest British and other Allied information, and to urge, as joint plan, such plans as our estimate and policies may indicate. This action appears to be all the more necessary, considering the fact that any offensive operation which we may undertake, must be in conjunction with British Forces, and must be from bases established or occupied within British territorial waters.²⁶²

It was after this visit by Benson that he supported additional ships and personnel moving to Europe to provide greater support. Sims told Admiral Bayly, "I believe Admiral Benson thoroughly understands that every available destroyer should be sent to this side at the earliest possible moment."²⁶³

After Benson approved an American Naval Planning Section, the number of personnel assigned to Sims increased with staff growing from sixteen personnel on October 1st, 1917, to twenty-five officers on January 1st, 1918, forty officers on April 1st, forty-seven officers on July 1st, eighty-one officers on October 1st, and ninety-three officers on the day of the armistice.²⁶⁴ Clearly, as Admiral Benson and Secretary Daniels came to see, the complexity and scale of the war demanded an advance headquarters and also required the integration of relatively new structures --- in terms of cooperation at an operational level rather than the strategic level of war --- for planning and intelligence that are seen in the creation of an American Naval

²⁶² See *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 227.

²⁶³ *Admiral Sims letter to Admiral Bayly, November 20, 1917*. Naval Records Collection, National Archives, Washington D.C., "General Matters Relating to the Operations, Plans, and Policies of the Navy as a Whole."

²⁶⁴ Derived from a table III provided by Admiral Sims copied in *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 251. The table also notes a large number of communications officers growing from seven personnel on October 1st, to fifteen officers on January 1st, 1918, twenty-seven officers on April 1st, thirty-four officers on July 1st, fifty-three officers on October 1st, and sixty-eight officers on November 11th.

Planning Section and an Intelligence Section that were partially *integrated* with the British and Royal Navy counterparts. These structures enabled compatible working practices that facilitated cooperation and supported naval integration both during and after the war.

Having examined what Sims did and the evolutionary timeline by which he achieved his ends, we will examine how these structures compare with previous U.S. practice, and whether Sims was exercising a choice between well-understood options, trying something new, or modelling after a British practice. The American Navy was accustomed to fighting as fleet units supported by an archaic Bureau system of equal and independent organizations that each reported directly to the Secretary of the Navy despite the creation of the office of the Chief of Naval Operations in 1915. The scope of a protracted multi-theatre conflict, coupled with new communications modalities, led to the need for an advance headquarters which Sims so aptly described. Sims' analogy (cited earlier) for the creation of an advance headquarters was the wartime Army model --- that is, a forward headquarters responsible to the headquarters in Washington, D.C.

THE LONDON FLAGSHIP

The lack of organization in the United States in preparing for the First World War was evident in nearly all aspects of the leadership in Washington, D.C. To fulfil his duties, however, Sims ultimately created an effective command centre known as the “London Flagship” to provide the organizational and representational capacity to support United States' naval efforts in conducting the war. The London Flagship created a new model for multinational collaboration and command as well as its execution. In his *The Victory at Sea*, Sims described the exponential growth of his European command as follows:

From April to August, 1917, the American navy had a very small staff organization in Europe. During these extremely critical four months the only American naval representatives in London, besides the regular Naval Attaché and his aides were my personal aide, Commander J.V. Babcock, and myself; and our only office in those early days was a small room in the American Embassy.²⁶⁵

The approval to create the advance headquarters enabled significant expansion and development starting in August 1917 and growing exponentially until November 1918. By November 1918, the command had grown immensely as the “American naval forces in European waters comprised about 370 vessels of all classes, more than five thousand officers, regulars and reserves, and more than seventy-five thousand men; we had established about forty-five bases and were represented in practically every field of naval operations.”²⁶⁶

The breadth and scope of the command for the U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters was quite extensive. In addition to the ships based at Queenstown, by August 1918 Admiral Sims had overarching responsibility for extensive forces in France providing troop escort and protection, ships based in Gibraltar for escort duty for Allied trade through the strait, forces conducting submarine-chasing duty in the English Channel, six submarines in Berehaven, Ireland to attack enemy submarines at the entrance of the Irish Sea, submarine chasers in Corfu to attack submarines in the Adriatic, five battleships serving with the Grand Fleet (commanded by American Admiral Hugh Rodman but under the authority of British Admiral David Beatty), a Mine Force for North Sea minelaying, a clearing force in the Azores to allow coaling and sustainment, and a large fleet of merchant ships to carry coal from England to the

²⁶⁵ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 240. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

French ports.²⁶⁷

Sims' subordinate Flag commanders included Rear Admiral Thomas S. Rodgers in Berehaven, Bantry Bay, Ireland (as of August 1917), Rear Admiral Albert P. Niblack in Gibraltar (as of November 1917), Rear Admiral Henry B. Wilson in Brest, France (as of November 1917), and Rear Admiral Joseph Strauss in Inverness and Invergordon (as of April 1918).²⁶⁸ Interestingly, the establishment of these bases and the arrival of forces was often a surprise to Sims as the Navy Department often negotiated locations and forces directly with Allied representatives in Washington, D.C. The Navy Department would then inform Sims of their decision or broadly ask for advice after the decisions had been made. Sims naturally argued this greatly reduced the efficiency of the forces assigned and created delays in coordinating support or employment during the war.²⁶⁹

On a smaller scale, Sims also controlled cross-channel transports in Southampton, a cruiser based in Murmansk, two tugs in Genoa, Italy, and two tankers based in Liverpool. Figure 3 shows a more detailed breakdown of the forces under Sims' authority as Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters.

²⁶⁷ *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters*. The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 11-13. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* A detailed history of the evolution of the development of French ports and air stations can be found in Dr. Henry P. Beers, *U.S. Naval Port Officers in the Bordeaux Region 1917-1919*, Naval History and Heritage Command, <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/u/us-naval-port-officers-bordeaux-region-1917-1919.html> accessed April 21, 2019.

²⁶⁹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 53-83. Despite his role at the Allied Councils, Sims details several months of a lack of information flow and how he was surprised at the arrival of ships in the Azores and forces that were to be assigned to France (though he was informed after the decision had been made).

<u>PORT OR STATION</u>	<u>FORCE INVENTORY as of August 1918</u>
QUEENSTOWN	24 Destroyers, 2 Tenders, 3 Tugs (plus 2 Destroyers temporarily assigned to Plymouth)
FRENCH COAST	33 Destroyers, 16 Yachts, 9 Minesweepers, 5 Tugs, 4 Repair Ships, 1 Barracks Ship, 2 Barges. (plus 1 Tug temporarily assigned to Azores)
GIBRALTAR	2 Scout Cruisers, 5 Destroyers, 6 Coast Guard Cutters, 5 Gunboats, 10 Yachts
PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND	41 Submarine Chasers, 2 destroyers, 1 Tender
BEREHAVEN, IRELAND	6 Submarines, 1 Submarine Tender
CORFU	36 Submarine Chasers, 1 Tender
GRAND FLEET INVERNESS/INVERGERDON	5 Battleships 10 Mine Planters, 1 Repair Ship, 2 Tugs
AZORES	4 Submarines, 1 Gunboat, 1 Monitor, 2 Yachts, Marine Detachment (plus 1 Tug temporarily from Brest)
ENGLAND TO FRANCE	73 Merchant Ships commissioned or on order (COAL TRANSPORT)
SOUTHAMPTON	4 Cross Channel Transports (Commissioned Ships)
MURMANSK, RUSSIA	1 Cruiser
GENOA, ITALY Government	2 Tugs for direction by Italian
LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND	2 Tugs

Figure 3. Force Composition of the United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ This chart is derived from *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters*. The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 11-13. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box.

It is noteworthy that the largest U.S. naval force operated out of Brest France but were distributed in French ports along the coast to accommodate the large numbers of ships.²⁷¹ The subordination of U.S. Navy Commanders was also evident in the employment of U.S. Navy ships in France. Admiral Wilson, commander of U.S. Naval Forces in France as of November 1917, noted that “the Senior Allied Naval Officer Present commanded all forces operating in any particular country or section of a country. Thus, logically, all American forces on the west coast of France were under the command of the Senior French Naval Officer.”²⁷² In practice, this policy was modified when “it was decided by the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in France, and by the French naval authorities that the former should assume the responsibility for the escorting and the routing of ships that carried American troops to and from the coast of France...[though this] did not apply to the French liners which carried a comparatively small number of troops to and from Bordeaux.”²⁷³ These convoy operations were also critical to the economic sustainment of Great Britain.

In addition to communications with subordinate commanders, Sims’ communications with the naval leadership of nations other than Great Britain was accomplished through site visits, direct telephony, and naval attachés in the other nations. Sims’ Intelligence Section described the communications with the various naval attachés noting:

²⁷¹ Henry B. Wilson, Vice Admiral, Commander United States Naval Forces in France. *An Account of the Operations of the American Navy in France During the War with Germany* at www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/a/account-operations-american-navy-france-during-war-germany.html accessed December 25, 2020, 18.

²⁷² Ibid, 17.

²⁷³ Henry B. Wilson, Vice Admiral, Commander United States Naval Forces in France. *An Account of the Operations of the American Navy in France During the War with Germany* at www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/a/account-operations-american-navy-france-during-war-germany.html accessed December 25, 2020, 21.

The Naval Attachés at Paris and Rome are the medium of communication between Admiral Sims and the Ministries of Marine in France and Italy, and they keep him in constant touch with the naval situation in these countries. The Admiral makes frequent trips to Paris [to attend Allied Naval Conferences] and an occasional trip to Rome [to meet his Italian counterpart]. Our Naval Attachés in Holland and Scandinavian Countries keep Admiral Sims constantly in touch with all information they obtain. There is direct telephonic communication between the British and French Admiralties, and in addition, the French Admiralty keeps an Admiral with a staff on duty in London, who cooperates with our staff.²⁷⁴

At a more operational level, the interactions between the naval leadership of the Allies were conducted through the Allied Naval Council consisting of senior representatives from Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy, and Japan that met periodically in London or Paris to coordinate their actions.²⁷⁵ The Allied Naval Council was intended to parallel the Supreme War Council but focused on maritime matters. Sims recalls the establishment of the Allied Naval Council on November 29, 1917, noting, “The idea agreed upon was to have a council composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the various Admiralties concerned, except that I would represent our Navy Department. This Council was to meet at stated intervals and also as often as the council itself might consider necessary outside the regular meetings.”²⁷⁶ In execution, the council met in January 22, 1918 (London), 12-13 March (London), April 25-27 (Paris), June 11-12 (June), September 13-24 (Paris), and October 28-November 4 (Paris/Versailles).²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters.* The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims’ Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 1. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box.

²⁷⁵ *William Sims letter to William V. Pratt, November 21, 1917.* National Archives, Washington D.C., File “General Matters Relating to the Operations, Plans, and Policies of the Navy as a Whole.”

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume. V: Victory and Aftermath January 1918-June 1919*, Introduction by Barry Gough (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2014), 20-

Communications between the London Flagship and the Admiralty consisted of interactions between the staffs, a daily meeting at the Admiralty, and the exchange of liaison officers that enabled “any division of the Admiralty desiring any information from or consultation with individual members of Admiral Sims’ staff are enabled to do this through this [liaison] officer. Similarly, officers of Sims’ staff were enabled to obtain information from the Admiralty.”²⁷⁸ To ensure connectivity, direct telegraph and telephony capability were also installed to facilitate more immediate communications.²⁷⁹

The London Flagship leased a five-storey residence consisting of twenty-five rooms and then expanded to incorporate six total residences that was merged into one building that was just under two miles from the Admiralty.²⁸⁰ This building housed the main headquarters such that, “...on the day the Armistice was signed, we had not far from 1,200 officers, enlisted men, and clerical force, working in our London establishment, the commissioned staff consisting of about 200 officers of which sixty were regulars and the remainder reserves.”²⁸¹ Organizationally, the London Flagship had twelve departments or sections: Intelligence Department, Convoy Operations Section, Anti-Submarine Section, Aviation Section, Personnel Section, Communication Section, Material Section, Repair Section, Ordnance Section, Medical Section, Legal Section, and Scientific Section.²⁸² Later an American Naval

30.

²⁷⁸ *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters.* The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims’ Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 2. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

²⁸⁰ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page, & Company.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 249-250. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page, & Company.

Planning Section was headed by the Chief of Staff Captain N.C. Twining.

Many of these organizational structures were traditional --- that is, staffs are generally organized around operations, planning, and manpower --- however, the changes wrought by the Great War required adaptations. These adaptations included a convoy operations section, anti-submarine section, aviation section, and scientific section. These sections recognized the emergence of technologies in the Great War such as the ocean-going submarines, dirigibles, and aircraft as well as improvements in weaponry ranges and lethality. The Intelligence Section --- which alone reported directly to Sims demonstrating Sims' understanding of the importance of an information advantage --- and a Planning Section will be detailed below, but the Convoy Operations Section and Anti-Submarine Section reflected new types of operations and the need to organize to manage these complex challenges. The London Flagship organization emphasized operations and logistics including the foundational elements of maintenance, repairs, and gunnery as well as new operational requirements. Overlaid on top of the new types of operations were other new enablers of war such as signals and communications intelligence which was probably the most interesting feature of the new environment and reflected how "real-time" or near real-time intelligence could shape operations.²⁸³ Finally, the organization included a scientific section led by Dr. Henry Andrew Bumstead.²⁸⁴ The organization of the London Flagship is depicted below:

²⁸³ For a detailed review of real-time intelligence in the First World War at the battle of Jutland, see Andrew Gordon, *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and British Naval Command* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2013) and Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁸⁴ Dr. Bumstead was a physicist at Yale University who specialized in electromagnetic or "electrodynamic" theories. A few years after the war, he was Chairman of the prestigious U.S. National Research Council. See National Academy of Sciences, *Report of the National Academy of Sciences for the Year 1921* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 49.

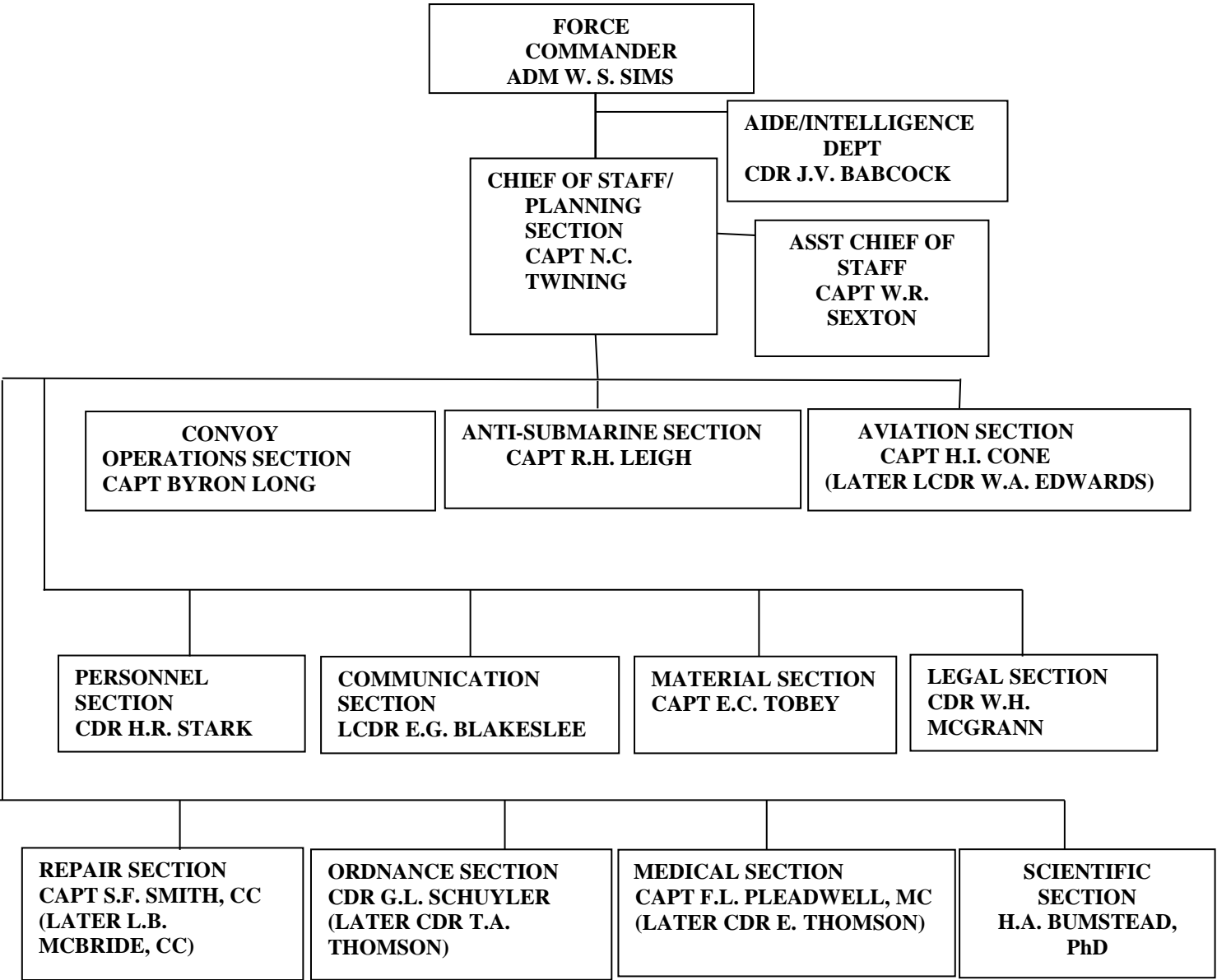


Figure 4. The London Flagship Organization

In the Royal Navy, most of its technological reviews were managed in what Admiral Jellicoe called “design and production” departments such as the Naval Ordnance Department and the Torpedo and Mining Department.²⁸⁵ The London Flagship scientific section is arguably a nod to the exponential increase of technology in the Great War and reflects a willingness to learn from industry as well as an effort

²⁸⁵ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., republished 2017), 171-172. Originally published in 1920.

to integrate scientific expertise into a staff to provide on-site advice.²⁸⁶ More broadly in the United States, the expanding impact of technology led to the creation of a U.S. Naval Consulting Board designed to explore scientific matters and the role of technology in the war fighting domain. The famous American scientist, Thomas A. Edison served as Chairman of the U.S. Naval Consulting Board which was a forerunner to today's Defense Science Board for the U.S. Department of Defense. The Board was created in 1915 by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels at the suggestion of Edison.

THE AMERICAN NAVAL PLANNING SECTION

Within the advance headquarters or London Flagship, "Sims urged the need of a Planning Section at his headquarters in London, where comprehensive and timely information was more available; not only of the activities of American Forces, but of the Allied Navies and of the enemy."²⁸⁷ Although Sims gave credit for the American Naval Planning Section to the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Benson, the idea originated with Sims as highlighted earlier although Sims suggests that the idea originated in American industry which shows his willingness to learn from non-military organizations. Despite this claim, there was certainly a parallel to the British Planning Section which should be acknowledged. In any case, Sims found great value in the American Naval Planning Section, and in his *The Victory at Sea*, he notes:

One of our Departments was so novel, and performed such valuable service, that I must describe it some detail. We took over into our London organization an idea that is advantageously used in many American industrial establishments, and had a Planning Section, the first, I think, which had ever been adopted by any Navy. I detached from all other duties five

²⁸⁶ Captain Dudley Knox, Preface to *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923).

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

officers... These men made it their business to advise the Commander in Chief on any questions that might arise. All were graduates of the Naval War College at Newport, and they applied to the consideration of war problems the lessons which they had learned at that institution. The business of the Planning Section was to make studies of particular problems, to prepare plans for future operations, and also to criticise fully the organization and methods which were already in existence.²⁸⁸

Because of Sims' confidence in the applicability of the Naval War College's intellectual methods, the American Naval Planning Section relied on graduates of the Naval War College.

Although war planning in the Navy Department was a function assigned to the General Board, the idea of creating a parallel Planning Section in Washington D.C. was not suggested until the Fall of 1918. The American Naval Planning Section was not a parallel structure to something in existence in Washington, D.C. A Planning Section or Division in Washington D.C. was later to be designed on recommendations from the American Naval Planning Section in London.²⁸⁹

The American Naval Planning Section in London, formally led by Captain N.C. Twining, USN, provided broad oversight to all U.S. planning efforts to include tactical, operational, and strategic considerations. The Planning Section included the working heads of the section Captain F.H. Schofield, Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Lewis McCarty Little, and Captain Dudley Knox. Knox records the creation of the Planning Section noting:

²⁸⁸ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 253. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

²⁸⁹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 192, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 45, Organization of a Plans Division for Navy Department, August 10, 1918 was drafted in response to a cablegram requesting the American Naval Planning Section in London submit recommendations on how to organize a Plans Division within the Navy Department in Washington, D.C.

A visit to England during November, 1917, by Admiral Benson, Chief of Naval Operations, coincided with a reorganization of the British Admiralty, which included, as a result of war experience, magnification of the function of strategic planning by their War Staff. Decision was then reached to form an American Planning Section at the London headquarters of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, with the idea of cooperating more closely with the British and other Allied plan makers.²⁹⁰

By the end of 1917, the American Naval Planning Section was up and running and submitted its first substantial input in *Memorandum Number 1* on December 31st, 1917 regarding “The North Sea Mine Barrage.”²⁹¹ Interestingly, the section’s efforts were nearly derailed by the First Sea Lord’s vision that the officers of the Planning Section be dispersed to include serving on the Dover staff for Rear Admiral Keys, and others to the Admiralty’s Material and Operations Section. Fortunately, the Planning Section was able to rapidly overcome this vision of disaggregation through a forceful argument presented as *Memorandum Number 2* dated January 2nd, 1918.²⁹²

Memorandum Number 2 candidly observed that:

The proposed arrangement is not at all in accord with the expressed ideas of Admiral Benson and would but serve to nullify our usefulness as a Planning Section.

It is therefore proposed that it be pointed out to the First Sea Lord that the duties of the Planning Section must necessarily be more general. The United States is now involved in this war to an enormous degree. The naval vessels, and the troops on this side of the water, are no correct measure of our

²⁹⁰ Captain Dudley Knox, Preface to *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923).

²⁹¹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 1, The North Sea Mine Barrage, explored the mission of closing the northern exit of the North Sea to contain the German submarine threat and possible raiders, and hesitantly approved moving the position of the original barrage position (Aberdeen to Eckersund) in deference to the British Admiralty whose Grand Fleet would bear responsibility for patrolling the barrage.

²⁹² Ibid, Memorandum Number 2, Duties of Planning Section, January 2, 1918, documents the order from Admiral Benson to create the American Naval Planning Section and outlines draft topics to be explored by the new Planning Section.

participation in the war. Loans to the Allies, aggregating seven billion dollars, are being made with prospect of further loans. Our entire military effort is by way of the sea. We are intensely concerned in the measures taken to drive the Germans from the sea and in the measures taken to handle shipping at sea.

It is therefore appropriate that the Planning Section of Admiral Sims' staff shall be free to consider those questions that seem to him and to the members of the section most urgent.²⁹³

The American Naval Planning Section was designed, in part, to maximize U.S. input on allied policy. Fortunately, the argument contained within Memorandum Number 2, including the pointed tie to the continuation of loans to Great Britain, carried the day with the First Sea Lord. Throughout the Great War the work of the American Naval Planning Section provided real-time and historical compilation of planning efforts ranging from operational factors, platform employment options, geographic considerations, situation estimates, and analysis of future implications beyond the war such as execution of the Armistice, future naval platform employment options, and policy implications for international law principles.

The effort of the American Naval Planning Section was impressive with seventy memorandums produced in twelve months. The memorandums were reviewed by Admiral Sims and then distributed based on the subject matter with many being forwarded to the office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Most telling is the scope of the issues addressed by the Planning Section with topics ranging from trip reports, tactical innovations and assessments, technological impacts on war fighting, the optimization of specific ship platforms, and, towards the end of the war,

²⁹³ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 1. The memorandum also proposes "special subjects" to be studied in a joint manner including the Northern Barrage, the English Channel, the Straits of Otranto, the tactics of contact with submarines, the convoy system, cooperation of United States naval forces and naval forces of the Allies, and a joint naval doctrine.

recommendations and assessments on the military perspective of war termination requirements and law of the sea interpretation differences that would impact post-war efforts. Unfortunately, most of the memorandums except for those dealing with diplomatic recommendations have attracted little scholarly interest perhaps because of the highly focused nature of the memorandums.²⁹⁴ The memorandums are listed by date of issuance in Appendix C, but it is useful to review the memorandums through the various lenses that Sims brought to his command --- doctrinal development, operational and intelligence application, and diplomatic assessments.²⁹⁵

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION

The American Naval Planning Section created a number of memorandums that would be considered doctrinal --- that is a codification of lessons or proposed policies that it then disseminated and applied.²⁹⁶ Some of the memorandums examined how to improve tactical effectiveness. For example, one memorandum sought the best employment of forces given the critical nature of shipping losses and recommendations for more offensive orientation and indoctrination. It specifically explored expanded use of non-military vessels for slow convoys to free destroyers,

²⁹⁴ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972) in particular researched the memorandums but mainly to detail the diplomatic machinations that occurred at the end of the war and in the negotiations in Paris.

²⁹⁵ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum 67 was omitted from publication in 1923 because it examined the possibility of a post-war conflict with Great Britain.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* The publication also provides a history of the Planning Section that demonstrates how many of the memorandum recommendations were implemented including organizational changes (i.e., task forces), technological developments, and improved tactical implementation. See also William N. Still, Jr., *Victory Without Peace: The United States Navy in European Waters, 1919-1924* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018) for examples of how the American Naval Planning Section contributed to the Armistice negotiations and demobilization efforts.

increased air patrols, and reorganized forces to allow greater hunting of submarines.²⁹⁷ Given the increasing reliance on convoys, the doctrinal policies of convoy operations required optimization and led to planning recommendations to create a more streamlined and uniform system of issuing orders for convoys consisting of sailing orders, instructions to ship Masters, and sealed instructions.²⁹⁸ Finally, within anti-submarine warfare, there was a constant review of doctrine to optimize the effectiveness of the submarine hunt.²⁹⁹

The American Naval Planning Section also reviewed operational-level doctrine such as how to optimize the growing number of maritime forces in theatre. One striking innovation was to re-organize the growing number of forces assigned to the U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters using titles that reflected the task they were assigned to execute whilst forces administered from ashore would carry geographic titles.³⁰⁰ This type of “task” orientation continues today in the U.S. Navy with Task Forces organized around the missions of the forces assigned to a Task Force Commander.

Another doctrinal output of the American Naval Planning Section were assessments on how to optimize specific ship platforms during the war. A number of memorandums reviewed how to employ merchant vessels as auxiliary cruisers,

²⁹⁷ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923) Memorandum Number 18, Antisubmarine Policy, March 28, 1918.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, Memorandum Number 25, Convoy Orders, May 8, 1918.

²⁹⁹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923) Memorandum Number 54, Increasing the Probability of Torpedo Hits, September 23, 1918, reviewed the technical specifications of torpedoes at the request of the Bureau of Ordnance and recommended a magnetic firing capability when within 70 feet of a target, improved depth capacity to 100 feet, and the need to develop the ability for the torpedo to drive in circles when near maximum range to enhance torpedo effectiveness.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Memorandum Number 19, Reorganization of United States Naval Forces in European Waters, March 26, 1918.

examined U.S. destroyer deployments with the Grand Fleet as well as Grand Fleet employment options, and proposed tender support ratios to maximize maintenance support to destroyers.³⁰¹ The memorandums also explored contingencies such as how to counter newly emerging German cruiser-submarines and potential battle cruiser raids in the Atlantic in the event of a High Seas Fleet breakout.³⁰² The fear of battle cruiser raids is an example of creating a doctrine or, in this case, a set of standard operating procedures in the event of a contingency such as a German breakout in part because of the potential havoc that might be wrought upon the convoy system.³⁰³

³⁰¹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923) Memorandum Number 5, Employment of Auxiliary Cruisers, January 10, 1918, sought to increase the tonnage of food and munitions transported in support of the war and critically identified 42 Royal Navy Ships that the Planning Section believed could be better employed. Memorandum Number 7, Assignment of Destroyers to the Grand Fleet, January 14, 1918, was prepared in response to a request from the American Battleships serving in the Grand Fleet to allow Queenstown destroyers to serve in the Grand Fleet for greater experience. The memorandum concluded that service with the Grand Fleet was of secondary importance to the convoy and anti-submarine mission but recommended a swap of 12 U.S. Navy destroyers from Queenstown in exchange for twelve British destroyers from the Grand Fleet. Memorandum Number 24, Tenders, May 2, 1918, recommended one destroyer tender be provided in the war zone for every twenty-four destroyers assigned in theatre.

³⁰² *Ibid*, Memorandum Number 10, Cruiser-Submarines, January 30, 1918, explored the problem posed by Germany's cruiser-submarines capable of "having a speed of 16 to 18 ½ knots on the surface, 9 to 10 knots submerged; cruising radius about 20,000 miles. Armament, two 5.9 inch guns, two 4.1 inch guns, or four 4.7 inch guns; eight inboard torpedo tubes." Given the superior gunnery capabilities of the new cruiser submarines, the memorandum recommended destroying the vessels near their bases and implementation of convoy systems. Memorandum Number 26, Battle-Cruiser Raid, May 17, 1918, offered an updated perspective on how to approach a Battle Cruiser raid in the Atlantic and was submitted due to the American Naval Planning Section's belief that the Grand Fleet's proposed action to manage the raid upon entering or leaving port was inadequate. Because of the accelerated transits of troop convoys, the Planning Section proposed updated scouting tactics and ship hunter tactics that included U.S. Battle Cruisers as well as Battleships.

³⁰³ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923) Memorandum Number 44, Enemy Raiders, August 6, 1918, expressed concern regarding German Navy raiders escaping to open seas because of the ever-increasing number of troop transports. It urged immediate completion of the barrage. Memorandum Number 46, Execution of Navy Department's Plan for Battle-Cruiser Raid, August 10, 1918, details a plan to counter a German Battle-Cruiser raid using three Battleship Division geographically deployed to protect convoys and defeat the raids. Memorandum Number 50, Battle Cruiser Raid, September 1918, further details the implementation of plans in the event of a Battle Cruiser raid by the German Navy and specifically denotes Battleship assignments and plans for specific troop convoys in view of British Admiralty differences in managing the planned

Dissemination of the tactical doctrine was achieved in several ways. Clearly the American Naval Planning Section distributed the information, but Sims was particularly adroit at ensuring the information reached his subordinate commanders.

Elting Morison, in *Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy* notes:

To each officer in charge of a base or force, Sims issued a set of General Instructions...The fundamental policies set forth were: cooperation with the Allies; the carrying out of operations in accordance with the plans of the Senior Allied Commander in the several areas; the encouragement of individual initiative to a maximum degrees... To each commander, the value of doctrine was especially commended. Until every force developed its own, the Flotilla doctrine [that is tactics to be employed by destroyers that were developed by Sims when he commanded the Atlantic Destroyer Flotilla from July 1913 to October 25, 1915] was to be used. It was the War College and the Flotilla all over again.³⁰⁴

Sims' efforts in creating torpedo and manoeuvring doctrine were significant as was proving the value of a Reserve Flotilla.³⁰⁵ Additionally, Sims' leadership of the Atlantic Flotilla allowed him to develop his staff officers including William Veazie Pratt, Dudley Knox, and J.V. Babcock. It was, however, through General Instructions, the issuance of doctrine to all commanders, and the wide dissemination of the Planning Section outputs that Sims ensured doctrinal application.

OPERATIONAL AND NAVAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATION

Among the most significant memorandums produced by the American Naval Planning Section are those that can be broadly characterized as Operational and Naval Intelligence Application in support of broader planning efforts. Although these planning memorandums addressed convoy communications and anti-submarine tactics, a significant number of the Planning Section memorandums were devoted to

troop convoy operations.

³⁰⁴ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 373-374.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 300-301.

solving operational challenges in the maritime domain and included detailed exploration of possible tactics to be employed by naval forces. A large portion of these operational planning efforts dealt with the creation of various “mine barrages” which were essentially an interwoven network of mines that were connected together to create a marginally successful barrier until improved mines were developed in 1918 across an expanse of sea of the North Sea from Scotland to Norway or across the English Channel to France.³⁰⁶ The planning for the barrages was often a combined effort between the British and American Naval Planning Sections and included a recommendation in March 1918 to pursue an Adriatic mine barrage and anticipated the additional force requirements to be provided by Italy, France, Great Britain, and the United States.³⁰⁷ The monitoring of the barrage fields also led to significant basing considerations with a memorandum recommending basing options from which to coordinate the building and execution of the Mediterranean barrages with Bizerta, Tunisia being the favoured base.³⁰⁸

The American Naval Planning Section also completed a number of operational assessments during the war and are invaluable for their detailed explanation of the status of war efforts to include the overarching strategy being employed by naval forces. The memorandums consistently note the operational and strategic requirement to “obtain subsurface command of the sea, while still retaining command of the surface of the sea.”³⁰⁹ From a sea power perspective, the memorandum is noteworthy

³⁰⁶ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

³⁰⁷ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 16, Memorandum on Adriatic Project, March 7, 1918.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, Memorandum Number 53, Mine Base in Mediterranean, September 23, 1918.

³⁰⁹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 39-40.

in that it determines, “the fundamental end in view of sea power is the support of land power. Success on the sea alone (sic) can not force peace terms as favorable as those to be gained by corresponding success ashore.”³¹⁰ The operational assessments also recognized the damage inflicted by unrestricted submarine warfare and sought to optimize efforts to defeat the submarine threat through exploration and exploitation of new technologies and means to optimize the employment of specific ship-types.

The operational assessments are noteworthy for their consideration of the various Allied theatres of war as well as efforts to examine the means to defeat or delay German capabilities and advances.³¹¹ Geographic considerations include a review of the Skagerrak, Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean, the northern barrage area between Scotland and Norway, and the Bay of Biscay. Of great value is the recognition of possible contingencies such as a German Raider foray into the Atlantic and the potential impact this would have on convoy operations and shipping protection. Finally, the memorandums examine complex dynamics such as how to impact enemy morale while rebuilding Allied morale which had also been affected by the war.³¹²

A more mundane function of the American Naval Planning Section was the documentation of various trips made by Planning Section members to enhance their understanding of the planning efforts. These visits allowed an in-depth understanding of underwater technologies, mine barrage effectiveness, logistical support for U.S. troop landings in France, and visits to the Grand Fleet to improve understanding and

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 39-40.

³¹² Ibid, Memorandum Number 11 Morale --- Allied and Enemy that proposed psychological methods to “strengthen our own morale and weaken that of the enemy” by creating teams of psychologists to study and exploit morale while building a religious revival. The memorandum was created in response to the Planning Section’s observation that Allied morale was arguably impaired. 88.

potential integration of U.S. efforts in the war.³¹³

DIPLOMATIC ASSESSMENTS

Among the more significant memorandums produced by the American Naval Planning Section were those that offered diplomatic assessments as the likelihood of Allied victory increased. The focus of these memorandums in offering U.S policy perspectives should, in part, counter the narrative that claims Sims was uncritically Anglophile. Beginning with the American Naval Planning Section Memorandums of October 24th, 1918 and later, the memorandums shifted in focus from doctrinal and war fighting assessments to plans that exclusively dealt with the armistice, doctrinal discussions about ship numbers, diplomatic planning in the event of revolutions, and post-war considerations of international law. Presumably there was recognition among the War Councils that victory was near as more diplomatic assessments became necessary, and thus the Planning Section worked to support Admiral Sims' and later Admiral Benson's involvement in various Allied Councils discussing options for peace negotiations or war termination in the event of a revolution that would change the alliance structure for Germany. For example, one of the diplomatic assessments explored the possibility of an Allied peace treaty with Turkey to offset a German treaty with Ukraine as well as the possibility of hostilities by the Ottoman

³¹³ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). For example, Memorandum Number 42A, Notes on Visit to France (by Captain D. W. Knox and Captain H. E. Yarnell) related to French Ports and Facilities), August 5, 1918, documents Captain Knox's inspection tour of French ports to examine their capacity for troop throughput and improvement. Several recommendations resulted including better allocation of destroyers, means to improve bombing and seaplane operations at Dunkirk, and the need for naval control of the Shipping Board ships. Memorandum Number 47, Notes on Visit to Grand Fleet and Mine Bases, September 3, 1918, documents Captain H.E. Yarnell's underway period with American Battleships in which Admiral Rodman requested ships with 14-inch guns to replace the current 12-inch guns. A review of the Northern Mine Barrage also led to a better understanding of the weather in the Summer that may allow small boats as chasers to preclude submarine contravention of the barrage.

Empire and Bulgaria against Imperial Germany.³¹⁴ Another diplomatic assessment, just days short of the actual armistice explored how to manage the war fighting capacity in the event of a revolution in Austria-Hungary.³¹⁵

At a higher level, strategic assessments were provided including practical recommendations such as the possibility of demanding unconditional surrender based upon Allied strength.³¹⁶ Other practical recommendations included how to optimize Army and Navy demobilization after the war as well as the naval conditions to be met within Austria-Hungary and Germany when an armistice was declared. The post-war analysis memorandums also addressed the thornier issues of the delicate naval balance that might be affected by the future disposition of Imperial German Navy ships into any of the Allied navies. The memorandum offered a simple negotiating principle for the United States suggesting that “no vessel surrendered by Germany shall ever be used to increase the naval armament of any power whatsoever.”³¹⁷

³¹⁴ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 15, Peace with Turkey, March 4, 1918, reviewed the Allied strategy considering a peace treaty between Germany/Austria and Ukraine and recommended an Allied peace treaty with Turkey to counteract the Ukrainian peace treaty. Memorandum Number 28, United States Relations with Turkey and Bulgaria, May 17, 1918, was prepared for Admiral Sims in preparation for an Inter-Allied Naval Council advising him of President Wilson’s position against declaring war on the Ottoman Empire or Bulgaria. Memorandum Number 52, Appreciation by British Plans Division --- Offensive and Defensive Alliance with Bulgaria (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections), September 15, 1918, examined whether Turkey or Bulgaria was more desirable in concluding a separate peace. It concluded Bulgaria would be the more strategic ally due to its troop strength within the German ranks.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* Memorandum Number 63, Proposed Decisions in the Event of a Revolution in Austria-Hungary, November 3, 1918, which recommended taking over maritime vessels and fortifications as well as sending a U.S. Flag Officer to act as a liaison in the event the existing government was disrupted.

³¹⁶ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 59, Armistice Terms, October 24, 1918.

³¹⁷ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), Memorandum Number 64, Principle Governing Disposition of German Vessels that are Surrendered, October 30, 1918. This principle was submitted to Admiral Benson to support his participation in Armistice talks in

Another representative diplomatic-level American Naval Planning Section Memorandum posited a vision for the future of submarine warfare recommending its abolition. Memorandum Number 68, *Future Submarine Warfare*, undated, explored world and national interests for future submarine warfare and recommended the abolition of submarine warfare. Admiral Sims found the argument illogical because of the expanded role for submarines, but after reviewing the memorandum he forwarded the memorandum to the Navy Department for consideration.³¹⁸

More significantly, the memorandums explored the possibility of post-war conflict with Great Britain after the war and the role of the Free Seas and neutral rights in the establishment of any new world order marking the disparate positions on neutral rights between the United States and Great Britain. American Naval Planning Section Memorandum Number 67 was omitted from publication in 1923 because this memorandum explored the possibility of a post-war conflict with Great Britain. Although it noted that a conflict between the United States and Great Britain was quite unlikely, the memorandum acknowledged that the unresolved tensions regarding neutral rights and the potential overlap in trade interests should at least be considered.³¹⁹ Specifically, this omitted memorandum notes:

There are many factors which make war between the United States and Great Britain unlikely. Among these are (a) Present sentiment. (b) Economic dependence of Great Britain on the United States. (c) Proximity of Canada to United States. (d) Great amount of British wealth invested in the United States. (e) Possible lack of Colonial support unless the war were considered highly just by the British Colonies. (f) British labour situation. (g) Sound

Paris.

³¹⁸ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), Memorandum Number 68, *Future Submarine Warfare*, undated.

³¹⁹ *Memorandum Number 67 of the American Naval Planning Section, Building Program, November 21, 1918*. Department of the Navy, Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, TX File.

business sense of the British Government. (h) Lack of aggression in American aims. But in spite of these happy obstacles to war, war may come; so we have to examine the possible causes of war, the missions imposed on naval forces by the war, and the resulting character of the possible campaigns.

Although conflict was truly unlikely, the other underpinning of potential diplomatic conflict was the unresolved definition of freedom of the seas and this was addressed just days before the Armistice in Memorandum Number 70, Freedom of the Seas, November 7, 1918, which proposed changes to the body of international law as a function of the lessons of the Great War.³²⁰ It noted that “absolute freedom of the seas is at present impracticable” and made legal proposals to accommodate elements of blockade policies.³²¹ This potential flashpoint is detailed in Appendix F.

PLANNING AND INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION

The American Naval Planning Section also served an additional function of intelligence coordination. The section sought to provide the best solutions to the most complex problems and would often perform analysis from an enemy perspective. Sims noted, “One of their favorite methods was to place themselves in the position of the Germans and to decide how, if they were directing German naval operations, they would frustrate the tactics of the Allies.”³²² This effort was a formalized technique known today as “red-teaming” where intelligence experts attempt to discern trends and enhance understanding by analysing problems through the eyes of one’s opponent. The technique was specifically applied to “problems” that were analysed

³²⁰ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 70, Freedom of the Seas, November 7, 1918.

³²¹ This recommendation is intriguing since the White House position contained within Wilson’s Fourteen Points was unlikely to accommodate a shift to include blockade principles.

³²² William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 254. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

from a German perspective to derive appropriate Allied actions. The results of the analysis were often jointly developed with the British Plans Division or shared when complete.³²³ The analysis was recorded in the Planning Section Memorandums, and the U.S. Naval War College methodology of the “estimate of the situation” was evident in its outcomes.

It is also enlightening to see how the American Naval Planning Section attempted to grapple with new technologies like improved naval guns, submarines, mines, and aircraft that were affecting the strategic environment. Although we traditionally think of the Second World War as the great infusion of technologies, the Great War was a crucible that also saw extraordinary new technologies.³²⁴ One intriguing effort to solve the U-boat problem was offered by the Chairman of the U.S. Naval Consulting Board led by the gifted scientist Thomas Edison. In November 1917, Edison offered a set of “strategic recommendations” directly to Sir Eric Geddes, which were based on Edison’s review of maps that showed shipping traffic in and out of British and French ports as well as a map showing the locations of ships that had been sunk between February 1st and October 12, 1917. Edison offered and detailed eight recommendations.³²⁵

³²³ Prior to the establishment of the Plans Division on September 28, 1917, the Plans Section of the Operations Division of the Royal Naval Staff conducted the corresponding functions. The Plans Section and the Plans Division both pre-dated the creation of the American Naval Planning Section in November 1917. For a history of planning efforts in the Royal Navy see Shawn T. Grimes, *Strategy and War Planning in the British Navy, 1887-1918* (Rochester, New York: Boydell Press, 2012).

³²⁴ G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 135.

³²⁵ *Proposals from Chairman U.S. Naval Consulting Board, Thomas A. Edison, November 21, 1917*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8505/260 Anti-Submarine Warfare, World War I. In closing the letter, Edison challenges Sir Geddes to have his experts and especially “naysayers” correspond with him, saying, “It is probable, in fact certain, that if the statements I have made are out up to the average Naval Officer, he will at once make a lot of objections, because these views differ from his previous experience, or, possibly, from a lack of imagination if my statements do not appeal to him. In such a case, I would request that such objections be reduced to writing, signed by the objector, and forwarded

- 1st. Send cargo boats across to France or along the English Channel only at night.
- 2nd. No cargo boat should enter or leave any English or French port except at night.
- 3rd. The density of traffic is very great at certain spots, and very dangerous. Stop this and route your ships to diminish the density, and spread the traffic over the whole of France, England, Ireland and Scotland...
- 4th. Shorten the line of traverse through the danger zone as far as possible.
- 5th. You have two types of submarines to contend with. The ocean going submarine, which cruises far off the land in the Atlantic, and the small submarine which only frequent waters of 100 fathoms or less. By [altering the] routing the whole of your traffic...you make it necessary for the Enemy to build and operate several times as many ocean going submarines as they now operate to sink ships at the present rate.
- 6th. It will be noticed...that most of the ships have been sunk in the lanes shown by sailing charts published by the different governments...You will note that in mid-channel, between the Scillys and the Bristol Channel and Irish Coast, scarcely any ships have been sunk on account of the Captains of ships clinging to the old sailing lanes.³²⁶
- 7th. ...up to June 1st, 1917, only 19% of the cargo boats going in and out of England and France had any wireless...But what is more serious, - and absolutely necessary in order to work strategic plans, - Is the installation on each cargo boat of a modern wire and tube sounding apparatus. With this the boats can be continuously making soundings without lowering their speed, thus determining their position by means of the hydrographic charts and enabling them to make anchorage at a good port under any condition of weather.
- 8th. If you can partially blind the enemy, you have him at a great disadvantage. If you can blind him entirely, you have him whipped. These night operations are, of course, equivalent to a Camouflage of high efficiency. The Camouflage can, of course, be carried on in a measure, when running through the danger zone in daylight, - but not if bituminous coal is to be used on cargo boats. Eliminate the smoke and, all other things being equal, the number of submarines necessary to get the same number of sinkings must be

to me for answer.”

³²⁶ The fact that mariners clung to the sailing lanes delineated in the maritime guides is not surprising and could be a natural quest for safety even considering the submarine threat. It points out the natural tendency to do as we have always done even in detriment to the goal. One is reminded how the Soviet Soldier's standard procedure of placing large military insignia and command seals was identified in satellite photos and one of the ways the United States determined that Soviet soldiers were in Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. See Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd edition, (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., 1999) 210.

doubled.

Interestingly, the geographic analysis provided by Thomas Edison offered some seemingly viable options to reducing the submarine menace. Sir Eric Geddes promptly forwarded Edison's recommendations to Admiral Jellicoe; however, the recommendations were discarded as simply too elementary. Admiral Jellicoe replied to Geddes, "it is not possible to deal with this letter in detail without wasting a great deal of time."³²⁷ Geddes politely responded to Edison noting that his proposals were "carefully examined by my naval advisors. The points which you raise are constantly in their minds --- though of course accumulated experience renders it necessary frequently to revise our arrangements."³²⁸ Geddes was naturally more pointed in his reply to Secretary Daniels dated December 31, 1917, noting, "Mr. Edison has already written to me, and I am having his proposals very carefully examined by my naval experts here – though up to the present Mr. Edison has not put forward anything which has not already been experimented with or adopted by the Anti-submarine Division of the Admiralty."³²⁹ It is probably unfortunate that some of the proposals by Edison were not considered more fully, but by the end of 1917 when the proposals were floated, the Royal Navy felt more comfortable with the success of convoy operations and the attendant reduction in shipping losses.

Another little-known effort at solving the submarine challenge was an international conference held in 1917 at the Admiralty to "discuss and consider designs for unsinkable ships."³³⁰ The conference was chaired by the Third Sea Lord

³²⁷ *Proposals from Chairman U.S. Naval Consulting Board, Thomas A. Edison, November 21, 1917.* National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8505/260 Anti-Submarine Warfare, World War I.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ *Proposals from Chairman U.S. Naval Consulting Board, Thomas A. Edison, November 21, 1917.* National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8505/260 Anti-Submarine Warfare, World War I.

³³⁰ *Unsinkable Ships, December 15, 1917.* National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8507/280.

Rear Admiral Lionel Halsey and attended by delegates from France, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States. Although attended principally by Attachés and shipbuilders, the conference sought to review “the protection of the merchant ship on which we all rely for necessary supplies of all sorts and for Munitions of War” and recognizing “there are three vital considerations which must be borne in mind by everybody. These are – the supply of steel, the supply of labour, and the number of building slips available.”³³¹

The conference is illuminating as it describes the shipbuilding lessons of the war and provides extraordinary details such as, “we find speed undoubtedly has a very great bearing on vulnerability from torpedo attack. Statistics prove to us that a speed of 12 knots is the turning point, or in other words that ships over 12 knots speed are more immune from torpedo attack than those under 12 knots.”³³² As a result, the conference details the British considerations in their shipbuilding plan to include speed, additional bulkheads, bulges, shaft tunnels, and other unique design features.³³³

Despite these principles being discussed and, in many cases adopted, the shortage in resources and shipbuilding capacity limited production efforts. One of the British delegates, Mr. Anderson whose official capacity was “controller,” remarked in closing, “at the present time the view taken in this Country is that we cannot afford to make our ships unsinkable. We have come to the opinion that the only practicable form of protection is to prevent our vessels from being hit. It is no use having unsinkable ships which cannot be built until after the war.” The exigency of war

³³¹ *Unsinkable Ships, December 15, 1917*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8507/280. These considerations are appropriate concerns for the Third Sea Lord whose duties entailed “procuring and equipping the fleet.” For a detailed history of the Third Sea Lord, see dreadnoughtproject.org, Third Sea Lord, accessed October 8, 2018.

³³² *Unsinkable Ships, December 15, 1917*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 1/8507/280.

³³³ *Ibid*, 4-6.

including the need for the import of raw materials and foodstuffs had already made its mark.

The American Naval Planning Section also explored the impact of emerging technologies upon the operational theatre of war. Most of these memorandums assess the exploitation of sound propagation and detection in the fight against submarines to include the new K-tube underwater listening devices or the optimization of depth charges although other memorandums assess the role of aircraft, kite balloons to expand detection ranges, and the potential for employing long range guns.³³⁴ The most significant contribution, however, is a synthesis of the data used in anti-submarine warfare with a summary of most effective techniques to be employed doctrinally against submarines. Planning Section Memorandum Number 41, for example, concluded the most effective weapons against submarines were gunfire, depth charges, torpedoes fired from Allied submarines, ramming of the submarine, and lastly mines.³³⁵ The recommendations for future improvement also included more real-time communications, experimenting with more powerful depth charges, more

³³⁴ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923). Memorandum Number 4, Notes on Submarine Hunting by Sound, February 4, 1918, consolidated lessons to date for the use of sound listening devices such as “the fish,” K. tube, S.C. tube, and a “trailing wire” describing optimal employment for each to include organizational recommendations and detailed tactics for pursuing and attacking submarines. Memorandum Number 13, Employment of K. Tubes, February 23, 1918, documents the proper employment of K-tubes to forestall German attacks on the Dover barrage patrol. Memorandum Number 12, Further Development of United States Naval Air Effort in European Waters, February 15, 1918, explored the optimal employment of increasing numbers of aircraft being assigned to the theatre and recommended any additional aircraft be employed in attacking enemy submarine basing. Memorandum Number 55, Kite Balloons in Escorts, September 23, 1918, examined the value of using kite balloons by destroyer escorts to improve submarine sightings whilst escorting convoys. The memorandum concluded that kite balloons enabled detection of submarines at greater distances, and Admiral Sims therefore directed further study and experimentation. Memorandum Number 58, Naval Use of Long-range Guns, October 19, 1918, reviewed the utility of such a gun, with a range of 68 miles, on naval ships or for use in land bombardment. It concluded that for the current war, there was no use at sea and only modest use against two potential targets ashore.

³³⁵ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 269-288.

aggressive hunting tactics including better exploitation of new technologies, and proposals for more inventions based on specific needs.³³⁶

The efforts at managing the new technologies led appropriately to trial and error and a constant evolution in managing a new weapon and developing countermeasures. This phenomenon is inherent in warfare but is more complicated in today's strategic environment. Given the faster rate of technological growth, the likelihood of obsolescence is a constant threat as nations seek transformational or "leap" technologies to ensure their battlefield edge. Moreover, these technologies must be developed and fielded at a time when many of these technologies are extraordinarily expensive again creating a greater need for certainty in the capabilities being produced. Unfortunately, warfare and the constant changes in the environment cannot guarantee such certainty creating the need for improved acquisition processes and integration.

THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION

The role of intelligence as we understand it today was relatively new to the United States Navy in the First World War, especially with its focus upon signals and code-breaking. In fact, the expanded intelligence role within the American Naval Planning Section was novel for the U.S. Navy in part because many officers decried anything other than "practical" officers within the field of naval operations. This severely limited the role of naval officers in fields such as the burgeoning arena of signals exploitation, communications, or intelligence writ large.³³⁷ This also meant the United

³³⁶ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7.* Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 287-288.

³³⁷ These limitations are detailed in the famous Knox-King-Pye Report. See Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye, "Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers," *Naval Institute Proceedings*,

States Navy was “unprepared to claim an equal place within the multinational Anglo-French alliance, which also limited the effectiveness of U.S. intelligence exploitation.”³³⁸ As a result of unpreparedness in 1914, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence was so poorly informed that cooperation in the early days of the war fell to the U.S. Embassy in London, and particularly the Second Secretary Edward Bell. Bell created a relationship of trust that enabled sharing of State Department information rather than naval intelligence.³³⁹ Later, cooperation was based on the integration of liaison personnel such as Tracy Barrett Kittredge --- who was provided intelligence after it was decoded --- or other personnel who were physically allowed in the Admiralty plotting rooms.³⁴⁰ Although American naval officers were integrated in convoy planning operations, the dissemination of intelligence sources was carefully controlled by the British intelligence organizations.

The Royal Navy, on the other hand, sought to recruit civilians to create a new field of intelligence based on the interception and decoding of German naval wireless transmissions, and the success of the British Room 40 was the result.³⁴¹ Even so, Room 40 was not an easy transition for the Admiralty. Patrick Beesly, in *Room 40: British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918*, notes the challenges in creating an intelligence section:

The Royal Navy remained, as it had for hundreds of years, a very autocratic organisation centred on the professional head of the Navy, the 1st Sea Lord, and its political head, the 1st Lord. Churchill had been made 1st Lord in 1911

Volume 46, Number 210 (August 1920), 1265-1293.

³³⁸ David Kohnen, editor, *21st Century Knox: Influence, Sea Power, and History for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 9.

³³⁹ Patrick Beesly, *Room 40 British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918* (London: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Publishers, 1982), 227.

³⁴⁰ David Kohnen, editor, *21st Century Knox: Influence, Sea Power, and History for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 10.

³⁴¹ Room 40 was also known as OB 40 for the room number in the “Old Building” of the Admiralty.

partly to compel the Admiralty to set up an efficient Naval Staff, and had encountered much opposition from the Sea Lords, who regarded staff work with much distrust, not to say contempt.³⁴²

Despite the centralised control within the Admiralty, Room 40 became an exceptional intelligence organization that had the good fortune in acquiring codebooks that enabled the exploitation of German intentions.³⁴³ The Royal Navy was quite fortunate to have acquired three of the most important German codebooks by December 1914 through a series of at-sea encounters --- the capture of a German steamboat in August 1914 off of Melbourne by the Royal Australian Navy, the finding of a code book in the captain's cabin of the grounded German cruiser Magdeburg by the Russian Navy in August, and the sinking of German destroyer S-19 in mid-October off the Dutch coast whose discarded code book was dredged up in November.³⁴⁴ Given the sensitivity of the broken codes and fear of alerting the Germans to their capture, the codes were handled by a select few and disseminated in ways to preclude the suspicion that the codes were broken.³⁴⁵ David Ramsay in his *Blinker' Hall:*

Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I notes:

Churchill insisted that the decrypts should be controlled by a small group of senior naval officers inside the Admiralty. Only the two most important fleet commanders, Jellicoe and Beatty, and Jellicoe's Chief of Staff, Charles Madden, were even aware of Room 40's existence and its daily interception of decrypts....Churchill issued a Most Secret order directing that only one copy

³⁴² Patrick Beesly, *Room 40 British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918* (London: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Publishers, 1982), 8.

³⁴³ *Ibid*, 9, 204-224. The military codes that were deciphered using these codebooks is different from the significant effort to break the diplomatic codes such as the Zimmermann Telegram that was decoded on January 17, 1917. An excellent account of the code-breaking involved in the Zimmermann Telegram can be found in the autobiography of Admiral Sir Reginald Hall with commentary by Philp Vickers, *A Clear Case of Genius: Room 40's Code-breaking Pioneer Admiral Sir Reginald 'Blinker' Hall* (London: The History Press, 2017).

³⁴⁴ David Ramsay, *Blinker' Hall: Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I* (Gloucestershire, Great Britain: Spellmount Ltd. Publishers, 2008), 30-32.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 35-36.

of each decrypt received should be issued ‘direct and exclusively’ to Oliver, as Chief of Staff, who would pass it on to a small number of recipients inside the Admiralty: the First Lord, the First and Second Sea Lords, Sir Arthur Wilson – Old ‘Ard Art’ to the lower deck – the former First Sea Lord, who had been brought back from retirement following the declaration of war, the Naval Secretary, Hall as DNI, the Director of Operations and his Assistant and the Duty Captains in the War Staff.³⁴⁶

Although Sims himself was steeped in the role of intelligence through his service as Naval Attaché in Paris and as one of the first collateral duty intelligence officers while assigned to the China Station where he compiled “reports on harbors, fortifications, or foreign vessels,” he also recognized the need for organized intelligence exploitation and created an Intelligence Section within the London Flagship under the leadership of his Aide, Commander John Babcock.³⁴⁷ The new London Flagship also recruited Tracy Barrett Kittredge for its civil service, and Kittredge received a commission as a Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Auxiliary Volunteer Reserve.³⁴⁸ Kittredge was ultimately the key to intelligence sharing and served as the personal liaison of Admiral Sims to the Admiralty’s Room 40. Kittredge thus directly enabled sharing of intelligence between the two navies during the Great War, and he established a trust that enabled him to perform similar functions in the Second World War whilst on the staff of Admiral Harold R. Stark in 1942.³⁴⁹ The British head start in signals intelligence often meant that key intelligence

³⁴⁶ David Ramsay, *Blinker’ Hall: Spymaster, The Man who Brought America into World War I* (Gloucestershire, Great Britain: Spellmount Ltd. Publishers, 2008), 35-36.

³⁴⁷ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 40.

³⁴⁸ David Kohnen, editor, *21st Century Knox: Influence, Sea Power, and History for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 10.

³⁴⁹ After 1919, Sims and Dudley Knox would recruit Kittredge to organize the Historical Section at the U.S. Naval War College. This work in Newport also allowed Kittredge to collaborate on Sims’ *The Victory at Sea*. Later, when the Senate investigation into inefficiencies identified by Sims were brought into the public light, Kittredge wrote his *Naval Lessons of the Great War: Review of the Senate Naval*

was provided by the British although the Americans were able to provide coded messages often acquired from other neutral nations for British decoding which was then returned to the Americans.³⁵⁰ At a more operational level, the American liaison officers also had access to the Admiralty plotting rooms used to track the German U-boats. Sims provides a detailed summary of the methods used by the Allied intelligence organizations to track the German U-boats, noting:

The great chart in the convoy room of the Admiralty showed, within the limits of human fallibility, where each submarine was operating at this particular moment, and it also kept minute track of its performances. ...I have already said that there were comparatively few submarines, perhaps no more than an average of eight or nine, which were operating at the same time in the waters south and west of Ireland, the region with which we Americans were most concerned. These boats betrayed their locations in a multitude of ways. Their commanders were particularly careless in the use of wireless....The U-boats communicated with each other, and also with the [German] Admiralty at home; and, in doing this, they gave away their positions to the assiduously listening allies.” The radio-direction finder, an apparatus by which we can instantaneously locate the position from which a wireless message is sent, was the mechanism which furnished us much of this information.³⁵¹

The main intelligence integration including convoy routing occurred between the London Flagship and the Admiralty through designated liaison personnel until the creation of more formal American Intelligence Services.

From the British perspective, the success of British code-breaking in the Second World War traces its roots to the success of Room 40. Although the team that

Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels (London: Forgotten Books, 2017). As one linkage between the First and Second World Wars, Kittredge later joined Admiral Stark in London in 1942. See Naval History and Heritage Command, Naval Historical Center Operational Archives, *Office Files of Captain Tracy B. Kittredge, USNR*.

³⁵⁰ Patrick Beesly, *Room 40 British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918* (London: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Publishers, 1982), 248.

³⁵¹ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 125-126. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

cracked Enigma in the Second World War has been appropriately lauded and documented, David Boyle notes, "...if you ask how Enigma was cracked in the early years of the Second World War, there are various answers – gifted amateurism, the brilliance of Alan Turing, the very first computers, the pioneering work of Polish cryptographers. All those are true but there is one other crucial factor, which is less well known. The same team had done it before."³⁵² It was this sense of "repeatability" created through personal relationships that enabled improved intelligence sharing when the U.S. entered the Second World War.

CONCLUSION

The creation of the organizational structures created by Sims were instrumental in the operational execution of the war by American naval forces in Europe. The scope of the conflict created a critical need for structures that had not existed before. Sims should rightly be credited for creating the London Flagship. He also created the American Naval Planning Section that he credited to American industry but modelled after the British equivalent which proved invaluable in examining operational and diplomatic options for the Commander and for the U.S. Navy writ large. We have seen that intelligence functions were executed in more of a liaison role, but Sims was required to establish effective mechanisms to achieve the highest possible level of integration.

As one of the three elements (ties of affection, ideological affinities that lead to shared objectives, and compatible working practices and structures that facilitate cooperation) used to define a special relationship, the convergence of professional practice --- even if temporary --- was pioneered or at least enhanced by Sims'

³⁵² David Boyle, *Before Enigma: The Room 40 Codebreakers of the First World War* (London: The Real Press, 2016), 7.

structures created in support of his operational command at the London Flagship. The London Flagship itself enabled multinational collaboration and cooperation but the integration of the American Naval Planning Section and Intelligence Section with their British counterparts created a pathway that not only allowed the convergence of professional practice but directly enabled accelerated integration in the Second World War.³⁵³

It is at least in part because of the convergence of professional practice due to the structures created and implemented by Sims, as well as the continuity of the personal relationships examined in the last chapter, that some elements of the special relationship might be traced to the First World War. With the extraordinary skills that enabled Admiral Sims to create and exploit the new structures of practice, Sims should be appropriately identified as a key individual in the effectiveness of the maritime coalition. The next chapter will explore Sims' extraordinary contributions after the Great War by examining his role as President of the U.S. Naval War College as well as the lessons of the war which he highlighted in congressional testimony. The maritime lessons outlined in his January 7, 1920 letter to the Secretary of the Navy contributed to an important dialog regarding the future of the U.S. Navy that was sadly overcome by war weariness and political exigencies. Nonetheless, the lessons of the testimony have relevance today, and an examination of strategic lessons will include an examination of the characteristics of an effective coalition.

³⁵³ *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters*. The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 2. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box. See also David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King's College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 122.

CHAPTER 4
SIMS IN THE INTERWAR YEARS
AND
THE LESSONS OF THE MARITIME WAR

INTRODUCTION

Having examined the personal relationships and the structures created by Admiral Sims that contributed to the Allied cause in the Great War, in this chapter we will explore the contributions of Admiral Sims in the interwar years including the reforms implemented at the U.S. Naval War College where Sims served after the war from April 1919 until his retirement in October 1922. In addition to the visionary changes at the college, Sims caused an exhaustive review of the maritime lessons of the Great War to be reviewed before the U.S. Senate leaving a record for future generations that is worthy of detailed study.

For many reasons, these lessons of the Great War have been lost or forgotten, and many arguably prefer to examine the Second World War presumably because it is closer in chronological time. Although the temporal closeness of the Second World War makes its study invaluable, it would also be worthwhile to *rediscover* the lessons of the Great War and review their applicability to fighting power and naval coalitions today. This thesis argues that is worthwhile to examine the lessons of the Great War because of their particular relevance in managing coalition challenges.

SIMS AS THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE PRESIDENT AFTER THE WAR

Although our case study has focused on personal relationships and the structures created or enhanced by Sims in support of the Great War, Sims should also be credited for his efforts after returning home to the U.S. Naval War College. Sims critically refocused the U.S. Naval War College and made significant changes at the college after his return in 1919 that directly contributed to preparing the U.S. Navy for the

Second World War. Using his wartime experience, Sims implemented reforms at the College to enhance its effectiveness.

Sims was convinced that the college must become ever more practical and further strengthened the teaching of the applicatory system.³⁵⁴ His experience in command during the war had renewed his belief in the need to teach a habit of mind like he had developed in the course of his career and as he had experienced as a student at the War College himself. For Sims, this habit of mind meant, “1. A clear conception of the *mission* to be attained. 2. An accurate and logical *estimate of the situation*, which involved a mustering of all information available, and a discussion of its bearing upon the situation under consideration. 3. A *decision* that was the logical result of the *mission* and the *estimate*.”³⁵⁵ Sims *refined* this framework and reoriented the college to achieve the practical application of this model. More importantly, it was through this framework that Sims and his successors created a generation of war fighters for the U.S. Navy that would fight and win the Second World War alongside Great Britain.

Accordingly, Sims reorganized the Departments of the College to reflect the new strategic environment after the war. Sims desired to include command, strategy, tactics, and administration, and he specifically wanted a Rear Admiral to teach strategy whilst another taught tactics.³⁵⁶ Sims also greatly expanded the library

³⁵⁴ Until after the First World War, the idea of education as being inherently valuable was lost on many naval officers. To entice officers to attend the College before the war and to quell the argument against education, Sims published an article in which he extols the practical applications of the curriculum. See William S. Sims, “Cheer Up!! There is No Naval War College,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, May-June 1916, Volume 42, Number 163, 857-860.

³⁵⁵ *Sims’ letter to Secretary Daniels, January 5, 1921*, Naval War College Archives, RG2 Box 37 File A-12.

³⁵⁶ *Sims’ letter to Secretary Daniels, January 15, 1919 with Admiral Benson’s endorsement January 23, 1919*, typescript held in the Naval War College Library, History of the Naval War College to 1937, 88-99.

resources of the college exceeding 45,000 books by 1921, and he created a broader integration of the archival resources for use by the students and the historical research community.³⁵⁷ To achieve these ends, Sims was granted significant latitude in modifying the curriculum at the college because of his stature as a former Four-Star Admiral.³⁵⁸ His accomplishments during the war enabled him to negotiate with a supportive Admiral Benson and Secretary Daniels for the approval to effect the desired changes.³⁵⁹

After the Great War, the War College was afforded additional opportunity for educational focus because many of the war planning functions now resided in Washington D.C. on new planning staffs that were created to augment or replace the General Board of the Navy. Sims asserted that the War College's "staff and students were capable of doing this [planning] if there had been more of them and if they were supplied with the data not readily available outside of Washington" and "if the college course proves successful it will supply commanders-in-chief and fleet staff officers competent to prepare and carry out such plans."³⁶⁰

As part of increasing the practical nature of the War College experience, Sims also expanded the role of war gaming although gaming was first introduced at the college by William McCarty-Little in 1887.³⁶¹ Sims understood that gaming would enhance war fighting prowess. Rob Doane, Curator of the Naval War College

³⁵⁷ Naval War College Library, typescript, *History of the Naval War College to 1937*, 115.

³⁵⁸ After the war, Sims reverted to a Rear Admiral.

³⁵⁹ *Sims' letter to Secretary Daniels, January 15, 1919 and Admiral Benson's endorsement granting most of Sims' request, January 23, 1919*, typescript held in the Naval War College Library, *History of the Naval War College to 1937*, 88-99.

³⁶⁰ *Sims to Secretary Daniels letter, January 5, 1921*, Naval War College Archives, RG2 Box 37 File A-12.

³⁶¹ John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 22-24.

Museum, recognizes the role of Sims in bridging U.S. Navy success through the interwar years noting:

...a central component of that program was the practice of war gaming. Sims believed that war gaming was crucial because it allowed officers to practice their art. He compared it to the Army/Navy football game, saying that a coach would be fired if he merely had his players read books about football without ever putting them through practice on the field. It also encouraged future leaders to experiment with new ideas where they were free to make mistakes and learn lessons in an environment where no lives were at stake. Many of the senior operational commanders in the Second World War learned their business through constant practice on the war gaming floor in Pringle Hall.³⁶²

The contribution of war gaming in the U.S. Navy during the interwar years is well documented in preparing for the Second World War and for inculcating a norm of initiative and war fighting prowess.³⁶³

In addition to Sims' reforms at the War College that included the "estimate of the situation" and expanded war gaming, Sims also supported the Knox-King-Pye Report (formally the "Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation Regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers") drafted by Captains Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye that pushed for education reform for U.S. naval officers in the Summer of 1920.³⁶⁴ It is fair to say that Sims inspired many of the recommendations including a junior course.³⁶⁵ Sims

³⁶² Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War* (Newport: Naval Heritage and History Command, 1917), 28.

³⁶³ The best reference on operational war planning to include plans against Japan for the Second World War is Edward S. Miller's *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Naval Institute Press, 1991). See also Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919- 1941* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1980).

³⁶⁴ John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 128.

³⁶⁵ Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye, "Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation Regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* Volume 46, Number 210 (August 1920), 1265-1293.

knew the report drafters well with King commanding the Naval Postgraduate School, Knox serving on the staff of the War College, and Pye so renowned in naval circles that Sims asked for him to serve on his staff in London although this was denied.³⁶⁶

In the aftermath of the First World War, the report codified the need for dedicated training and instruction due to the new complexity of the world and the war fighting environment. The report reflected that, “the present advanced state of civilization includes great development in every branch of the arts, industry and science, so great that keeping abreast of developments in one branch of art, industry, or science is practically a life-work. Development is proceeding at an ever-accelerating rate and the complication of activities is increasing continuously.”³⁶⁷ As a function of the exponential rate of change seen in the First World War and articulated in the report, a recommendation was also made to allow greater specialization for line officers to allow individuals to maintain a high level of expertise, and this led to a number of new training schools in “operations, communications, ship control, aviation, submarine, engineering, gunnery, electrical, and torpedos.”³⁶⁸ The Knox-King-Pye report specifically recommended these schools among required specializations. In deference to his wartime experience, Sims also wrought specific curriculum changes at the War College such as increasing the amount of historical study to improve the understanding of strategic principles in order to create better navy strategists.

The most significant reform proposed by the report was a recognition of the

³⁶⁶ John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 128.

³⁶⁷ Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye, “Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation Regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 46, number 210 (August 1920) 1265-1293. Supplement page 1.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

value of an education that was not solely reliant on practical application. Although Sims pushed for greater practical application there was still a need to be grounded in the theory that one attained only from reading books. The report emphasizes the need for educational transformation suggesting:

The opinion has been generally held, in the Navy, that the only way to learn things is to do them. This opinion has had much truth and fact to justify it, but this idea has been undergoing a marked transformation in recent years. It is becoming realized more and more that although one cannot learn to do a thing by merely being told how it is done, such previous knowledge greatly facilitates learning how to do it when practical work is started. This knowledge affords its possessor a strong foundation, barren and useless in itself, but a firm basis upon which to build the structure of practical experience. Book learning, abstract knowledge, is like fertilizer; it does not, of itself, produce anything, but it stimulates growth and advance when the live seed, practical experience, is instilled into the soil.³⁶⁹

Sims' efforts drove important changes for the future relevancy of the College, and his thinking on sea power on a global scale can, in part, be credited with the development of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's two-ocean navy policy.³⁷⁰

THE JANUARY 7, 1920 LETTER

Before examining the lessons of the maritime arena of the First World War, it is worth reviewing the lessons as seen by Admiral Sims through his lens as the Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters. The operational execution of the war at sea is detailed in Sims' Pulitzer prize-winning *The Victory at Sea*, but the broader lessons of the War are detailed in his letter to Secretary of the Navy

³⁶⁹ Dudley W. Knox, Ernest J. King, and William S. Pye, "Report and Recommendations of a Board Appointed by the Bureau of Navigation Regarding the Instruction and Training of Line Officers," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 46, number 210 (August 1920) 1265-1293. Supplement page 2.

³⁷⁰ Peter Stanford, "From Two-Ocean Navy to All-Ocean Navy," *Sea History* 104, Spring/Summer 2003, 6-9.

Josephus Daniels dated January 7, 1920 (printed in its entirety in Appendix D).³⁷¹

Whereas the book sought to highlight the achievements of the U.S. Navy in the Great War in order to sell books, the January 7th letter sought to reconcile Sims' dismay at the U.S. Navy's lack of readiness for entry into the Great War and hence Sims' dissatisfaction with the Secretary of the Navy. The chronology of this disaffection is important. Although Sims had been seeking reforms to organization of the Navy Department for decades, Sims harboured a genuine disappointment with the conduct of the war and articulated his feelings as early as May 1918 in a letter to his wife. Sims wrote, "The history of our part in this war will be such a sad one that our children will see to it that we are never again placed in such a defenseless and humiliating position."³⁷² Then, in a letter to Captain Pratt in the Summer of 1918, Sims noted, "When the history of this war comes to be written, there will be a number of features that will not be very creditable to the United States Navy."³⁷³

Sims nonetheless waited for an opportunity to bring his dissatisfaction to light, and that opportunity occurred when the Secretary of the Navy was creating a policy for the awarding of medals and decorations after the war in late 1919.³⁷⁴ At the beginning of the Great War, the only military award for U.S. forces was the Congressional Medal of Honor. At that time, U.S. service members could not accept foreign awards and, accordingly, Sims proposed that foreign awards should be authorised. Congress then approved the acceptance of foreign awards in July 1918

³⁷¹ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels of January 7, 1920.* U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

³⁷² Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 440.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ In the U.S. military today, awards and decorations are known as medals and ribbons.

even though Secretary Daniels opposed the action.³⁷⁵ In February 1919, Congress created an expanded number of military awards to include the Distinguished Service Medal and the Navy Cross.³⁷⁶

A controversy erupted when Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels created a board led by Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight to determine the individuals who would receive the new levels of military awards being created by the U.S. Navy, but then the board was disestablished and Secretary Daniels personally modified the list of awardees in favour of afloat Commanders.³⁷⁷ Kittredge later provides the mathematical analysis that showed “only 41.5 per cent of his [Daniels] list was in accord with the recommendations of commanding officers and the Board of Awards.”³⁷⁸ Sims, ever the outspoken reformer, disagreed with the Secretary’s decisions in part because he viewed the bias toward afloat commanders as unwarranted. A small number of officers including Sims who were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal refused to accept their awards, and this created derisive correspondence within the Navy Department that was reported in *The New York Times*.³⁷⁹ The outcome of the internal Navy debate led to a Senate Naval Committee in January 1920 to review the awards issue. Sims testified before this committee where

³⁷⁵ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 44-45. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

³⁷⁶ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 434.

³⁷⁷ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 44-45. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co., 59-63.

³⁷⁸ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942), 437.

³⁷⁹ “Sims Attacks List of Naval Honors; Refuses D.S. Medal,” *The New York Times*, December 24, 1919, 1.

he expressed his disappointment with a lack of a clear policy for the new awards.³⁸⁰

The hearings on the military awards led to a broader session of Senate hearings regarding overall lessons of the war in which the January 7, 1920 letter played a critical role. At the hearing on military awards, the subcommittee Chairman, Senator Frederick Hale of Maine, asked Sims for any additional correspondence between Sims and Secretary Daniels, and Sims conveniently produced the January 7th letter from his pocket which was then read aloud before the investigating committee leading to the creation of another subcommittee to explore the allegations being brought forward by Sims.

To explore the broader lessons of the Great War identified in Sims' letter, the subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs met between March 9th and May 28th, 1920. The subcommittee consisted of three Republicans and two Democrats led by Senator Hale.³⁸¹ U.S. Naval War College Professor Emeritus John B. Hattendorf et al, in *Sailors and Scholars* underscores the motive for Sims' push for Congressional hearings on U.S. unpreparedness for the war, noting, "A better reorganization of the Navy, not a personal vendetta against Daniels, was Sims' motive. Moreover, he was being entirely consistent with what he had done before in a career marked by his insistence that the Navy organize itself and operate as a modern professional fighting force."³⁸² Although Sims may have been consistent with his previous actions, it would certainly appear that Sims was motivated by his revisionist

³⁸⁰ *Hearing Before a Subcommittee on Naval Affairs*, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, on Senate Resolution 285, 1920, 245-361.

³⁸¹ The other committee members were L. Heisler Ball (Delaware), Henry W. Keyes (New Hampshire), Key Pittman (Nevada), and Park Trammel (Florida). See Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 441.

³⁸² John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 123.

goals to achieve better operational control of the U.S. Navy but also by a personal animosity to Secretary Daniels despite Daniels' support of Sims' appointment as President of the Naval War College.³⁸³ At this point in 1920, Sims had little hope for promotion to four stars since the perceived Congressional window of opportunity had passed without action. Perhaps with nothing to lose, Sims then purposefully ensured the letter made its way to Congress with the goal of creating an investigation by the Senate.

In any case, the seventy-eight paragraph letter from Sims to Secretary Daniels provides a pointed critique of non-support from the Navy Department to the on-scene Commander and includes the allegation that, "If it had been recognized from the beginning [that inadequate staffing], as well as the necessity of sending all possible anti-submarine forces, there can be no doubt that the end of the war would have been hastened, and hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping and many lives would have been saved."³⁸⁴ Interestingly, a parallel complaint regarding the stalemate on land can be made that the end of the war was delayed by General Pershing's insistence on an independent Army and refusal to amalgamate into Allied Forces except for training purposes.³⁸⁵ Sims' assertion, however, was based on the effectiveness of the convoy system with the assumption that more U.S. destroyers would have defeated the submarine threat much sooner although the anti-submarine campaign continued through the end of the war. Convoys and additional forces would indeed have reduced the losses in tonnage as well as lives, and it is likely that faster results would have

³⁸³ John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1984), 115.

³⁸⁴ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 49. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels,

³⁸⁵ David F. Trask, *The AEF & Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

eased the burden on the Admiralty during the crisis months of the summer of 1917.

Although Sims' estimate was likely an exaggeration, he quantified the impact of the delays in his testimony before the Senate noting:

A review of the various books by military experts and of the available information concerning the German campaign of 1918, shows that the earlier defeat of the submarine campaign would have had the effect of very greatly shortening the war...The loss unnecessarily of the two and a half million tons of shipping, therefore, in all probability, postponed the end of the war at least four months. The average loss of life per day during the war, was 3,000 men. This prolongation of the war, therefore, cost half a million lives. Similarly, as the war cost the Allies \$100,000,000 a day on the average, this prolongation resulted in the unnecessary expenditure of \$15,000,000,000, of which at least one-third was expended by the United States directly or loaned to the Allies.³⁸⁶

The losses in shipping and human lives, if accurate, were truly tragic, and Sims naturally sought to exploit the information to gain traction in Congress for organizational reforms in the U.S. Navy.

Specifically, Sims accused the Navy Department leadership of eleven “grave errors (that) were committed in violation of fundamental military principles.”³⁸⁷ The eleven grave errors were (1) no mature plans for war, (2) no Departmental policy for executing the war, (3) lack of wholehearted effort, (4) lack of material readiness, (5) lack of concentrated force in the area of conflict, (6) lack of staff and inadequate forces, (7) inability to personally select staff, (8) decision-making with incomplete information, (9) focus on plans that could not be executed, (10) implying a lack of confidence in the designated Commander, and (11) interference with the Commander in the theatre of action. These “errors” are explored in greater detail below although

³⁸⁶ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 37.

³⁸⁷ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

they have been consolidated for analysis where appropriate.

NO PLANS FOR WAR

One of the main reasons for the delayed response in American support to the maritime war was the limited planning in preparation for the war. Sims noted this shortfall as the first grave error noting, “Although war with Germany had been imminent for many months prior to its declaration, there was nevertheless no mature plans developed or naval policy adopted in preparation for war insofar as its commander in Europe was informed.”³⁸⁸ Much of the lack of planning came from the U.S. effort to remain neutral in the build-up to the war, but the timeline of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the decoding of the Zimmermann telegram would affirm Sims’ claim that U.S. involvement in the war was becoming increasingly likely but basic planning was severely lacking. In the Senate testimony, Sims noted, “In April, 1917, the whole of the plan of the Navy...was to mobilize the fleet, to defend the Atlantic coast ports, and to provide for an offshore patrol by sending out available light forces of the Navy on arduous patrol duty along the Atlantic coast, 3,000 miles from the nearest submarines.”³⁸⁹ Sims is clearly suggesting that the type of war that the U.S. should have prepared for was in complete misalignment with broad planning then in existence.

The U.S. Navy’s General Board, housed in Washington D.C. most of the year but at the U.S. Naval War College between April and June every year, normally played a role in planning efforts and specifically was responsible to the Secretary of

³⁸⁸ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (1). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

³⁸⁹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 3227.

the Navy for recommendations regarding planning for war.³⁹⁰ Admiral Charles Johnston Badger, who served as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet from 1913 to 1914, testified before the Senate as to the General Board's lack of war planning noting:

...because it was believed that we should have to do what the people abroad were doing: to follow their lead. You understand that we entered the war under the handicap that we came in to co-operate after the others had been at war three years. Our neutrality prevented us from completing the necessary ships to prepare for a new type of war.³⁹¹

Admiral Badger's testimony on the inputs of the General Board was designed to show that Sims' allegations were inappropriate and wrong. His testimony nonetheless showed the inadequacy of the planning efforts. Badger further testified as to the lack of planning for warfare involving submarines as follows:

Chairman Hale: Had any plan been formulated for a war against submarines?

Admiral C.J. Badger: We could not say that, no, sir.

Chairman Hale: Had any plans been formulated, prior to our entrance into the war, for sending anti-submarine craft abroad?

Admiral C.J. Badger: Not that I know of.

Chairman Hale: Was any general plan governing anti-submarine operations ever drawn up in the Navy Department?

Admiral C.J. Badger: I do not know; I do not believe that any such plan was prepared.

Admiral Badger therefore testified that neutrality precluded any sort of generalized

³⁹⁰ For an excellent discussion of the role of the U.S. Navy's General Board, see John T. Kuehn, *America's First General Staff: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of the General Board of the Navy, 1900-1950* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017).

³⁹¹ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 1142.

planning and that the observed character of submarine warfare was also completely ignored on the assumption that the American forces would merely follow the practice of those already fighting the war.

Tracy Barrett Kittredge summarizes the Senate testimony and the lack of plans and policy noting :³⁹²

A review of Admiral Sims's testimony thus reveals a number of very grave violations of sound and accepted military principles by the Navy Department in its conduct of the war. The Department failed for many months, as a result of the unpreparedness of naval vessels and of the lack of any policy or any adequate plans, to exert the naval power of the United States offensively against the enemy and thus ignored one of the most important of all factors in war, the time element.³⁹³

The Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Benson also affirmed the lack of planning in his testimony. He remarked that the U.S. Navy had broad plans for the execution of war, or really the preparedness for war, but not for the type of war that was required to be executed in Europe. The testimony exchange was as follows:³⁹⁴

Chairman Hale: In view of your feeling that on account of the attitude of the American people we were not justified in preparing the Navy for war, do you think we would have been justified in preparing plans for the Navy in case of war?

Admiral Benson: We had plans in case of war. As I stated in the beginning, the General Board had plans that had been studied. We had several plans. We had our battle plans that were very confidential, and particularly for any operations

³⁹² Lieutenant Kittredge was a strong supporter of Admiral Sims and served on Sims' staff in the London Flagship in the Intelligence Section and then served as the Director of the Historical Section. After the war, Kittredge served as an Archivist and Statistician at the U.S. Naval War College under Sims.

³⁹³ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 130. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

³⁹⁴ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 2, 1824-1825.

in the Atlantic. We had plans, that were developed up to a certain extent, in the Pacific...The Atlantic Fleet had been drilled in the battle plans that we had, for several years. As commanding officer of the *Utah*, I frequently took part in the general battle plans that we had, and they were worked out on the game board at Newport, at the War College, and most officers were supposed to be familiar with the plans that we had.

In regard to the war that was facing us, the situation was a very peculiar one. I appreciate the emphasis that has been laid on the question of plans, and I think that possibly it has played a part that really is not altogether just to the situation. For instance, we did not know that we would be drawn into the war with the Allies, but if we were drawn into the war with the Allies we would have to enter it in the way in which they wanted us to enter it; that is to say, that our forces would have to be combined with their forces in the way that would carry out the plans and policies that they had set out and had been following for the past three years in carrying on the war. It would have utterly impossible for the United States to have sent a naval force into the European waters without carrying out a policy or plan of that kind, because we would have had no place to base our vessels or to exercise an absolutely independent command, and we would simply have complicated the situation by attempting any such line of action; so that the only thing to do was to get, as we did, what we had in the best condition possible, and be prepared to enter the war in such a way as would develop when the time came.

Chairman Hale: Was there a sound, complete, and well-defined plan for conducting this particular war ever drawn up before war was declared, as far as you know?

Admiral Benson: For this particular war, I do not think so; only such general plans or policies as I have already outlined...

Chairman Hale: But there were no definite plans drawn up?

Admiral Benson: No definite war plan drawn up on paper; no, Mr. Chairman; there was not.

Chairman Hale: There was later on, was there not?

Admiral Benson: I (sic) can not say whether there was or not.

Chairman Hale: Was it ever used?

Admiral Benson: That I (sic) can not say, either. As I said just now, I had charge of the general field and gave orders to carry out such plans as were drawn up as were material, to execute the policies and ideas that I had and intended to carry out, and were carried out...

Chairman Hale: As Chief of Naval Operations you know what plans were

used, do you not?

Admiral Benson: I could not tell you now, Mr. Chairman, just what plans were drawn up. All I can say is that I had charge of the general field of operations, and I kept in close touch with every movement, and gave the necessary orders to carry out those policies, and to execute what would have been a plan if it was drawn up; but as to whether it was drawn up on paper or not, I could not say.

In this exchange, Admiral Benson and Chairman Hale are talking past one another, with Hale seeking a definitive war plan with appropriate detail while Benson refers to his general policies and decisions in support of the war as a “plan” in and of itself. In fairness to Benson, it is worth noting that American naval strategy revolved around a basically Mahanian building programme to prepare for a climactic battleship engagement. It is not surprising therefore that the U.S. Navy was less prepared for a war in which its most important contribution was destroyers. Despite this, the Allies were able to reach a geographic accommodation in the early days after U.S. entry into the war in recognition of limited resources and the initial focus of the United States on coastal defence. Admiral Benson recalled the geographic division in his testimony on May 6, 1920:

That we would be responsible for an area, I think it was from 50 degrees west longitude, covering the North Atlantic, taking in the Virgin Islands, and going then westward into the Caribbean, and then down to the north boundary of Columbia, including the Gulf of Mexico, of course; and then that we would hold cruisers in readiness to pursue raiders; in case one appeared in the North Atlantic, particularly in that area; that we would look out for an area on the east coast of Brazil, extending from 5 degrees south latitude and off the coast some distance --- I have forgotten how far --- and extending down parallel with the coast as far as the latitude of the mouth of the Rio de la Plata...

A second factor of inadequate planning was the American effort to control the timing of support to maximize advantage in post-war negotiations although these delays are more ascribed to the efforts in the land war. David Trask notes:

In one fundamental respect President Wilson's strategy diverged from the wishes of the Allies. He decided that the United States would mobilize an independent army that would fight under its own flag and in its own sector of the western front, according to its own doctrine, with its own commanders, staffs and services of supply. When in position, the independent American army would strike a decisive blow, giving Woodrow Wilson the leverage needed to dictate the terms of peace. The United States rejected the alternative urged by the Allies, which was to deploy troops to Europe organized in divisions or even smaller organizations for service in the French and British armies.³⁹⁵

In the maritime domain, however, the U.S. Navy *did* adopt amalgamation of its forces starting with the arrival of the first U.S. Navy destroyers in early May 1917. Sims directed that "active command will be exercised by the senior officer on the spot, under the orders of the Vice Admiral of the Port."³⁹⁶ Maritime efforts to prepare for war were delayed nonetheless by President Wilson's refusal to establish a war footing or assign liaison officers sooner in order to maintain neutrality.³⁹⁷ Secretary Daniels described President Wilson's reluctance to act as late as March 20, 1917 in his diary noting:

[Wilson] pointed out that he had told Congress he did not believe Germany would do what it threatened [through unrestricted submarine warfare]; if so he would ask for power. G[ermany] had. He had the power to put Armed Guard on ships & to use the Navy to protect. He needed no other power, unless we should go the final step and declare that Germany was waging war against us. He opposed G[erman] militarism on land and E[ngland]'s militarism on sea. He was disinclined to the final break....The Pres said "I do not care for popular demand. I want to do right, whether popular or not."³⁹⁸

Clearly, President Wilson remained hesitant to push for war against Germany despite

³⁹⁵ David F. Trask, *The AEF & Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 168.

³⁹⁶ *Letter from Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), May 11, 1917*. Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, File TD, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁹⁷ David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1963). See the entry for March 20, 1917, 117-118.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

popular demand and the recommendations of his cabinet.³⁹⁹

Another reason for a lack of U.S. planning for the war stemmed from the Bureau System of naval leadership that was in place until 1915 that reported directly to the Secretary of the Navy. This Bureau System was augmented by a “General Board of the United States Navy” principally led by Admiral George Dewey and augmented by other retired Flag Officers and active-duty personnel depending upon the subject under review.⁴⁰⁰ In broad terms, this somewhat independent body provided policy recommendations and generalized planning constructs.

LACK OF MATERIAL READINESS

The United States Navy was unprepared for the start of the Great War, but there is a myth of preparedness that is pervasive. The myth of U.S. naval readiness for the war was underscored by the famous quote by Commander Joseph K. Taussig, who commanded the first American destroyer contingent to arrive in Queenstown on May 4, 1917. In response to a query from Admiral Bayly as to when the newly arrived destroyers would be ready, Commander Taussig famously answered, “we are ready now, sir.”⁴⁰¹ The actual response, however, was, “I shall be ready when fueled.”⁴⁰²

Although it was true that six destroyers were dispatched relatively early after the declaration of war, it is equally true that the urgent appeals for ships of this type were

³⁹⁹ David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1963). See the entry for March 20, 1917, 117-118.

⁴⁰⁰ John T. Kuehn, *America's First General Staff: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of the General Board of the Navy, 1900-1950* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 2-3, 37.

⁴⁰¹ *Letter from Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), May 11, 1917*. Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, File TD, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Commander Taussig also kept a detailed diary that is helpful in understanding the activities of the Queenstown Patrol. See Joseph K. Taussig, *The Queenstown Patrol, 1917 The Diary of Commander Joseph Kneffler Taussig, U.S. Navy*, edited by William N. Still, Jr. (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1996).

⁴⁰² Joseph K. Taussig, “Destroyer Experiences during the Great War,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 48/12/238, December 1922, 2036.

hampered by readiness concerns. Sims also cited the lack of material readiness in the U.S. Fleet and its dispersion that complicated readiness for conflict. Sims notes:

The outbreak of hostilities found many important naval units widely dispersed, and in need of repairs before they could be sent to the critical area. Destroyers arriving in the war zone had been cruising extensively off our seaboard and in the Caribbean, and, when war was declared, were rushed through a brief and inadequate preparation for distant service.⁴⁰³

In his testimony before the Senate, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Benson, responded to questioning regarding the Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report. In his Annual Report to the President on December 1, 1918, Daniels noted, "Before the President went before Congress on the 2d day of April, 1917, and delivered his epoch making message, which stirred the hearts of all Patriots, and in the climax said, 'America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured; God helping her, she can do no other,' the Navy from stem to stern had been made ready to the fullest extent possible for any eventuality."⁴⁰⁴ Admiral Benson, however, confirmed the lack of training and preparedness of U.S. Naval Forces in the following exchange from the Senate testimony:⁴⁰⁵

Chairman Hale: Would you say that the statement in the Secretary's annual report that the navy was from stem to stern ready for war in April, 1917, was justified?

ADM Benson: Not from my point of view, no.

Chairman Hale: Was its personnel adequate?

⁴⁰³ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (4). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴⁰⁴ *Annual Reports of the Navy Department: Report of the Secretary of the Navy*. Navy Department. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, December 1918).

⁴⁰⁵ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 2, 1820.

ADM Benson: No.

Chairman Hale: Were all the ships ready?

ADM Benson: No, they were not all ready.

Chairman Hale: Were they fully manned?

ADM Benson: They were not fully manned.

Chairman Hale: Was the navy mobilized?

ADM Benson: It was not.

Despite the admission that the U.S. Navy was unprepared for conflict, Benson highlighted organizational and review efforts that took place upon his assuming the duties as Chief of Naval Operations on May 11, 1915. The following exchange at the testimony of Benson on May 4th, 1920, demonstrates a modest effort to achieve organizational readiness:⁴⁰⁶

Chairman Hale: But from the standpoint of the people of America, when did you first feel that you were justified in preparing for war?

ADM Benson: I think about the time that Congress decided to declare war.

Chairman Hale: April 6, 1917?

ADM Benson: Yes.

Chairman Hale: And not before?

ADM Benson: Not from the attitude of the people of the country; no. But I want it distinctly understood that that is not my professional opinion.

Chairman Hale: Did you inform the Secretary of your professional opinion that there was danger of our being drawn into the war?

⁴⁰⁶ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 2, 1820.

ADM Benson: To the best of my recollection, I did.

Chairman Benson: When?

ADM Benson: I could not state that. I might go back and state what, as Chief of Naval Operations, I found when I came to Washington, and what I did in filling that office to carry out my views.

As I said just now, I assumed the office on the 11th of May, 1914. I found absolutely nothing in my office that was of any service to me. Even the office into which I came was not in proper condition even for an officer of my rank and the position I held. That was about all there was to it; a room in the Navy Department, and I think one or two small rooms outside for clerical help. Of course the General Board had been functioning in its normal and proper way, and the general plans for war that had been worked out by the General Board existed, and certain studies had been made, certain regulations drawn up in regards to communications.

As near as I can recall it now, that is practically all I found in the way of preparation. I immediately took steps to ascertain the conditions of the various bureaus of the department and their readiness for war. The General Board had already taken up the subject, a short while before, and I think on the 28th of May the letter went out, the order to the bureau chiefs, to report at a certain time their readiness for war, and report any features in which they were not prepared for war, and periodically after that they had to make reports of progress made in getting their bureaus in shape.

Despite these organizational efforts, the lack of material readiness greatly hampered American participation in the critical stages of the conflict. In part, the material unpreparedness was caused by the highly compartmentalised organization of the U.S. Navy Department and a weakness in the power of the Chief of Naval Operations that was not fully resolved until the Second World War under Admiral Ernest J. King. At a strategic level, President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary Daniels purposefully avoided a war footing --- including operational planning, logistics readiness, training, and resolving manning shortfalls --- in order to remain neutral

until the war was declared.⁴⁰⁷ This translated into delayed, or worse, ignored planning for a war that created significant challenges when the war came.

LACK OF A POLICY TOWARDS ALLIES

Among the more significant of the grave errors identified by Sims was the lack of an articulated policy for naval forces and their employment in theatre. Sims' complaint was that U.S. efforts were not "wholehearted," timely, or well understood. These factors contributed to personal and professional embarrassment for Sims and underscored his complaint that the U.S. efforts were delaying Allied efforts at a critical stage of the war. Specifically, Sims notes in his letter:

For some reason which has never been explained, the Navy Department, during at least the first six months of the war, failed to put into actual practice a wholehearted policy of cooperation with the Allies --- the policy required for winning the war with the least possible delay.⁴⁰⁸

Many would clearly attribute the delays in Navy Department actions to the normal burden of such complex operations as well as poor information flow or processing by the headquarters involved. Though the complexity of the issues was certainly a factor, the Navy Department was also saddled with a priority for homeland defence which was in line with its broad strategic plan. Kittridge describes the lack of policy and timeliness as follows:

No indication of our naval policy was given Admiral Sims until June 24th [1917]. He was then informed, by cable, that the Navy Department was ready to co-operate with the Allies in putting down the submarine campaign, by sending anti-submarine craft in any number "*compatible with home needs*"; and that the Navy Department was prepared to consider requests from the

⁴⁰⁷ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 184-189. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

⁴⁰⁸ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920* paragraph 13. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

Allies for other forces, *provided the reasons for the requests could be made clear to the Navy Department*. This statement of policy was enlarged upon in a cable received in London on July 10th, 1917, by the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of State. In this message, the co-operation of the United States with the Allies was qualified, first, by the requirements of home defense...and, secondly, by a consideration of the future needs of the United States, after the war.⁴⁰⁹

The actual policy was outlined in a letter from Daniels to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on July 9, 1917, that reads:

After careful consideration of the present naval situation, taken in connection with possible future situations which might arise, the Navy Department is prepared to announce its policy in so far as it relates to the Allies:

1. The heartiest cooperation with the Allies to meet the present submarine situation, in European or other waters, compatible with an adequate defense of our own home waters.
2. The heartiest cooperation with the Allies to meet any future situation arising during the present war.
3. A realization that while a successful termination of the present war must always be the first allied aim and will probably result in diminished tension throughout the world, the future position of the United States must in no way be jeopardized by any disintegration of our main fighting fleets.
4. The conception that the present main military role of the United States Naval Forces lies in its safeguarding the lines of communications of the Allies. In pursuing this aim there will, generally speaking, be two classes of vessels engaged – minor craft and major craft – and two roles of action: first offensive, second defensive.
5. In pursuing the role set forth in paragraph 4, the Navy Department cannot too strongly insist that in its opinion, the offensive must always be the dominant note in general plans of strategy prepared. But, as the primary role in all offensive operations must perforce belong to the Allied powers, the Navy Department announces as its policy that, in general, it is willing to accept any joint plan of action of the Allies, deemed to meet immediate needs.
6. Pursuant to the above general policy, the Navy Department announces as its general plan of action the following:
 - (a.) Its willingness to send its minor fighting forces, comprised of

⁴⁰⁹ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 109. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

destroyers, cruisers, submarine chasers, auxiliaries, in any numbers not incompatible with home needs, and to any field of action deemed expedient by the joint Allied Admiralties, which would not involve a violation of our present policy.

(b.) Its unwillingness, as a matter of policy, to separate any division from the main fleet for service abroad, although it is willing to send the entire battleship fleet abroad to act as a united but cooperating unit when, after joint consultation of all Admiralties concerned, the emergency is deemed to warrant it, and the entire tension imposed upon the line of communications due to the increase in the number of fighting ships in European waters will stand the strain upon it.

(c.) Its willingness to discuss more fully plans for joint operations.⁴¹⁰

This policy provided by Secretary Daniels offered “heartiest cooperation” but was tempered by a strategy that called for subservience to homeland defence. This should not be surprising since all nations will ultimately act in their own interests. The strategy of looking after Western Atlantic needs and sea lines of communications, however, would hardly be considered “hearty” although the promise of minor craft was noteworthy although it was a codification of what had been accomplished thus far and a somewhat deaf response to the repeated needs expressed by Sims and others. This obsession with maintaining the integrity of the U.S. fleet is an analogue at sea to Pershing’s resistance to integration on land. In addition, there was an obvious tension between the desire for more offensive action as opposed to the overriding strategic need of protecting allied shipping. The need for additional destroyers was repeatedly urged by key players including Sims, and this became one focus area for the Balfour Mission that was named after the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour who led an emergency mission to the United States to communicate the urgent requirements of Great Britain in the war.⁴¹¹ In his letter to Admiral Dudley De Chair

⁴¹⁰ *Letter from Secretary Daniels to Secretary Lansing, July 9, 1917.* Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 54.

⁴¹¹ A detailed review of the success of the mission is found in David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo- American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press,

of the Balfour Mission on April 26, 1917, Admiral Jellicoe also emphasized this urgent requirement for additional forces noting:

You must emphasize most strongly to the United States authorities the very serious nature of the shipping position. We lost 55 British ships last week, approximately 180,000 tons and rate of loss is not diminishing.

There is no immediate remedy possible except the use of many more patrol craft which we do not possess. Press most strongly that the number of Destroyers sent to Ireland should be increased to 24 at once if this number is available...

Urge on the authorities that everything should give way to the submarine menace and that by far the most important place on which to concentrate patrols is the S.W. of Ireland...

You must keep constantly before the U.S. Authorities the great gravity of the situation and the need that exists for immediate action.

Our new methods will not be effective until July and the critical period is April to July.⁴¹²

One could argue that the provision of destroyers in increasing numbers met the stated needs but certainly not the required timeliness. Repeated calls for assets to be forward deployed to counter the submarine threat were delayed or ignored while broader operational considerations were explored.

In addition to providing destroyers, the United States also provided battleships (USS NEW YORK (BB-34), USS WYOMING (BB-32), USS FLORIDA (BB-30), and USS DELAWARE (BB-28)) to the Grand Fleet although these did not arrive in Scapa Flow until December 7, 1917. The decision to send the battleships to Scapa Flow was made by Admiral Benson when he was part of an American mission to London on November 8th, 1917, and was designed to provide reinforcements for the Royal Navy.⁴¹³ Upon their arrival, and “with the approval of Admiral Sir David

1972).

⁴¹² *Letter from Admiral Jellicoe to Admiral De Chair, 27 April 1917*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 137/655 War History Collection 1914-1918.

⁴¹³ Mary Klachko, “William Shepherd Benson: Naval General Staff American Style” in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930*

Beatty, the American battleships officially joined the Grand Fleet as the Sixth Battle Squadron [under American Rear Admiral Rodman] where their duties included protecting convoys and trying to lure the German surface fleet into battle. They were eventually joined by USS TEXAS (BB-35) and USS ARKANSAS (BB-33), with DELAWARE returning to the U.S. in July 1918.”⁴¹⁴ Additionally, three other battleships (USS UTAH (BB-31), USS OKLAHOMA (BB-37), and USS NEVADA (BB-36)) were assigned at the Royal Navy base in Berehaven, Ireland (Bantry Bay) under the command of Rear Admiral Thomas S. Rodgers “in case elements of the German High Seas Fleet somehow broke out of the North Sea.”⁴¹⁵ The battleships at Scapa Flow and Bantry Bay represented nearly twenty percent of the American battleship inventory. Nonetheless, the competing demands for people and platforms no doubt created delays in responding to the critical issue of submarine warfare.

Sims echoed his perspective on what he viewed as unnecessary delays in his letter to Daniels noting:

As usual in such cases, the policy thus set forth was academically sound, but that it was not carried out, or was not understood by the Department, is shown by the fact that for ten months after its receipt I was still urgently recommending an increase of forces – still trying to convince the Department that the war was in the Eastern Atlantic; that the United States naval “Front” was off the European coast and not off the United States coast; that it was there only that the naval enemy was operating: that it was there only that United States shipping, let alone allied shipping, could be protected with the maximum efficiency.⁴¹⁶

(Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990).

⁴¹⁴ Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War* (Newport: Naval Heritage and History Command, 1917), 19.

⁴¹⁵ John Ware, “Bantry Bay in the First World War” *History Ireland*, November/December 2015, Volume 23, Issue 6, at <https://www.historyireland.com/wwi/bantry-bay-in-the-first-world-war/> accessed January 23, 2020.

⁴¹⁶ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920* paragraph 15. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

During the war, Sims was a consistent clarion call for additional forces to be forward deployed.

LACK OF A WHOLEHEARTED EFFORT

Although the newly stated policy of July 1917 called for “heartiest cooperation,” Sims challenged this notion in his letter suggesting, “the Navy Department did not enter wholeheartedly into the campaign for many months after we declared war, thus putting a great strain on the morale of the fighting forces in the war area by decreasing their confidence in their leaders.”⁴¹⁷ This is an interesting assertion because Sims claims the U.S. policy was not wholehearted but never offers a substantive linkage to the morale of the U.S. Navy forces serving in Queenstown or throughout Europe. Sims provides no amplification, and although there was obvious dissatisfaction regarding the number of forces assigned and delay in obtaining additional forces, there is little to suggest that crew morale was affected in a material way.

Kittredge confirms the linkage between the level of assistance by the U.S. Navy and the “lack of wholehearted effort” concluding:

The messages submitted in evidence by Admiral Sims, that were exchanged with the Department from April to October, 1917, show clearly that at that time the Department was not cooperating whole-heartedly with the Allies. They were being informed almost daily by their representative abroad that a very much greater degree of assistance from the United States was necessary if the German submarine campaign were to be checked. Instead of accepting these recommendations, the Department was eagerly grasping at any suggestions or requests, made by local Allied authorities in Washington, which seemed to demand a lesser measure of co-operation.⁴¹⁸

Kittredge illuminates a phenomenon that is normal when there are parallel

⁴¹⁷ *Admiral Sims letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920* paragraph 78 (3). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴¹⁸ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 123. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

communications efforts in the field and at the headquarters level. Given the requirements to align national policy with military strategy, coupled with the intricacies of the relationship between the strategic and operational levels of war, it is not surprising that the Department would consider the requests made by “local Allied authorities” to include appeals from the British Ambassador or, at a higher level, the Balfour Mission. What was lacking, however was the coordination between these talks in Washington and Admiral Sims although, arguably, the various Allied War Councils served to fill this need.

ACTING ON INCOMPLETE INFORMATION

Sims also complained in his letter that the Navy Department made decisions in a vacuum or without sufficient information. Sims noted:

The Navy Department made, and acted upon, decisions, concerning operations that were being made 3000 miles away, when the conditions were such that full information could not have been in its possession. This violating an essential precept of warfare that sound decisions necessarily depend upon complete information.⁴¹⁹

It is an empty argument to suggest that one could ever have complete information in the normal fog of war, although Sims was surely right to think that he had fuller information about many questions. However, Sims faced several barriers in keeping Washington informed. The first barrier was simply the timing of his mission. When Sims departed for London under an assumed name, it was before war was declared by the United States. The quest for secrecy about the mission as well as the overriding desire to maintain neutrality served to limit any Commander’s integration. It was only because of Sims’ pre-existing relationship with Admiral Jellicoe that he was able to be informed about war fighting issues including fear of losing the war in the near

⁴¹⁹ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniel, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (8). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

term.

A second factor that led to incomplete information was the sheer volume of information to be distilled and communicated. At the beginning of any war, the demand for information is simply overwhelming. In Sims' case, most information had to be communicated by cable or telegraph and was further delayed by the need for encryption. The flow of cables does not have the natural interchange or genuine dialog seen in voice communications. To this end, Sims complained, "Judging from the actions that were finally taken, after extensive cabled and written communications, and consequently long delays, it is apparent that if I could...explain fully my recommendations [to Washington], and the discussions before the conferences upon which they were based, they would undoubtedly have been carried out from two to six months earlier."⁴²⁰

A third factor contributing to incomplete information flow was, as we have seen, the lack of staff assigned to Admiral Sims. Sims placed great emphasis on the reduced effectiveness of his role as Commander as a function of limited staffing and a lack of control in the selection of his staff. Sims complained that his task was not feasible compared to the requirements at hand and, of course, he would have preferred leeway in selecting the personnel for the key positions on his staff. Over time, the London Flagship grew to an adequate size, but the initial demands were clearly hindered by the shortage of personnel. Sims specifically complained, "the Department's representative with the allied admiralties was not supported, during the most critical months of the war, either by adequate personnel or by the adequate

⁴²⁰ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniel, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 20. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

forces that could have been supplied.”⁴²¹ Sims attempted to add weight to various elements in his critique through appeals to military judgment, principles derived from Alfred Thayer Mahan, or the art of war or command.⁴²² His inability to control personnel assignments was ultimately attributed to a neglect by Washington to follow the “art of command” defined as authority, decision-making, and leadership.⁴²³

The American lack of understanding of the Allied theatre of war until after the U.S. entry into the war also resulted in decisions based on incomplete information. This failure led to a number of unfocused efforts causing Sims to lament, “Instead of relying on the judgment of those who had actual war experience in this peculiar warfare, the Navy Department, though lacking not only this experience, but also lacking adequate information concerning it, insisted upon a number of plans that could not be carried out.”⁴²⁴

A fifth factor that precluded the flow of more complete information was the very nature of navies. Until the London Flagship, the U.S. Navy was accustomed to on-scene leadership being accomplished from ships at sea. The scope and scale of conflict precluded at-sea leadership, however, and consequently the growing pains of managing information flow --- let alone coalition information and intelligence

⁴²¹ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniel, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (6). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴²² *Ibid*, paragraph 79 (11) quotes Mahan noting, “To interfere with the commander in the field or afloat is one of the most common temptations to the government---and it is generally disastrous.”

⁴²³ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniel, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (7). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels. Sims appeals his inability to select the personnel assigned to him noting, “The Department’s commander in the critical area of hostilities was never allowed to select his principal subordinates, and was not even consulted as to their assignment. A fundamental *principle of the art of command is here involved.*” (italics added) The “elements of the art of command” are described in *Joint Publication 0-2 Unified Action Armed Forces*, July 10, 2001, at <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/6-0/bib.htm#jp0-2> accessed October 4, 2020.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*, paragraph 78 (9).

integration --- led to decision-making without the benefit of the on-scene Commander's more complete information. Additionally, as we have seen, the various delegations to the U.S. also played a role in decisions that were at odds with the role Sims was assigned as the Commander.

A final factor that affected information flow was the suspicion by Secretary Daniels and Admiral Benson that Sims, and Ambassador Page for that matter, were Anglophiles who simply adopted the British perspective on all issues.⁴²⁵ This bias against Sims' advice, despite his selection to serve as the Navy Department's representative and Commander of Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, also caused the Department to operate with incomplete information based on a need to validate information through other mechanisms such as Allied missions or representatives in Washington D.C. During the Senate hearings, Admiral Benson testified, "Admiral Sims got all his information and his ideas as to what should be done from the British Admiralty, and as I stated before, he simply transmitted them to the Navy Department."⁴²⁶ During his testimony, Benson thus wrongfully downplayed Sims' role as an operational Commander and incorrectly described him as a mere conduit of information.

AMERICAN FOCUS ON THE WRONG THEATRE

Sims also argued that the United States was inappropriately focused on the wrong theatre of war and the obsession with a homeland defence was compromising success in European waters and undermining the Allied cause. Sims argued that operations outside of Europe were simply misallocated. Sims notes:

⁴²⁵ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 87.

⁴²⁶ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 343. Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

It is quite true that there were many naval activities outside of the Eastern Atlantic, such as in Caribbean, South Atlantic, Pacific and Asiatic Waters. But, considering the rapidity with which at the time in question we were losing the war in the submarine zone, these forces were of little importance – practically none as regards ultimate success. A great deal of unnecessary effort was expended in these areas.⁴²⁷

Sims specifically cites this as a “Clausewitzian” failure to concentrate mass against the enemy in Europe and not in the United States. Sims notes:

There was great delay and reluctance in accepting the (sic) [in]disputable fact, which should have been apparent to anyone that the critical sea area was in the Eastern Atlantic in the so-called submarine war zone; that the submarine campaign could be critical and could (sic) effect the ultimate decision of the war only in that area.⁴²⁸ ...During the most critical months of the enemy submarine campaign against the allied lines of communication, the Department violated the fundamental strategical principle of concentration of force in the critical area of the conflict.⁴²⁹

From Sims’ perspective this allegation was certainly true, and he of course knew the German Fleet was effectively bottled up, but it is not too surprising that the U.S. Navy leadership was focused on providing appropriate support for homeland defence.

There was, after all, a perception of a submarine threat that was reinforced by the pre-war visit to Newport, Rhode Island by U-boat *U-53* on October 7th, 1916.⁴³⁰ Rob

Doane, in *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World*

War, summarizes the visit of *U-53* noting:

On the afternoon of 7 October 1916, an American Submarine spotted a German U-boat approaching the entrance to Narragansett Bay. The commanding officer of *U-53*, Kapitanleutnant Hans Rose, asked for permission to enter Newport Harbor. Since the United States was still a

⁴²⁷ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 44. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*, paragraph 21.

⁴²⁹ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 78 (5). U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴³⁰ Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War* (Newport: Naval Heritage and History Command, 1917), 13.

neutral power, Rose received permission to tie up at a mooring off Goat Island. Rose went ashore to pay courtesy calls on the senior officers in Newport. Following a brief meeting with the President of the Naval War College, Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight, Rose hosted U.S. Navy personnel and local civilians for drinks on board *U-53*. After dropping off a letter for the German ambassador, Rose set sail that evening. Admiral Knight and his officers were left to wonder...what was the purpose of this surprise visit? The next morning found *U-53* cruising in international waters near Nantucket. As Allied merchant vessels appeared on the horizon, Rose stopped them one by one, ordered their crews and passengers to evacuate, then sent them to the bottom with a torpedo. Rose sank five ships before the day was over, and although none were American-flagged, the message to the United States was clear: Stay out of the war, or your merchant fleet will be destroyed.”

Although Sims was correct in the analysis that few U-boats were likely to continue to make the trans-Atlantic journey due to speed constraints (normally 5-6 knots to conserve fuel), the numerous merchant sinkings off the coast of the United States --- some 200 over the course of the war --- naturally gave U.S. naval leadership pause.⁴³¹ Nonetheless, Sims argued that any effort that drew U-boats away from the Western Approaches was worthwhile. Sims notes:

...if we could actually entice the enemy into shifting his submarines to our coast, it would be greatly to the advantage of the common cause, even granting that our shipping would suffer somewhat more severely; that the chances of the enemy shifting any of his operations to the United States coast without our having but advance knowledge, while remote, was a fully justifiable risk; and therefore that such considerations should not deter us in any way from throwing every possible bit of naval strength into the fight on the actual “front”, that is, in the “war zone” in European Waters.⁴³²

⁴³¹ *Admiral Sims letter to Admiral Bayly, May 17, 1918*. National Archives, Washington D.C. File “General Matters Relating to the Operations, Plans, and Policies of the Navy as a Whole.” For information on U.S coastal sinkings see Casey MacLean, “World War I on the homefront” National Marine Sanctuaries, May 2018, at <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/may18/world-war-i-on-the-homefront.html>, accessed July 8, 2020.

⁴³² *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 42. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

This is a brilliant piece of strategic thinking, and Sims' idea that it would have been positively desirable to tempt U-Boats to operate on the American seaboard shows his clarity of mind in terms of prioritizing anti-submarine warfare as the centre of gravity for war at sea. Unfortunately, however, this thinking also demonstrated a lack of political realism. Although these were strategic and political decisions, Sims was probably accurate in noting that the urgency of avoiding an Allied collapse in the Summer of 1917 may have justified a larger flow of resources into the European theatre. Nonetheless, given his perceived Anglophilia, Sims' tragedy was that he was correct in strictly military terms, but he was arguably the worst possible preacher of his message.

TESTIMONY COUNTERPOINTS

Although Sims provided a pointed critique of the Navy Department's actions, the testimony in support of the department was extensive. Secretary Daniels called upon Admiral Hugh Rodman, Admiral Henry B. Wilson, Rear Admiral Albert P. Niblack, Rear Admiral Joseph Strauss, and Rear Admiral Frank Friday Fletcher who all provided testimony that broadly supported the Department even if the individual details actually supported Sims' contentions.⁴³³ Admiral Rodman, in particular, illuminated a common concern that Sims actions were inappropriately "indiscreet" by noting:

Admiral Sims's letter was very indiscreet --- this, I believe, is the general opinion --- it was that which, no doubt, brought about this investigation.

⁴³³ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 115-116.

Naturally, in defending his actions he has tried to make good by attempting to make it appear that his remarks were pertinent only to the first months of the war. To my mind it covers a much wider field; his indiscretions lay primarily in the tone, wording, and phraseology of his letter, and very particularly in the breach of confidence by making public an intimate and confidential conversation which should have been held sacred.⁴³⁴

Rodman and others identified how Sims' actions limited the effectiveness of his communications style and the ability to achieve his ends.⁴³⁵

LESSONS FOR COALITIONS

In analysing the lessons articulated by Admiral Sims in his post-war assessment delivered to Secretary Daniels in the letter of January 7, 1920, there are important lessons from the Great War that are applicable to today's strategic environment with respect to naval coalitions. These lessons include (1) the need to align policies between coalition partners, (2) the need to manage the exponential rate of technological growth whilst ensuring interoperability, and (3) the need to better understand the role of international law in maintaining the international order. As we examine these lessons, we will review their influence on the ability to form coalitions today.

COALITION ALIGNMENT

In the most significant though misunderstood argument put forth in the January 7, 1920 letter to Secretary Daniels, Sims provides a detailed exposition of the failures of the Navy Department to communicate with and accept his judgment. Clearly, the

⁴³⁴ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 1, 843.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.* See also Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 97-98 (Daniels), 268-270 (Rodman), and 310-311 (Pratt).

modern tools of communications including cables and wireless communications had changed the ability of a headquarters to direct actions in the field or in individual ships. Michael A. Palmer in his *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* notes the impact of wireless communications at the battle of Jutland in 1916:

The battle of Jutland demonstrated that wireless telegraphy had changed the face of naval warfare. Strategically and operationally, heavy and careless reliance on wireless led Scheer toward destruction when in the early evening of 31 May he discovered the Grand Fleet arrayed in all its glory. But those same wireless sets enabled the Germans to execute their turn-about and escape the British trap. Remarkably, while navies were just beginning to employ effective wireless sets at sea, they were already intercepting and decoding messages, employing radio direction finding, jamming enemy transmissions, and at times operating under radio silence. By the Spring of 1916, naval warfare had entered the electromagnetic spectrum in the forms of what would become known as signals intelligence (sigint), traffic analysis, electronic warfare, and emissions control (emcon).⁴³⁶

The new ability to communicate over greater geographic distances had changed the role of headquarters as well, and this led to a perennial argument since the Great War that commanders in the field should be trusted since they are on scene.⁴³⁷ Aside from the question of what constitutes a purely operational decision, this also presupposes that all the information needed to “form just conclusions” was to be found in London rather than Washington. Additionally, there were decisions of a political nature that

⁴³⁶ See Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 250. Palmer notes the unique nature of intelligence at Jutland noting, “The British failure to make the best use of the intelligence gained from intercepted German messages was an important lesson to be learned from the battle. Admiralties and naval commanders had always had to coordinate intelligence with their strategic and operational plans. But Jutland was the first battle in which a commander had access to nearly immediate intelligence, albeit in limited form, of potential tactical importance.”

⁴³⁷ Sims complained frequently to Pratt that he did not have total control over his forces. See *Admiral Sims letters to William Veazie Pratt, August 11, 1917, September 7, 1917, February 15, 1918, April 4, 1918, and 18 May 1918*. W.V. Pratt Papers, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

could only be made at the Navy Department or at the level of the President.

Nonetheless, Sims notes:

The point is that if the Department considered that there was anyone in Washington more competent to form just conclusions, he should have been sent to Europe for that purpose; but, failing this, the recommendations of the Navy Department's representative, based upon conferences with the Allied commanders, should have been accepted and immediately acted upon. The action of the Department in this respect was a violation of a fundamental principle of warfare – see Mahan, or any authority – and it was continuous throughout the war. It added greatly to the burden of my work.⁴³⁸

Many of the Department's actions so strongly implied a conviction that it was the most competent to make decisions concerning operations in the war zone, that the result was an impression that it lacked confidence in the judgment of its representative on the Council of the Allies and its responsible commander in the "field". It is a fundamental principle that every action on the part of superior authorities should indicate confidence in subordinates. If such confidence is lacking, it should immediately be restored by ruthlessly changing the subordinate.⁴³⁹

Sims was directly attacking the tendency during the war for operational decisions to be made by higher authority because of improved communications capabilities.

Sims was also attacking the interference in decision-making that he believed should have been reserved for the military commanders. Despite this emotional admonition, Sims has been effectively proven wrong. The military leadership of democratic or republican-minded nations must be subservient to the civilian leadership that they serve. Military officers are required to offer their "best military advice" to their civilian leadership and then follow the direction of the political leadership. Without this type of relationship between the political leadership and the military leaders, there is potential for a divorce from the relationship between policy goals for a nation and the military strategy executed by the military. The outcome of a

⁴³⁸ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 20. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, paragraph 78 (10).

disconnected policy and military strategy is the potential for enormous waste of lives and treasure. This lesson --- the need for clear linkages between policy and strategy -- - is perhaps the greatest afforded in the analysis of the First World War. Carl von Clausewitz, in his *On War*, reminds us that “war should never be thought of as something autonomous, but always as an instrument of policy.”⁴⁴⁰ It is a lesson often relearned, but given the exponential rate of mobilization realized in the Great War, the costs were significantly higher.

Interestingly, the U.S. Navy in the Great War suffered a strategy-policy mismatch for different reasons than its expeditionary equivalent under General Pershing. Pershing, like his allied peers, was given extraordinary latitude in decision-making with little challenge by the political leadership of the respective nations.⁴⁴¹ The best analysis on the relationship between strategy and policy in the Great War can be found in Bernard Brodie, *War & Politics*. Brodie marks World War I as the worst example in history of the disconnect between policy and strategy noting:

Even as World War I recedes in time, all the dismal and hideous events that mankind has suffered since cannot diminish our dismay in looking back at it...It was a vast effusion of blood for purposes that could hardly be discovered, let alone commended, by those who survived it and by the generations following...There was never before such fruitless sacrifice of such huge numbers, who struggled and died in drearily stagnated positions under conditions unimaginably monstrous...Thus, if we seek historical examples of a failure to match military design with political purpose, with measureless unhappy consequences, World War I is exhibit number one. No other war comes close --- which is saying much, considering what other wars have been like.

The naval examples in the Great War are rather different with greater civilian

⁴⁴⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

⁴⁴¹ Bernard Brodie, *War & Politics* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973), 15.

oversight by Sir Eric Geddes over Admiral Jellicoe and by Secretary Daniels over Admiral Sims as representative examples. In the naval domain, however, the disconnect between the U.S. policy articulated by Daniels in his policy letter to the Secretary of State, and the military strategy desired by the on-scene Commander were starkly different in part due to the reasons cited by Sims. In this case, naval policy and strategy were more fully capable of being aligned through more timely allocation of military forces, but the unpreparedness of the U.S. Navy created significant delays.

The modern lesson for the United States is particularly germane because the alignment of a nation's policy and its military strategy is critical to preventing unnecessary costs as seen in many recent wars led by the United States. Dr. Harlan Ullman of the Atlantic Council, in his *Anatomy of Failure: Why America Loses Every War It Starts*, describes the complexities of this policy-strategy alignment for the United States noting:

To be effective, policy must begin with identifying outcomes that can be realistically achieved and then proceed by linking means with ends and available resources. Too often the proposed outcomes are vague or unattainable. Worse, the assumptions that lead to policy choices are often untested or not fully challenged, taken as truths instead of hypotheses. Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan are tragic examples of the consequences of disregarding these basic tenets of strategic thinking.⁴⁴²

Clearly, the policy objectives of a nation may change as a war progresses with a subsequent impact on strategy. Similarly, a new strategy may have significant policy implications thus reinforcing the requirement to align one's policy with one's strategy. Though it may be too easy to ascribe the complex dynamics of war to misalignment of policy and strategy, it is nonetheless a linkage that must be

⁴⁴² Harlan Ullman, *Anatomy of Failure: Why America Loses Every War It Starts* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 31.

understood and pursued.

The alignment of national policy and military strategy is also important in determining the amount of integration or amalgamation that affects coalition effectiveness. Sims' achievement of amalgamation for the naval forces under his command enhanced the operational efficiency of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy. As we saw in Figure 3, Sims' command throughout the European theatre consisted of nearly 370 vessels, more than 80,000 personnel at forty-five bases, and operational authority over more junior Flag Officers including Rear Admiral Niblack, Rear Admiral Wilson, and Rear Admiral Strauss.⁴⁴³ In contrast, amalgamation of the U.S. land forces was deliberately limited due to a "mixture of political, nationalist, and institutional considerations," and these considerations may, arguably, have contributed to the lengthening of the war.⁴⁴⁴ In modern coalitions, and especially those that consist of dozens of partners, the most obvious need for alignment of policy and strategy is within the application of Rules of Engagement --- literally a set of rules that define the limits of how one's military can engage a potential opponent and how far one may support a partner.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ This paragraph derived from *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters*. The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' Staff. August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 11-13. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box. See also *U.S. Naval Port Officers in the Bordeaux Region 1917-1919* prepared by Dr. Henry P. Beers of the Naval History and Heritage Command at <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/u/us-naval-port-officers-bordeaux-region-1917-1919.html> accessed April 21, 2019.

⁴⁴⁴ David F. Trask, *The AEF & Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 12.

⁴⁴⁵ As an example, see Robert H. Caldwell, "The Canadian Navy, Interoperability, and U.S Navy-Led Operations in the Gulf Region from the First Gulf War to 2003" in Gary E. Weir, principal investigator, and Sandra J. Doyle, editor, *You Cannot Surge Trust: Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, 1991-2003*.

As we have seen, the alignment of strategy and policy within an alliance or coalition is critical to the effectiveness of the coalition. An alignment of national policies between allies or coalitions enables a coalition to create a deterrent effect. An alliance that exists before a conflict starts offers a combined military capability or geographic reach that must be accounted for by potential opponents. One example of the deterrent effect of an alliance can be seen in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization designed to counter the former Soviet Union and now a resurgent Russia. In the Western Pacific, the alliance between the United States and Japan offers a deterrent effect as well as geographic basing for American forces that hopefully inhibits independent Chinese action against Japan. The basing also provides logistics support for U.S. forces in a critical part of the world.

MANAGING THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY

A second lesson that can be drawn from the Great War that has parallels to today's strategic environment and which has an impact on coalitions is the complexity of managing new technologies that directly affect war fighting. Colin S. Gray, in his *Why Strategy is Difficult* underscores this difficulty noting:

Despite electro-mechanical marvels it is no easier --- in fact it is probably harder --- to perform well as a strategist today than a century ago. Consider the utility of railroads, telegraph, radio, and aircraft to the strategist. The poison in the chalice of each is that other polities have acquired them; each has distinctive vulnerabilities and worse (recall the radio intercepts of World Wars I and II); and none of them can address the core of the strategist's basket of difficulties...The fog of war and frictions that harass and damage strategic performance do not comprise a static set of finite challenges which can be attrited by study, let alone by machines.⁴⁴⁶

Grasping the reality of a strategic environment marked by disruptive technologies is

(Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013), 295-305.

⁴⁴⁶ Colin S. Gray, "Why Strategy is Difficult" *Joint Force Quarterly*, Summer 1999, 9.

difficult at best and getting more difficult.

Today's warfare is characterized by a similar exponential rate of change and is equally unprecedented. Although the change in "transport" types is essentially the same, they are certainly faster and more reliable. The types of weaponry have also been enhanced by range, capability, and lethality especially in nuclear weaponry, ballistic missiles, and hypersonic capability. The most significant change, however, is the increase in the number of "new" environments and their impact on the strategic environment in which humans must fight. Whereas the First World War became three-dimensional, today's wars are marked by additional operating environments such as Space and the Cyber environment. Admiral James Stavridis highlights the shift in additional operating environments suggesting a shift from the 'old' triad of land, sea, and air to a new paradigm of "special operations forces, unmanned vehicles, and cyber capabilities. Each has an important role to play, but taken together, the sum of their impacts will be far greater than that of each of the parts when used alone."⁴⁴⁷

The new environments offer unique means to deliver kinetic and non-kinetic effects to impact an enemy.⁴⁴⁸ Additionally, the new environments have potentially altered or blurred the lines between peace and conflict. No longer is there a clear line between the phases of conflict and what traditionally marked a kinetic or, in U.S. joint terminology, the "phase 2" of warfare.⁴⁴⁹ Accordingly, the phases of warfare are no

⁴⁴⁷ James Stavridis, "The New Triad: It's Time to Found a U.S. Cyber Force," *Foreign Policy*, June 20, 2013, 1-7.

⁴⁴⁸ A recent example of the use of such technologies and the new strategic environment was the choice by President Donald Trump in 2019 to use cyber attacks on Iran as a non-kinetic, and arguably more proportional, response to the Iranian downing of a U.S. military drone operating in the Arabian Gulf. See Agence France-Press, "US 'conducted cyber attacks on Iran' in response to drone downing," *The Telegraph*, June 23, 2019 at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/23/us-conducted-cyber-attacks-iran-response-drone-downing/> accessed July 14, 2019.

⁴⁴⁹ *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations*, January 17, 2017 incorporating Change 1 October 22, 2018, V-13, at https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_0ch1.pdf?ver=2018-11-27-

longer linear but rather phases of operations that vary in the respective domains in which warfare is fought. In space, a domain that previously had not been militarized, new anti-satellite weaponry and capabilities have driven a need for countermeasures and alternative means to ensure communications and surveillance information that was previously uncontested. The Cyber Domain, for example, also offers means to impact an opponent in peacetime in ways that would otherwise be acts of war, and it offers non-kinetic effects or outcomes in warfare that was previously unimaginable. Additionally, these domains may be well-suited to efforts at amalgamation because the tasks to be performed do not necessarily require discrete nationally-based units.

Because World War I was characterized by such an exponential growth in technology that caused the belligerents to be faced with dramatic changes in how to fight a war, the plans on how to optimize employment of the technology consumed considerable energy. Although the adoption of aircraft in the First World War is well documented elsewhere, the efforts to find solutions to the anti-submarine problem are noteworthy. In the end, convoys were the appropriate mix of deterrence and a defensive measure that has the capability to turn the tactical area around it into a killing ground. Convoys ultimately proved effective, but the search for alternative solutions continued apace with the convoy efforts although the success of these options was negligible with the possible exception of the mine barrages deployed *after* improved deepwater mines were developed in 1918.⁴⁵⁰

The impact of the exponential growth of technology *on coalitions* is best seen in the challenge to maintain interoperability between forces. The effectiveness of the

160457-910 accessed October 23, 2019. Per U.S. Joint Doctrine, the traditional phases of an operation include phase 0 Shape, phase 1 Deter, phase 2 Seize Initiative, phase 3 Dominate, phase 4 Stabilize, and phase 5 Enable Civil Authority.

⁴⁵⁰ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 291-292. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

fighting forces requires the ability to seamlessly communicate, share information, and effectively employ weapons systems. Without interoperability of communications and information systems, coalitions are relegated to “independent” operations or geographic isolation which negates some of the value of a coalition. Moreover, the increased cost of technology and the limited time that a technology offers an advantage makes the sharing of technology a double-edged sword; nations are naturally afraid that sharing their technological advantages will lead to an erosion of their war fighting edge through spy networks or reverse engineering by potential enemies. Dr. Peter Swartz of the Center of Naval Analyses, for example, offers the idea that technology is so free-flowing that any technological advantage gained by one power or another is transitory. He notes, “Technological superiority matters in the short run, but in the long run, naval technology flows more or less freely across borders among the world’s most powerful nations --- both reflecting and fueling naval arms races.”⁴⁵¹ This may be true, however, the exponential rate of technological change drives factors such as development strategies, acquisition strategies, and critical decisions on when to field a new technology in the quest to retain a dominant edge in warfare.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL ORDER

A final lesson of the Great War that is often overlooked is the need to reconcile the norms of international law. As we have seen, international law played a significant role in the decision of the United States to enter the war on the side of Great Britain although the U.S. had grave concerns over the treatment of neutral vessels at sea.

⁴⁵¹ Peter M. Swartz, “Rising Powers and Naval Power,” in Phillip C. Saunders, Christopher Yung, Michael Swaine, and Andrew Nien-Dzu Yang, eds., *The Chinese Navy: Expanding Capabilities, Evolving Roles* (National Defense University Press, Washington D.C., 2011), 12-16.

Sims specifically shunned the practice of unrestricted warfare by German U-boats and recognized the obvious risk to international order.⁴⁵² At the end of the day, the Americans sided with a Great Britain that used its sea power to essentially waive the normative “cruiser rules” to create and enforce a blockade against Imperial Germany *because* the unrestricted submarine warfare being mercilessly imposed by Germany was seen as a greater threat to the world order.⁴⁵³

Neutral rights were tested in the Great War as a result of unrestricted submarine warfare as well as Great Britain’s insistence on blockade due to the exigency of war and because the Royal Navy was capable of enforcing it. Alliances and coalitions form based on national interest but, in general, those national interests are based on the foundation of a global international order that includes the free transit of goods at sea.

MODERN COALITIONS: “YOU CANNOT SURGE TRUST”

Despite inherent tensions within coalitions, most nations recognize the enormous value of coalitions whether it be through direct war fighting integration, logistics support, or the strategic value of legitimacy gained through multinational endorsement of coalition aims. The key lesson is that relationships and alliances matter. Sims was able to rapidly assess the possibility of the Allies losing the maritime war upon his arrival in London because the relationships forged before the war created an inherent trust. Additionally, Sims quickly grasped the value of working in an amalgamated fashion with the Royal Navy to create a unity of command and

⁴⁵² William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

⁴⁵³ Tony Booth, *Admiralty Salvage in Peace and War 1906-2006: ‘Grove, Grub, and Tremble’* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Great Britain, Pen and Sword, 2007) 4 and Schmidt, Donald E., *The Folly of War: American Foreign Policy, 1898-2005* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005).

unity of effort that created a synergy that optimized the war fighting efforts. This principle is underscored in the current unclassified maritime strategy of the U.S. Navy that notes “a strong, worldwide network of maritime partnerships, united in common purpose, serves as an enduring advantage over our rivals.”⁴⁵⁴ Coalitions based on alliances and partnerships are therefore an integral part of war planning efforts. An understanding of the lessons from the coalition efforts developed by Sims, Jellicoe, and Bayly will reinforce the enduring need to develop partnerships and coalitions when required. The naval coalition was effective due to well-developed human connections, not just official national policies. Trust and mutual interests directly fuelled the collaboration between Jellicoe and Sims and directly enabled the collaboration between the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy.

Where possible, having pre-established relationships is critical to deterring conflict, integrating required capabilities, and, if necessary, winning wars. In modern parlance, a nation can surge forces in response to a crisis, but that same nation “cannot surge trust.”⁴⁵⁵ Accordingly, great efforts must be made to not only build but maintain relationships that lead to coalition effectiveness when required.

The requirements of an effective coalition, based on the lessons from the Great War relationship between the United States Navy and the Royal Navy, are therefore to ensure an alignment of strategy and policy as well as finding mechanisms to enable interoperability. Another common goal for coalition members today is to support for the existing international order because the heart of most conflicts is a fundamental

⁴⁵⁴ U.S. Navy, *Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, December 17, 2020), 26.

⁴⁵⁵ The idea that one cannot surge trust in a conflict is a common coalition saying reflected in the title of Gary E. Weir, Principal Investigator, and Sandra J. Doyle’s *You Cannot Surge Trust: Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, 1991-2003* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013).

disagreement as to societal norms (for example, monarchies versus republics) or international legal constructs (territorial sanctity or merchant rights). In the maritime domain, the unifying foundation of a maritime-based coalition is a common subscription to international norms, and, in particular a respect for the global commons as codified in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Our case study showed that the United States and Great Britain had different *wartime* interpretations of the rights of neutral shipping but that these differences did not preclude the forging of an effective wartime coalition.

COALITION TRENDS FOR THE MODERN DAY

Though few books examine the operational elements of successful coalitions, there are readily identifiable historical trends. Professor Bruce Elleman and Professor S.C.M. Paine of the U.S. Naval War College provide a superb analysis of naval coalitions in their *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*.⁴⁵⁶ The concluding chapter of their scholarly work is perhaps the greatest contribution to understanding naval coalitions by comparing “factors as coalition type, theater of operations, membership stability, duration, command relationships, naval strategy, operational and strategic objectives, and enemy response.” In analysing these factors, Elleman and Paine also offer a broad review of historical trends that shape modern coalitions. Specifically, they identify a significant trend in modern coalitions as they note:

After World War II, however, coalitions have tended to include a far greater range of members in term of size, capacity, and contributions. Thus, the membership has become increasingly inclusive as it has become more heterogeneous. This shift not only reflects the bipolar nature of the Cold War,

⁴⁵⁶ Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, eds. *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (London: Rutledge Press, 2008).

where broad coalition membership gave greater legitimacy to each side, but also reflects a growing reliance on the niche capabilities of the different coalition members.

Since the end of the Cold War, naval coalitions have consistently opposed diplomatically isolated continental adversaries. Successful naval coalitions usually leveraged a wide variety of assets by being inclusive and heterogeneous. In other words, many countries of differing capabilities cooperated and leveraged their asymmetrical naval assets against a non-naval adversary.⁴⁵⁷

This trend may simply be a reflection of a more stable international order. However, it may also be useful in developing a strategy against nations who violate the laws and norms of international law. Elleman and Paine note that the modern strategy of naval coalitions “requires at least two offensive prongs: one military and the other diplomatic. To force a resolution, naval coalitions often focus not just on their adversary’s military and government, but also on its commerce and economy, so a third common prong integrates an economic strategy.”⁴⁵⁸ Finally, the authors offer two inter-connected characteristics of the modern strategic environment. They note:

The immediacy and global scope of media coverage has irrevocably altered the strategic environment. During the nineteenth century, and even in the early part of the twentieth century, gunboat diplomacy displayed naval power in order to intimidate the adversary. With the increasing power of the press, however, this would now almost certainly be portrayed as bullying and so might backfire. By contrast, in today’s world coalition naval forces possess the key advantage in their ability to influence the land while they “stand off” shore, using the water both to protect themselves from attack and to limit their visibility to the enemy and to the media. Most modern coalition forces are never seen by the enemy, even while their influence is more keenly felt than ever.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁷ Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, eds. *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (London: Routledge Press, 2008), 220.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, 219.

⁴⁵⁹ Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, eds. *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (London: Routledge Press, 2008), 220. For an indepth understanding of the new role of social media, see Tom Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

With an understanding of the dimensions of modern coalitions and historical trends --- including shifts in the strategic environment --- offered by the scholarship of Professor Elleman and Professor Paine, we may broadly examine the characteristics of effective modern coalitions.

An alignment between national policies and resultant strategies is critical and underlines the need for agreement on support of the international order.⁴⁶⁰ Peter C. Hunt, in his *Coalition Warfare*, offers twelve criteria to air commanders for effective coalitions of which four are germane in all modern coalitions.⁴⁶¹ These common lessons are (1) the need for operational liaisons, (2) cultural awareness builds trust, (3) modern command and control networks are important, and (4) the need to accommodate intelligence sharing.⁴⁶² We have seen how Sims was initially a liaison to the Royal Navy in the Great War and then was appointed a Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Operating in Europe Waters. Sims then appointed his own liaisons to integrate his naval staff within Royal Navy operational nodes and to solve the dilemma of intelligence sharing. In Sims' time, command and control networks including wireless communications had changed the nature of how one communicated with their forces. Today, the implication for modern networks refers to an interoperability that allows for navies to work together in real-time rather than through conduits which are independent of one another.

Additionally, Sarandis Papadopoulos offers coalition criteria gleaned from examination of operations between “the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy,

⁴⁶⁰ At the U.S. Naval War College, the Strategy and Policy curriculum is devoted to understanding to requirement to align strategy and policy.

⁴⁶¹ Peter C. Hunt, *Coalition Warfare: Considerations for the Air Component Commander* (Maxwell, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 67.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

Royal Navy, and United States Navy” between 1991 and 2003.⁴⁶³ Papadopoulos suggests five characteristics of effective coalitions that include networking, constant interaction, and liaison and personnel exchanges, access and trust, and brokering/re-brokering (defined as “ongoing negotiation and re-brokering of the human network to unify naval forces.”).⁴⁶⁴ The coalition between the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy met all of these attributes as seen in this thesis although the idea of “constant” interaction could apply to pre-conflict networking which was limited before the Great War due to the quest for American neutrality. These attributes are, however, readily apparent today in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S. alliance with Japan.

The lessons derived from the pioneering of the special relationship have significant parallels today that shed insight on a way forward for modern day coalitions including building foundational partnerships and critically examining the role of emerging technologies in a new light. We should see that coalitions are more important than ever before as a function of the specialisation that is required in managing the new domains in the strategic environment. Accordingly, for example, many nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have developed niche capabilities that contribute to required capabilities thereby allowing the United States or other highly capable navies in NATO (United Kingdom, Spain, France, and Italy) to focus on high-end capabilities.⁴⁶⁵ Other navies that are unable to meet funding requirements provide rotational forces or specialised enabling capabilities such as

⁴⁶³ Sarandis Papadopoulos, ‘Conclusion’ in Gary E. Weir, principal investigator, and Sandra J. Doyle, editor, *You Cannot Surge Trust: Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, 1991-2003*. (Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013), 295-305.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ James L. Smith, “Permanent On Call Joint Maritime Battle Force” January 12, 2016 in *NATO Striking and Support Forces* at <https://sfn.nato.int/media-center/news/2016/permanent-on-call-joint-maritime-battle-force.aspx> accessed April 2, 2020.

Netherland's amphibious Marines or Belgium's mine countermeasures capabilities.⁴⁶⁶

Combining these many lessons and trends into one possible model for future coalitions, the appropriate goals for modern day coalitions to optimize their effectiveness would include an alignment of policies between members of the coalition, effective management of fast-growing technologies to include ensuring interoperability, and a mutual support of the existing international order. The coalition formed in the Great War also offers a noteworthy model for the future and, as we have seen, the formations of a coalition can be enhanced through pre-conflict networking, operational liaisons and personnel exchanges, intelligence sharing, integrated command and control networks, constant interaction, mutual access and trust, and cultural awareness.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the contributions of Admiral Sims in the interwar years including his service as President of the U.S. Naval War College after the Great War as well as Senate testimony in 1920. In examining Sims' reforms at the Naval War College, we saw an operational war fighting inculcation in the students that directly contributed to the Allied success in the Second World War. In his Senate testimony in 1920, we saw Sims air his grievances in the execution of the war by Secretary Daniels which provides extraordinary historical understanding for the modern scholar but also allows a review of broad lessons and characteristics that are germane to modern coalitions. These lessons have application to today's strategic environment and offer a possible model for effective coalitions in the future. The next chapter will explore the

⁴⁶⁶ Gregory DeMarco and Gene Germanovich, "The Hidden Potential of NATO's Gator Navies," *DefenseOne*, March 17, 2017 at <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2017/03/hidden-potential-natos-gator-navies/136245/> accessed April 2, 2020.

elements of cooperation both during the Great War and in the interwar years leading up to the Second World War.

CHAPTER 5

SIMS AND CONTINUITY TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of elements that contributed to the continuity of the relationship between Great Britain and the United States during the Great War and in the interwar years leading up to the Second World War.⁴⁶⁷ There was of course a diplomatic rivalry that is well documented elsewhere, and the main sources of tension between the two nations are documented in Appendix F. This chapter will instead explore the precedents and the continuity of personal relationships during the war and in the years leading up to the Second World War. These precedents and relationships --- augmented by baseball, fraternal organizations, naval liaisons, intelligence and technology sharing, and covert support from the U.S. Navy --- reflect the foundation of a special relationship (ties of affection, ideological affinities that lead to shared objectives, and compatible working practices and structures that facilitate cooperation) that enabled success in the Second World War.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES TO COHESION

Despite efforts at cooperation, there were many challenges to cohesion at the operational level. Although Sims spent a great preponderance of his time in London, he spent a modest amount of time with the U.S. naval forces in Queenstown that were under the leadership of Admiral Bayly.⁴⁶⁸ Although Sims met briefly with Bayly in

⁴⁶⁷ See, for example, David F. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972) and Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, Volume II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939* (London: Collins Press, 1976). David F. Trask, for example, identifies “generalized suspicions in both Britain and the United States...throughout the period of American intervention that the wartime partners planned competitive naval and commercial policies after the victory.” P. 349.

⁴⁶⁸ Sims maintained a Flagship in Queenstown onboard the tender USS MELVILLE (AD-2) though he normally resided ashore at Admiralty House with Admiral Bayly when visiting Queenstown.

London with Jellicoe in April 1917, Sims' first visit to Queenstown was May 17-29 to meet with Admiral Bayly and the U.S. Navy ship Captains. Most historiography, including Bayly's memoirs, shows Sims as being in Queenstown for the arrival of the U.S. Destroyers in early May.⁴⁶⁹ Bayly, however, got it wrong in his memoirs because Sims was unable to attend to his duties in Queenstown in favour of a dinner with King George as detailed in a letter to his wife.⁴⁷⁰ It was during the mid-May visit to Queenstown that Sims cemented his relationship with Bayly of whom it was said before the war, "Bayly should be put in an iron cage and fed on raw beef and turned loose on the enemy when war broke out."⁴⁷¹ Sims was able to intervene with the Admiralty to address many of the difficulties experienced by Bayly in Ireland to include Bayly receiving a promotion to Commander-in-Chief, Coast of Ireland.⁴⁷² As we have seen, Sims was then the first American to command British forces in the month of June. Thereafter, Sims' visits to Queenstown --- which was a twenty-hour journey from London --- were limited to semi-annual visits as his duties in London expanded.⁴⁷³

In addition to visits and inspections of the ships, Sims led discussions of tactics and operations with the Commanding Officers. He also worked diligently to maintain morale and cohesion with the Queenstown community through his example.

⁴⁶⁹ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939), 219.

⁴⁷⁰ *Sims letter to his wife Anne, April 29, 1917*. Naval War College Archives, Letters from Admiral Sims to his wife Anne, Sims Collection, Sims notes, "I have written to Taussig (who is in command of the first six boats) a letter of advice. It is pleasant to know that these young fellows have confidence in what I tell them. Of course I intended to go to Queenstown to meet the destroyers and point them fair, look out for their supplies, etc., and was making arrangements to go when I received an invitation to go to Windsor Castle on May 1st and remain until the next day. Of course I must go." Upon return from Windsor Castle on May 2nd, Sims departed for his first trip to Paris. (Letter from Admiral Sims to his wife Anne dated May 2, 1917).

⁴⁷¹ *Admiral Sims letter to his wife Anne, June 20, 1917*. Naval War College Archives, Sims Collection.

⁴⁷² *Admiral Sims letter to his wife Anne, June 4, 1917*. Naval War College Archives, Sims Collection.

⁴⁷³ This is based upon a review of Sims' letters to his wife Anne which serve almost as a diary of his daily programme and geographic location.

Alongside Admiral Bayly, Sims would greet the mariners who had been rescued after their ships were sunk by German U-boats. Nonetheless, maintaining cohesion was complicated by community fears of large numbers of American Sailors as well as by occasional conflicts with members of Sinn Fein.

A natural amount of tension also existed with the infusion of young American males into the populace generating concern in the Roman Catholic community which was most of the population. In a letter to his Senior Officer, Ensign D.L. Ryan noted an anti-American sentiment at the church sermon in Queenstown Cathedral in September 1917 claiming the congregation was warned to “look out for their young daughters especially since there had lately arrived on our shores hundreds of vultures, yea I might say thousands of them, who were preying upon the purity of our daughters of Queenstown.”⁴⁷⁴ Similar tensions led to nearby Cork being placed off-limits to American Sailors. Admiral Bayly noted, “The U.S. sailors had plenty of money, as there was nothing to buy with it in Queenstown, and they used to go to Cork to spend it. The result was that they became very popular with the girls in Cork, whom they treated very handsomely, and the young men in the town found themselves left out of the picture. After a little time these young men got up fights and quarrels with the Americans until at last there was a fair-sized battle in the streets....I heard of this, ...and so I at once issued an order that neither British nor U.S officers or men were to go within three miles of Cork, on any pretext whatever.”⁴⁷⁵ Mindful of the Easter Rising that occurred just one year before the arrival of American destroyers in Queenstown, the inherent tensions within coalitions were closely monitored by the

⁴⁷⁴ *P-Bases, Queenstown*, Office of Naval Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.: Subject File 1911-1927.

⁴⁷⁵ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939), 223.

senior leadership of the Queenstown Command who deliberately limited interactions in Cork to eliminate conflict.

There was obviously tension that was created by operating in Ireland during the war and particularly because the status of a devolved government was deferred by the British government during the war itself.⁴⁷⁶ The delayed status of home rule created tensions with Sinn Fein who then made a unilateral declaration of independence in January of 1919 leading to a full scale insurgency by Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army in what was then an integral part of the United Kingdom.⁴⁷⁷ These tensions, and the sympathies invoked in the Irish-American population, were clearly reflected in comments made by Sims in a speech given to the English-Speaking Union on June 7, 1921 when Sims visited London on leave from his duties at the U.S. Naval War College to receive an honorary degree from Cambridge University. In the extemporaneous speech, a confident Sims spoke of:

“...action of the Sinn Fein faction with reference to our naval men during the war... There are many in our country who technically are Americans, some of them naturalized and some born there, but none of them Americans at all. They are Americans when they want money, but Sinn Feiners when on the platform. They are making war on America today. The simple truth of it is that they have the blood of English and American boys on their hands for the obstructions they placed in the way of the most effective operation of the Allied Naval forces during the war. They are like zebras, either black horses with white stripes or white horses with black stripes. But we know they are

⁴⁷⁶ The devolution of home rule was suspended by an act of Parliament known as “An Act to suspend the operation of the Government of Ireland Act 1914, and the Welsh Church Act.” See Marie Coleman, of Queen’s University Belfast, “*The Irish settlement: an often ignored legacy of World War I*,” *The Conversation*, November 7, 2018 accessed August 11, 2019 at <https://theconversation.com/the-irish-settlement-an-often-ignored-legacy-of-world-war-i-106091> Coleman’s article provides a fascinating history of the pursuit of home rule and how the Great War changed the political calculus to the pursuit of full independence away from the United Kingdom.

⁴⁷⁷ Christopher L. Pastore, “How the Irish Won Their Freedom,” *New York Times*, January 21, 2019 accessed August 11, 2019 at <https://nytimes.com/2019/01/21/opinion/how-the-irish-won-their-freedom.amp.html> Professor Pastore is an Associate Professor at the University at Albany in the State University of New York.

not horses --- they are asses; but each of these asses has a vote and there are lots of them.”⁴⁷⁸

The above speech has become known as the “jackass speech” and created a great stir in the United States that included Sims being recalled from leave back to the United States by Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby. Fortunately for Sims, there was an outpouring of support from many circles that defused the original intent of meetings with Denby and President Warren G. Harding that may have included removing Sims from his command of the Naval War College. In the end, Sims received a reprimand akin to that received after the Guildhall speech, with the reprimand noting that naval officers should not “express an opinion on international topics in a foreign country.”⁴⁷⁹ Although spared once again from his verbal indiscretions, Sims likely suffered later in Congressional circles when several attempts were later made to permanently appoint him to full Admiral or even Vice-Admiral.⁴⁸⁰

Despite these tensions, Sims worked diligently to successfully bridge the relationship with Admiral Bayly to optimize operational effectiveness during the war. After the war, there was a number of precedents as well as a continuity of key individuals that facilitated an effective partnership between the two navies in the interwar years.

⁴⁷⁸ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 482.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 485.

⁴⁸⁰ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 486-487. Morison details how the Congressional bills for permanent appointment had quietly died and “by the time Congress had met again in January, 1920, Sims’ letters to the Secretary on medal awards and the lessons of the naval war were common knowledge, and no one was in a mood to consider honoring any officer of the Navy.”

BASEBALL AS AN EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

In addition to managing the political tensions within Ireland and the interpersonal tensions caused by the influx of American Sailors into Great Britain and in the rest of the European theatre, Sims recognized that cultural differences were problematic and even dangerous to American military personnel particularly in Ireland. The Easter Rising of 1916 was fresh in the minds of many, and the Germanic and Irish surnames of many American service members cast doubts as to the “national loyalty” of the men, and the Irish population largely saw American support of the British as unfounded and inappropriate.⁴⁸¹

To partially assuage these concerns, “Admiral Sims looked for ways to diffuse the inherent tension by displaying the uniqueness of American culture. He wanted to show that Americans were not German or Irish --- they were simply American. To demonstrate this point, he organized the Anglo-American Baseball League.”⁴⁸² Sims did not really organize this league, but he did foster and exploit a venue which was designed to showcase a unique part of American culture in addition to providing a recreational outlet for the American military. Harold Seymour in his *Baseball: The People’s Game* notes:

England glimpsed wartime baseball as early as 1916 when American citizens serving under the British flag played in a London League against Canadians. The “London Americans” also had a team in the 1917 London League. American Servicemen stationed in various smaller British cities played, too... That year, in London, four American and four Canadian teams competed in what was called the Anglo-American Baseball League, financed in part by du Pont and other industries. One of the American Teams represented the Navy and the others the Army and Air Service.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War* (Newport: Naval Heritage and History Command, 1917), 24.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Rob Doane, *To Win or Lose All: William S. Sims and the U.S. Navy in the First World War*

These teams played throughout Europe and behind the lines of the Western Front in France and were immensely popular. The Army-Navy baseball game played on July 4th, 1918, for instance, drew 50,000 observers including Winston Churchill and King George V who was accompanied by Prince Albert, Queen Mary, and the Queen Mother Alexandra.⁴⁸⁴ The prolific baseball journalist Jim Leeke remarked how successful the 4th of July 1918 game was, noting,⁴⁸⁵

The game was as good as anyone had dared to hope, exciting even Londoners who barely comprehended the action. “I don’t know what he did, but I’m for him!” Queen Alexandra exclaimed as the Navy’s Harvard-educated catcher slid across the plate to score. ...The American teams delivered a raucous display of vigor and athleticism at a time when doughboys were only beginning to reach the front lines in meaningful numbers. The thrilling afternoon cheered war-weary Britons and helped to solidify the great transatlantic alliance.

As a recreational activity to introduce American culture in a tangible way, Sims’ fostering of the game was beneficial in bridging gaps in understanding between European and American culture. The July 4th game was, however, only one manifestation of using baseball to “promote the American way abroad.”⁴⁸⁶ In effect, the growth of baseball reflected a form of “cultural power” or “soft power” in that it enables other people to see the world through your lens.⁴⁸⁷ For example, Robert Elias

(Newport: Naval Heritage and History Command, 1917), 24. The evolution of the Anglo-American Baseball League is detailed in Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The People’s Game* (Norwalk, Connecticut: Easton Press, 1990), 344.

⁴⁸⁴ Jim Leeke, *From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 130. Leeke also wrote a brilliant and highly detailed book dedicated to this one game titled, *Nine Innings for the King: The Day Wartime London Stopped for Baseball, July 4, 1918* published by McFarland Press, Jefferson, North Carolina in 2015.

⁴⁸⁵ Jim Leeke, *From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 130.

⁴⁸⁶ Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

⁴⁸⁷ The definitive work on the role and value of “soft power” remains Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs of the Perseus Books Group, 2004)

suggests that baseball was deliberately employed as a method to demonstrate American physical superiority noting, “the Inter-Allied Games provided physical activity for soldiers waiting to return home, a safety valve against other temptations. They instilled a sporting message...But they were also staged to show American superiority and to establish a United States presence for the Paris Peace Conference.”⁴⁸⁸

THE QUEENSTOWN ASSOCIATION

Another element of interwar cooperation is found in organizations that were designed specifically to maintain cultural or professional ties. Sims contributed to the establishment of a new organization that served in the interwar years to maintain operational ties and fraternal relationships between the United States and Great Britain as well as between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy. Professor Geoffrey Sloan of the University of Reading identifies this linkage when he states:

This naval alliance, it can be suggested, which existed between May 1917 and November 1918 between the Royal Navy and the United States Navy in Ireland was the foundational stone of what was to become in the Second World War and post-Second World War period one of the key pillars of the Anglo-American special relationship.⁴⁸⁹

Professor Sloan also identifies a fraternal organization known as the Queenstown Association formed after the First World War that perpetuated the ties forged in the Queenstown Ireland naval base.

5-6. Nye tells us, “Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others...It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Simply put, in behavioral terms soft power is attractive power.”

⁴⁸⁸ Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 93.

⁴⁸⁹ G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the 20th Century* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 156.

After serving in USS O'BRIAN at Queenstown, Lieutenant Junius S. Morgan, Jr., organized the Queenstown Association in 1919 to "continue the spirit of cooperation among the officers of the Queenstown Forces."⁴⁹⁰ The requirements for membership were strict, and eligibility for membership in the association, which grew to 500 members, required three months of service under Admiral Bayly during the Great War.⁴⁹¹ The association also impacted influential leaders such as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt visited Queenstown in July 1918 noting, "When I went to Queenstown with Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the Admiralty, Admiral Bayly and Miss Voysey's house on the hill was not only the centre for the planning of major operations, but was also a haven where the young American officers were made to feel at home."⁴⁹²

The First Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Queenstown Association was held in Philadelphia in January 1920, and the minutes of that meeting show that it voted that membership "be limited to Commissioned Officers of the United States Navy, who prior to the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, were based on and operated from Queenstown; together with such other Commissioned Officers of The Irish Command who prior to January 3, 1919, had signified their desire to join the Association."⁴⁹³ A corresponding British branch was created in 1921 although

⁴⁹⁰ William H. Langenberg, "Pull Together" The Queenstown Naval Command of World War I," *Sea History* 99, Winter (2001-2002), 7.

⁴⁹¹ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939), 258.

⁴⁹² President Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreword dated October 26, 1938 to Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1939), 6. After the war, Admiral Bayly was offered an assignment as the Commander in Chief at the Naval Base in Portsmouth, but he elected to retire instead. See also Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 292.

⁴⁹³ *Minutes of the First Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Queenstown Association Held in Philadelphia January 3, 1920*. Library of Congress, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, The Records of the Queenstown Association, Box 1.

“officers of the Royal Navy who were based on Queenstown...[were] elected honorary members...”⁴⁹⁴ Aside from the commemoration of service, the Queenstown Association conducted a series of dinners and reunions in honour of Admiral Sims and Admiral Bayly and later raised funds to support the purchase of a home for Bayly and his niece because of financial distress in their later years.

In execution, the acclaim of the Association was best seen in 1934. When the U.S. Fleet visited New York City in May, Admiral Bayly and Miss Voysey were invited to celebrate, and their “welcome included a visit with Admiral Sims, lunch with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the opportunity to review the U.S. Fleet with the President aboard USS INDIANAPOLIS off Sandy Hook.”⁴⁹⁵ President Roosevelt in his Foreword to Bayly’s *Pull Together* noted, “the Admiral and his niece visited me at the White House, and he stood at my side when I reviewed the United States Fleet off Sandy Hook in 1934...The memory of Admiral Bayly will live for all time in the tender affection of the Navy of the United States.”⁴⁹⁶ Bayly and his niece also toured “Philadelphia, Washington, Annapolis, Boston, Newport, and Jamestown.”⁴⁹⁷ The trip to the United States was reported in the *Times*, with a recognition of the continuing ties between the United States and Great Britain:

In the world at this moment there is only too much evidence that hatred and savagery are quick to spread. Friendship and goodwill also, it seems, will spread and will endure; and Admiral Bayly’s visit to the United States will turn many a gaze upward towards one of the serenest gleams in a wild and

⁴⁹⁴ *Queenstown Association. Notes relating to meeting and dinner held January 3rd in Philadelphia. (annotated as being detailed in a letter from Captain Pratt). Library of Congress, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, The Records of the Queenstown Association, Box 1.*

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.* The visit to New York also offered Bayly the opportunity to deliver a commemorative brass plaque in memory of Vice Admiral Pringle who passed away in September 1936. The plaque was transferred to the U.S. Naval Academy where the plaque is displayed in Memorial Hall.

⁴⁹⁶ Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1939), Foreword by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

⁴⁹⁷ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 298.

stormy sky.⁴⁹⁸

Although few of the members had significant interwar influence other than Sims and Roosevelt, the members were able to provide an example to others of the ties that existed in the maritime services. The Queenstown Association continued its purpose and was active through the Second World War until its disbandment in 1961. The Association also served to maintain Anglo-American ties and was a representative example of a construct tied to Sims that perpetuated the naval relationship in the interwar years.

COOPERATION BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

There was also cooperation between the United States Navy and the Royal Navy, and this is best seen in the relationship in the years right before the U.S. entered the Second World War. Cooperation between the two nations was complicated by the strict Neutrality Acts passed by the U.S. Congress in 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1939 “designed to prevent the United States from being embroiled in a foreign war by clearly stating the terms of U.S. neutrality.”⁴⁹⁹ The 1935 Neutrality Act, for example, prohibited “the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war and requiring arms manufacturers...to apply for an export license.”⁵⁰⁰ In 1936, the act was extended and also “prohibited Americans from extending any loans to belligerent nations”...while 1937 added civil wars under the act, forbade U.S. citizens from travel on belligerent ships, and prevented “American merchant ships...from transporting arms to belligerents even if those arms were produced outside the United

⁴⁹⁸ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 300.

⁴⁹⁹ U.S. State Department, *Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations*, “The Neutrality Acts, 1930s” at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/neutrality-acts> accessed January 19, 2020.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

States.”⁵⁰¹ The 1937 Neutrality Act did allow, however, a “cash-and-carry” clause which “allowed, at the discretion of the President, [nations] to acquire any items except arms from the United States, so long as they immediately paid for such items and carried them on non-American ships.”⁵⁰² Finally, the Neutrality Act of 1939 lifted the arms embargo and made all trade cash and carry.⁵⁰³

After the Second World War started in Europe, Roosevelt was able to press for a special session of Congress on September 21, 1939 that passed a revision to the Neutrality Act that was signed into law on November 4, 1939 thus “it eliminated the arms embargo and restored the cash-and-carry provision.”⁵⁰⁴ In sum, the Neutrality Acts severely limited the capacity of the President to assist the Allied forces in the build-up to the Second World War, and this made the actions of Roosevelt in edging towards war even more remarkable.

Despite natural strategic rivalry and the Neutrality Acts passed by the U.S. Congress, collaboration between the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy evolved as a function of the relationships established in the Great War. Great Britain specifically benefited from the creation of an American security zone that sheltered British shipping. Professor David Kohlen notes:

[Roosevelt]...convinced Congressional leaders to support a Pan-American Security Zone in October 1939. The unprecedented boundary extended well into the Atlantic and along the east coasts from Iceland in the North Atlantic to Cape Horn in South America. Roosevelt provided Admiralty leaders with the means for routing merchant shipping under an umbrella of American neutrality. He approved aggressive rules of engagement for U.S. Navy

⁵⁰¹ U.S. State Department, *Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations*, “The Neutrality Acts, 1930s” at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/neutrality-acts> accessed January 19, 2020.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ U.S. State Department, *Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations*, “The Neutrality Acts, 1930s” at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/neutrality-acts> accessed January 19, 2020.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

skippers. Though unable to engage in direct combat with foreign warships, American maritime forces transmitted sighting reports of Axis-flagged vessels over open radio frequencies.⁵⁰⁵

In addition to tacitly facilitating British shipping, Roosevelt authorized by “executive agreement” the Destroyers for Bases Agreement in September 1940 which surged fifty U.S. Destroyers in exchange for long-term leases on British possessions.⁵⁰⁶

Later, “An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States,” better known as the Lend-Lease Act, was enacted in March 1941 in which Allied nations could be provided war materiel in exchange for land leases in a move that effectively marked the end of American neutrality.⁵⁰⁷

Additionally, as one strategic-level example of the continuity of relationships, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill found shared interests in Europe and Asia.⁵⁰⁸ The first American-British-Canadian (ABC-1) agreement of March 1941 established a “Europe First” principle.⁵⁰⁹ The ABC-1 agreement was the result of secret negotiations between January and March 1941 in the event the United States entered the war against Germany. The ABC-1 agreement is a significant example of U.S. Navy-Royal Navy cooperation before U.S. entry into the Second World War because it created geographic responsibilities with greater focus for the United States in Asia as well as “in the Atlantic, the Admiralty and Navy Department

⁵⁰⁵ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King’s College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 105. For detailed operational correspondence, see *Records of the Operating Forces, Atlantic Squadron and Patrol Force (Atlantic Squadron)*, National Archives and Records Administration RG 313, Dispatches Box 23.

⁵⁰⁶ See Philip Goldhart, *50 Ships that Saved the World* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965) 175.

⁵⁰⁷ The Lend-Lease program applied to the United Kingdom, Free France, and then the Soviet Union among others. See William McNeill, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict 1941-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 778.

⁵⁰⁸ See Geoffrey C. Ward, “FDR’s Western Front Idyll,” in Robert Cowley, editor, *Experience of War: An Anthology of Articles from MHQ* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992), 352.

⁵⁰⁹ Ronald E. Powaski, *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe 1901-1950* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 96-97.

established the MOMP [Mid-Ocean Meeting Point] to enforce Roosevelt's Pan-American Security Zone...and U.S. Navy forces thus escorted merchant shipping from American coastal waters to the MOMP under the auspices of enforcing the Pan-American Security Zone."⁵¹⁰ After the United States entered the Second World War, Churchill feared Roosevelt would shift his focus to operations against Japan because of Pearl Harbor, and Churchill implored Roosevelt to coordinate "common action" of "all of the production and allocation issues involved."⁵¹¹

As the Second World War approached, the foundation of the special relationship was evidenced in a vast expansion of liaison personnel serving in London with relationships developed during the Panay incident in 1937.⁵¹² Professor Kohnen describes the growth in the intelligence relationship citing the role of the U.S. Naval Attaché Captain Alan Goodrich Kirk noting:

...Kirk organized the U.S. Navy Special Observer program in 1940. Under the overall responsibility of Kirk as the Naval Attaché in London, the Royal Navy sponsored more than 460 U.S. Naval officers serving under the thinly veiled title of 'Assistant Naval Attaché' during the period of American neutrality after 1940. The exchange of Anglo-American military personnel provided vital foundations for collaboration. To facilitate collaboration with the Royal Navy, the U.S. Navy dispatched liaison personnel with specialized qualifications in surface escort operations, aviation, and submarines.⁵¹³

⁵¹⁰ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King's College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 132.

⁵¹¹ *Memorandum from Churchill to Roosevelt, "Personal and Secret from the Former Naval Person to the President, December 10, 1941.* National Archives and Records Administration, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York, Safe Files Box1, Atlantic Charter.

⁵¹² Tracy Barrett Kittredge, "Administrative History, 1940-1946," Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe, Historical Division, United States-British Naval Cooperation, 1940-1945, Appendix 18, 37-39.

⁵¹³ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King's College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 122.

To facilitate greater information exchange, Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations selected Vice Admiral R.L. Ghormley to serve as “Special Naval Observer” (SPENAVO) thus reviving U.S. “naval authority” in London on August 16, 1940.⁵¹⁴ The role of the Special Naval Observer was clearly defined in a letter from Admiral Stark to Admiral Ghormley noting:

...the Special Naval Observer was to be responsible to the Chief of Naval Operations [CNO] rather than to the Ambassador, although complete cooperation with the latter naturally was to be continued. Communications regarding matters that would logically lead to CNO action, i.e. those pertaining to material or operations, were to be sent directly to CNO, Communications pertaining to technical matters [such as intelligence] would continue to be to be sent through the Naval Attaché...

SPENAVO’s functions...were (a) to conduct negotiations with the British Chiefs of Staff regarding military matters involving U.S.-British cooperation within British areas of responsibility, and (b) to expedite construction of surface, air, and submarine bases for U.S. naval forces in Europe.⁵¹⁵

Additionally, SPENAVO was engaged in secretly developing a staff for when the United States entered the war. The official *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe* notes:

Although the Special Naval Observer and his staff were engaged in building up a nucleus naval staff for the Military Mission and a Staff for the Commander in Chief of Naval Forces in Northern European Waters, those organizations would come into being only if the United States entered the war. These were secret titles to be used for planning purposes only. The operating title of the organization that did exist was “Special Naval Observer.” In fact the Navy preferred to have little publicity for its preparations in the United Kingdom.⁵¹⁶

The SPENAVO organization was successful in creating an operational staff that

⁵¹⁴ The Army also sent Major General Delos C. Emmons, Air Corps, USA, and Brigadier General George A. Strong, USA.

⁵¹⁵ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King’s College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 17.

⁵¹⁶ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*, Volume 1, 19. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

moved into its new headquarters at 18-20 Grosvenor Square on July 12, 1941 --- nearly five months before the United States entered the war after Pearl Harbor.⁵¹⁷ The staff was clearly organized to support a transition to an American wartime footing and included a Secretariat, Plans Section, Operations Section, Aviation Section, Shipping Section, Submarine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Section, Operational Intelligence Section, Maintenance and Material Section, and a Marine Corps Liaison Section.⁵¹⁸ Kittredge gives credit to Sims for the organization of the Plans Section noting, “The Plans Section was modeled upon that of Admiral (sic) Sim’s staff in the last war. Officers assigned to it had no administrative duties, but advised SPENAVO on matters of naval or joint strategy.”⁵¹⁹

With an operational staff in place, Admiral Ghormley was appointed as Commander, Naval Forces Europe in March 1942, and Admiral Stark moved from Chief of Naval Operations to assume command of Naval Forces Europe on April 30, 1942.⁵²⁰ Interestingly, the *operational* control of U.S. Navy forces was not clarified until October 1, 1943. The *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe* notes:

When the United States committed naval craft to the forces planned for the Normandy invasion, the Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe became also the Commander of the Twelfth Fleet. The principles adopted for the supreme command of the Allied forces engaging in this operation OVERLORD accorded operational control of all naval forces to an Admiral of the Royal Navy who acted as the deputy of the Supreme Commander. The Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe retained administrative command and was responsible for the logistic support of the American naval units.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*, Volume 1, 19. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe, 68.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid*, 69-70. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

⁵¹⁹ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*, Volume 1, 71. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*, 81-82. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

⁵²¹ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*,

Although the operational functions of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe were different than those of Sims in the Great War, this was simply a result of the different Allied command relationships.

More importantly, Admiral Stark had a critical role in ensuring continuity between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy. Stark served as the American Chief of Naval Operations (August 1939 to March 1942) and Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe (April 1942 to August 1945). Stark served under Sims in the Great War, and Kittredge in the *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe* gives credit to Sims for continuity during the Second World War noting:

During the period 1917-1919, United States naval forces operating in European waters under command of Admiral William S. Sims, USN, laid down a precedent for friendly cooperation between the U.S. and Royal Navies both at headquarters and in the fleet. When war loomed again twenty years later the administrative pattern for coordinating the planning and operating of the two navies lay in the experiences of the previous war. Lessons and practices of that time were much quoted as we dealt with the problems arising in 1939 and the war years following...Commander Harold R. Stark, USN, flag secretary to Admiral Sims in that earlier period, had become Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, in 1939.⁵²²

Clearly, the evolution of the Commander, Naval Forces Europe role was, in part, based upon the foundation created by Sims.

A final example of interwar cooperation is the secret basing support offered by the U.S. Navy before entry into the Second World War. Roosevelt took political risk in authorizing the building of a secret base in Londonderry, Northern Ireland with

Volume 1, vi. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

⁵²² Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Administrative History of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, 1940-1946*, Volume 1, iv. Records of the Naval Operating Forces, Records of Naval Forces Europe.

construction starting in June 1941.⁵²³ Using Lend-Lease funds, the American G.A. Fuller-Merritt Chapman Corporation was contracted in June 1941 to build the base at Londonderry as well as a Catalina flying boat base in Lough Erne that became Royal Air Force Base Castle Archdale.⁵²⁴ The Londonderry base became operational supporting ship maintenance in October 1941, and other bases were developed in 1942 at Cullybacky and Crossgar as well as other sub-depots that played an important role in the Battle of the Atlantic.⁵²⁵ The Castle Archdale/Lough Erne air station opened in February 1942 and played an important role in anti-submarine warfare because it was only 30 miles from the Atlantic and represented “the most westerly flying-boat base in the UK...”⁵²⁶

Secret support to Great Britain also included offensive action against German U-boats under the guise of expanded neutrality patrols between Canada and Iceland.⁵²⁷ The Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King who served Admiral Mayo and Admiral Sims in the First World War, was a central figure in providing secret support to Great Britain. King endorsed plans to conduct a clandestine war against German submarines in the summer of 1941 using up to fifteen U.S. submarines to ambush German submarines.⁵²⁸ Although King’s anti-submarine

⁵²³ G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London, Leicester University Press, 1997), 216-217.

⁵²⁴ “United States Army in World War II: United States Army Forces in Northern Ireland” at <https://history.army.mil/reference/ireland/IRECHR.htm> accessed March 9, 2020. This history notes that in addition to the base at Londonderry and Lough Erne, additional bases were contracted for Rosneath and Ayrshire, Scotland.

⁵²⁵ G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London, Leicester University Press, 1997), 217.

⁵²⁶ Paul Freeman, *Abandoned Forgotten & Little Known Airfields in Europe*, accessed March 9, 2020 at <https://www.forgottenairfields.com/airfield-castle-archdale-1270.html>.

⁵²⁷ Patrick Abbazia, *Mr. Roosevelt’s Navy: The Private War of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, 1939-1942*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 118-123 and 141-142.

⁵²⁸ *F-21 Memoranda regarding Submarine Tracking and Operations*. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 38. See also Records of the Office of the

warfare plans were rejected by Admiral Stark, U.S. Navy ships and aircraft participated in efforts to search for the German Battleship *Bismarck* with King embarked in USS AUGUSTA during the operations. Professor Kohnen describes the level of U.S. Navy involvement:

The Royal Navy sank the *Bismarck* with direct U.S. Navy involvement in every facet of the operation. On 27 May 1941, Ensign Leonard B. Smith flew an American built PBV 'Catalina' when he observed the German battleship *Bismarck*. He transmitted the coordinates to Royal Navy forces in the area. Two other U.S. Navy aviators, Joe Johnson and Carl W. Rinehart, joined Smith in their PBVs, flying British colours. The next day, Lieutenant Commander Joseph H. Wellings observed from the HMS *Rodney* as Royal Navy forces sank the *Bismarck*. Working inside the OIC [Operational Intelligence Centre] in London, U.S. Navy Commander Frank T. Watkins observed how enemy radio signals helped pinpoint the *Bismarck*.⁵²⁹

The interwar liaison programs, secret bases in Northern Ireland, intelligence and technology sharing, clandestine support from the U.S. Navy, and offensive military actions started *before* U.S. entry into the Second World War, and some of these actions paralleled structures (such as the role of SPENAVO) and liaison roles created under Admiral Sims.

RELATIONSHIP CONTINUITY TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Another element of continuity in the creation of the special relationship was the number of key personnel that were specifically trained and influenced by Sims. We have seen the role played by President Roosevelt, Admiral Stark (Chief of Naval Operations) and then Commander United States Naval Forces Europe in the Second

Chief of Naval Operations, World War II files of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy, Box 37 For a broader analysis see Theodore Roscoe, *United States Submarine Operations in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1949), 85-87.

⁵²⁹ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King's College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 139.

World War), and Admiral King (Commander in Chief, United States Fleet (COMINCH) and Chief of Naval Operations in World War II), as noted above, but there was also a continuity to the second World War through Tracy Barrett Kittredge, Dudley Knox.⁵³⁰

As we have seen, a parallel intelligence organization for the U.S. Navy was established in the Intelligence Section of the London Flagship based on the British example of how to fuse strategic intelligence with tactical operations. These intelligence threads were reinvigorated when Dudley Knox and Tracy Barrett Kittredge were recalled to active duty in the late 1930s, and Admiral Ernest J. King relied heavily upon his own personal experience with the London Flagship in reconstituting and enhancing a similar organization known as the “Combat Intelligence Division” in the Second World War.⁵³¹

At a more strategic level, President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary Daniels created a foundation for collaboration in the First World War although their exhaustive efforts to remain neutral severely impacted readiness for the conflict. For the Second World War, Winston Churchill, who previously served as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Franklin Roosevelt, who had been Assistant Secretary of the Navy, both sought naval primacy with Great Britain reinforcing its Home Fleet whilst the United States expanded its Pacific Fleet leading up to the Second World War. Both men were shaped by their experiences in the Great War including a normal distrust of one another’s motivations. Even though Roosevelt disliked Churchill’s overbearing nature, the previously established relationship nonetheless enabled success in the

⁵³⁰ For the intersections with Sims’ wartime thinking, see Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2007).

⁵³¹ David Kohnen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King’s College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 290.

Second World War.⁵³²

Professor David Kohlen of the U.S. Naval War College suggests, “the world wars may be examined as a fifty-year conflict by considering the experiences of key personalities, like Stark and King, which directly influenced their visions of a maritime alliance between the Royal Navy and U.S. Navy.”⁵³³ Clearly, the previous interactions between individuals of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy influenced how future integrative support structures would evolve.

CONCLUSION

Although the relationship between the United States and Great Britain suffered low points due to various political issues, most disagreements were nonetheless resolved favourably through compromise on maritime concerns. More importantly, the parallel structures and relationships that were perpetuated in the years leading up to the Second World War --- fraternal organizations, naval liaisons, intelligence and technology sharing, and covert support from the U.S. Navy --- reflect the foundation of a special relationship (ties of affection, ideological affinities that lead to shared objectives, and compatible working practices and structures that facilitate cooperation) that was cemented in the Second World War. The truth is that diplomatic conflict was very real in the interwar years but so was a continuity of cooperation. The concluding chapter will thus review the research questions, address contributions derived from new insights, and summarize the main thesis.

⁵³² Geoffrey C. Ward, “FDR’s Western Front Idyll,” in Robert Cowley, ed., *Experience of War* (New York, Doubleday, 1992), 352.

⁵³³ David Kohlen, *Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy: Reconsidering Ernest J. King and His Headquarters of the Second World War*, Doctoral Thesis, King’s College London, Department of War Studies, Naval Unit, April 19, 2013, 105.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis has explored a historical case study examining the contributions of Admiral William S. Sims in developing the naval coalition between the United States Navy and the Royal Navy as well as examining how these efforts benefited relations in the Second World War. In the Great War, Sims was able to capitalize upon his pre-existing relationships with Royal Navy leaders to quickly gain trust enabling the integration of U.S. Navy forces into the Royal Navy command structure at Queenstown and through deployment of different types of U.S. naval ships into geographic locations throughout Europe. We have also seen how the critical role of Sims' personal relationships created before and during the war helped to bridge the relationship of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy into the Second World War. We also reviewed the extensive organizational structures that facilitated the coalition and the relatively rapid growth of U.S. naval forces in support of the anti-submarine campaign in the Western Approaches.

Equally important was Sims' efforts to highlight the lessons of the Great War which he did before the U.S. Senate in 1920. In addition to Sims' revelation of the eleven "grave errors," we examined some key lessons as they apply to modern coalitions. As part of examining the lessons of the Great War, the existing literature was reviewed to determine some of the key characteristics of an effective maritime coalition. Finally, there was a *continuity* in the relationship between the navies and their parent nations in the interwar years in addition to the antagonism that is well-documented in historiography. This is important because it serves to highlight the foundations of the special relationship.

Additionally, we are now able to answer some critical questions that will

contribute new insights in the study of the Great War and coalition construction. First, what were the contributions of Sims according to the historiography, and do modern interpretations offer a more balanced assessment? Second, was Sims an operational commander, or was he running a rapidly expanding naval headquarters overseas? Thirdly, to what extent did Sims successfully manage the rapidly changing technologies that was one of the characteristics of the Great War? Finally, was Sims' tense relationship with the Secretary Daniels and Admiral Benson symptomatic of the new communications technologies, or were there other factors at play? In this concluding chapter, we will review the detailed research questions and make an evaluation of the extent to which our methodology of a historical case study has addressed the questions listed above.

ASSESSING THE GREAT WAR COALITION

In assessing the success of the coalition between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy in the Great War, we have examined both soft power and hard power elements that contributed to an effective naval coalition. Fortunately, the relationship between the United State Navy and Royal Navy in the Great War was marked by three main characteristics. The coalition was marked by ties of affection seen before the war in the relationship between Sims and Jellicoe.⁵³⁴ During the war, Sims and Bayly forged a relationship that enabled the amalgamation of U.S. and Royal Navy forces. There was also exemplary camaraderie that led to a fraternal order seen in the Queenstown Association that perpetuated the relationship that included ties to the President of the

⁵³⁴ John Rushworth Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War* (New York: Chronicon Books, George H. Doran Co., republished 2017), 88, originally published in 1920, and William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt.⁵³⁵ Sims made deliberate efforts to create cultural understanding to bridge an otherwise significant cultural divide, and we saw how Sims used baseball during the Great War to bridge cultural misunderstandings between the two navies and nations.⁵³⁶ A second characteristic was an ideological affinity to a common fight against unrestricted submarine warfare that was egregious enough to overcome American political concerns regarding neutral shipping rights.⁵³⁷

Finally, compatible working practices and structures seen in the London Flagship, intelligence sharing, and the American Naval Planning Section facilitated cooperation that enabled success of the maritime coalition.⁵³⁸ Specifically, the London Flagship created the structures required for operational effectiveness and led to a greater participation in the operational decisions of the war including the formation and routing of convoys and the creation of mine barrages. The Planning Section also contributed to post-war planning efforts that contributed to the success of naval and diplomatic missions. These organizational structures have been a unique focus of this thesis, and, given Sims' direct role in many of these achievements, it is reasonable to conclude that Sims' contributions to creating the foundation for the special relationship were extraordinary.

Of the many lessons that can be drawn from the Great War, one of the more

⁵³⁵ *The Records of the Queenstown Association*, Library of Congress, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Box 1 and 2.

⁵³⁶ Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* (New York, The New Press 2010).

⁵³⁷ Tony Booth, *Admiralty Salvage in Peace and War 1906-2006: 'Groped, Grub, and Tremble'* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Great Britain, Pen and Sword, 2007) and Schmidt, Donald E., *The Folly of War: American Foreign Policy, 1898-2005* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005).

⁵³⁸ *A Brief Summary of the United States Naval Activities in European Waters with Outline of the Admiral Sims Headquarters*. The Intelligence Section of Admiral Sims' Staff, August 3, 1918. Prepared for the Naval Committee of Congress during a tour of inspection abroad, 11-13. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box.

important regarding coalitions is that there is a distinction between professional compatibility and ideological compatibility. For example, the United States and China have participated in naval exercises at a tactical level, however international cooperation remains elusive because of the People's Republic of China's efforts to undermine maritime cooperation.⁵³⁹ Certainly, two nations that have a lasting special relationship will need ideological compatibility. It is also true that one cannot surge trust --- that is, mutual professional respect. However, a good working relationship between navies does not necessarily require complete agreement about long-term political aims. This thesis has argued that the professional relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy was established before the national one was possible. One of the conclusions suggested by the American Naval Planning Section memorandums is that the sources of tension in the interwar years were already present in 1917-18, but this did not impede cooperation in the maritime domain.⁵⁴⁰ It should thus not be surprising that cordial cooperation revived rather quickly in the late 1930s; the basis of professional trust had not been damaged by disagreements about other matters.

SIMS' CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE LITERATURE

Unfortunately, modern historiography downplays Sims' contributions to the Great War. Professor William T. Johnsen suggested Sims was merely relaying the British Navy position on key issues although the source of Johnsen's assessment was David

⁵³⁹ Christopher P. Cavas, "Navies Begin Gathering for RIMPAC," *Defense News*, June 15, 2016 at <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2016/06/15/navies-begin-gathering-for-rimpac/> accessed July 28, 2020.

⁵⁴⁰ *Memorandum 67 Building Program*, Record Group 45, National Archives, American Naval Planning Section, November 21, 1918.

F. Trask.⁵⁴¹ Trask in *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* tells us “in evaluating Sims’s naval career it is important neither to underestimate nor to exaggerate its significance.”⁵⁴² Trask attributes Sims’ sterling reputation to the literature written after the war, noting “Sims’s reputation benefited greatly from his book, *The Victory at Sea*, and especially from an excellent biography, written by his son-in-law Elting E. Morison, that glorified the admiral as the exemplar par excellence of the modern American navy and fixed him in the minds of naval historians and others as the leading prophet of the naval future after World War I.”⁵⁴³

Trask believes a modern interpretation of Sims is needed to understand his real role and that Sims was arguably devoid of new concepts in the Great War. Trask notes:

A modern finding must deplore Sims’s intolerance of those who disagreed with him, an unlovely trait that eventually compromised his advocacy of naval reform. It must also identify some significant negative characteristics of his outlook, especially his unwillingness to give significant recognition to the principle of civilian supremacy over the military establishment. Like many other officers of his day, Sims failed to come to terms with the constraints that a democracy necessarily places upon its naval officers. Perhaps, finally, an accounting must recognize that often Sims was more a publicist than an originator of the reforms he pressed so energetically.⁵⁴⁴

Johnsen and Trask suggest that Sims’ contributions were less significant than history indicates is incorrect, and this perhaps simply marks a swing in the historical pendulum away from a notion of perfection towards insignificance. There is no doubt

⁵⁴¹ William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 22.

⁵⁴² David F. Trask, “William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore” in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 296.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid*, 296-297.

⁵⁴⁴ David F. Trask, “William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore” in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 297.

that Sims was imperfect. He was a vocal and perhaps even arrogant advocate for his positions and beliefs, but he superbly executed the tasks of his seniors. Additionally, the achievement of naval reform should not fall to one voice, but instead we should mark the successes of Sims to include armament improvements, gunnery reforms, and his support for enhanced readiness in the U.S. Navy.⁵⁴⁵ Other pushes for reform may have been simply premature but Sims' reputation allowed him to participate in Congressional hearings (for example, hearings on awards, naval leadership, and aviation) that moved the reform efforts forward despite Sims' acerbic tone. Trask also ignores, except for very modest references to the American Naval Planning Section, the contributions made by Sims in creating the war fighting constructs to execute a theatre-wide naval conflict.

Trask, like others including Secretary Daniels and Admiral Benson, argues that Sims was merely a telegraph for the positions of the Admiralty, but this ignores the extreme shortage of personnel assigned to Sims after his arrival in theatre. Trask notes:

During May, June, and July, 1917, Sims engaged in a number of exchanges with the Navy Department concerning various plans and proposals advanced in Washington to which he took strong objection...In all these matters [including the North Sea Mine barrage] Sims took the view of the British Admiralty, a tendency that probably strengthened the conviction of Benson and others that he was hopelessly pro-British and unable to exercise independent judgment.⁵⁴⁶

This is an interesting interpretation although many of the American suggestions were

⁵⁴⁵ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 241. See also David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 284-285.

⁵⁴⁶ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 87.

driven by a desire to be more offensive-minded when in reality the proposals were simply not feasible or appropriate.⁵⁴⁷ As Washington and London sorted through the questions of maritime support, “the most important discussions concerned the feasibility of close-in mining operations near German bases, the possibility of establishing a mine barrage across the North Sea to contain the submarines, the question of arming merchant ships, the likelihood of German submarine operations on the American coast, and the possibility of dispatching the American battleship fleet to European waters.”⁵⁴⁸ To be sure, some merchant ships were armed, German submarine operations off the American coast were limited at best, and part of the U.S. battle fleet was indeed deployed later in 1917. Each of the other issues was addressed during the first several months of U.S. participation in the war to the chagrin of the British and Admiral Sims who saw the logic of the British position on all of these issues with the exception of convoy operations which Sims fully supported. Additionally, Sims’ support of the British position on these operational topics is not necessarily an indication of a lack of independent thinking. Given Sims’ extraordinary ability to distil an understanding from vast quantities of information, his opinions deserve more study than saying that they were merely aligned with the position of the Royal Navy.

GREAT WAR OPERATIONS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The role of Sims in the Great War was significant, and a part of the historiography focuses on a debate over the need for more offensive action. Dissatisfaction with a lack of offensive action and surprise over the stalemate of decisive fleet engagements

⁵⁴⁷ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 361.

⁵⁴⁸ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 87.

led President Wilson and Secretary Daniels to reflect on other options besides the simple recommendation of convoys espoused by Sims. In particular, President Wilson liked the idea of more offensive action to kill the “hornet’s nest.”⁵⁴⁹ On August 11, 1917, Wilson gave a speech onboard USS PENNSYLVANIA before the officers of the Atlantic Fleet in which he said:

We are hunting hornets all over the farm and letting the nest alone. None of us knows how to go to the nest and crush it, and yet I despair of hunting for hornets all over the sea when I know where the nest is and know that the nest is breeding hornets as fast as I can find them...I am willing to sacrifice half the navy Great Britain and we together have to crush that nest, because if we crush it, the war is won.⁵⁵⁰

Additionally, the American decision to pursue a mine barrage in the North Sea on November 2, 1917 against the recommendation of Sims, for example, was reflective of this dissatisfaction with Allied inaction but contributed to Sims’ perception that costly and time-sensitive decisions were being made in Washington against sound judgment if only the leaders could be fully informed.⁵⁵¹ In his *The Victory at Sea*, Sims noted the general disconnect with a lack of more offensive actions:

Plenty of naval men, in the United States and in Europe, were constantly advancing the contention [in favour of a North Sea Mine Barrage], and statesmen in our own country and in Allied countries were similarly fascinated by this programme...The way to destroy a swarm of hornets --- such was the favorite simile --- was to annihilate them in their nests, and not to hunt and attack them, one by one, after they had escaped into the open...one point which few understood at the time was that the mere building of the barrage would not in itself prevent the escape of submarines from the North Sea.

⁵⁴⁹ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 361.

⁵⁵⁰ “President Woodrow Wilson to the Officers of the Atlantic Fleet, 8/11/1917,” Naval History and Heritage Command, at <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/publications/documentary-histories/wwi/august-1917/president-woodrow-wi.html> accessed May 15, 2020.

⁵⁵¹ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 294. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

Besides building such a barrage, it would be necessary to protect it with surface vessels. Otherwise German mine-sweepers could visit the scene, and sweep up enough of the obstruction to make a hole through which their submarines could pass. It is evident that, in a barrage extending 250 miles, it would not be difficult to find some place in which to conduct such sweeping operations; it is also clear that it would take a considerable number of patrolling vessels to watch such an extensive barrier and to interfere with such operations.⁵⁵²

In the end, several mine barrages were constructed although the overall effectiveness of the barrages relative to the cost is questionable especially during the critical months of 1917. The Royal Navy attitude towards mines is particularly insightful and illuminates the delay in making these systems effective. Sims, in his *Victory at Sea* notes:

The British navy knew little about mines in 1914; British naval men had always rather despised them [mines] as the ‘weapons of the weaker power,’ and it is therefore not surprising that the so-called mine barrage at the Channel crossing was not successful... In 1918, Admiral Sir Roger Keys reconstructed this barrage with a new type of mine and transformed it into a really effective barrier; but in the spring of 1917, the German U-boats had little difficulty slipping through, particularly in the night time.

The examination of mine barrages by the American Naval Planning Section was particularly insightful and show the value of new types of mines available by the end of 1917.⁵⁵³ The initial mine barrage was therefore created in late 1917 when:

⁵⁵² William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 287-289. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

⁵⁵³ Later, a surface mine barrage was developed that “consists of a series of anchored buoys, between which are laid floating mines connected to each other and to the buoys. The buoys are about 175 yards apart; seven mines are laid between each pair of buoys. The distance between mines is about 75 feet, and the distance from each buoy to the nearest mine is about 37 feet. The group of seven mines between each pair of buoys constitutes a separate unit of the barrage. They are connected by a wire jackstay, hove fairly taut, and an electric lead which hangs in a loose bight between the mines. For each unit there is a battery box on one of the buoys, which furnishes current to explode any mine struck.” See *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923*, Publication Number 7, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 257.

...the Admiralty decided to lay a new deep mine barrier from the south coast of England to the coast of France to close off the English Channel to the U-boats. It would force them to take the long and time-consuming north-about route to reach the Atlantic. They selected the 20-mile stretch of water between Folkestone and Cap Gris Nez. Work began in November and continued into December. The mines were laid at depths of between 30 and 100 feet below low water. The minefield itself – 20 parallel lines of mines – was to be 6 miles wide. It was vividly illuminated along its length by night patrols using flares and searchlights to force any U-boats that might try to traverse the channel on the surface during the hours of darkness to dive into the mines. Before it was even completed, three U-boats sank in the Dover Barrage.⁵⁵⁴

Other barrages were recommended and created in the Mediterranean though the effectiveness was questionable --- specifically in the Strait of Otranto between the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic Sea --- as a failed attempt to contain submarines within particular confines.⁵⁵⁵

In addition to mine barrages, the issue of convoys was critical to the outcome of the war. As we have seen, convoy operations turned the tide of U-boat success in the critical months of 1917 and enabled Allied merchant tonnage to replenish the vital needs of Great Britain. When examining the historiography, there is a confusing picture as to who pushed to introduce the convoy system and when. Clearly Prime Minister Lloyd George in April 1917 provided the impetus for a hesitant Admiralty to adopt the convoy system though the historiography is confused by partisan allegiance.⁵⁵⁶ Professor Barry Gough, for example, amplifies Arthur J. Marder's assessment in *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, 1917: The Year of Crisis* regarding the Royal Navy's failure to adopt convoys sooner. Gough notes:

⁵⁵⁴ Liam Nolan and John E. Nolan, *Secret Victory: Ireland and the War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2009), 257.

⁵⁵⁵ The failure of the mine barrage in the Strait of Otranto is outlined in *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923*, Publication Number 7, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 51.

⁵⁵⁶ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916-1917, Volume III* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 100.

Even changes at the Admiralty brought no new perspective, and Marder explores its serious shortcomings, particularly exposing its failure to make a serious study of trade protection...Marder worked strenuously to show it was the Admiralty that finally introduced convoy (even if on a trial basis) and not Lloyd George, who on 25 April threatened to visit the Admiralty with a view to changing the policy if Their Lordships did not take action. On the 26th [Admiral Sir Alexander] Duff [head of the Anti-Submarine Division] submitted detailed proposals for a trial ocean convoy from Gibraltar. The next day the Admiralty so approved...In reference to the Admiralty, Marder says that their hearts were not in it. He [Marder] writes (p189): 'They regarded convoy as the last shot in their lockers, were sceptical of its success, and had a lingering preference for a trade protection system based on patrolling.'⁵⁵⁷

Sir Henry John Newbolt's *Naval Operations*, Volume V, offers a different reflection on the impetus for convoy operations. Newbolt writes, "Although Admiral Jellicoe could not fail to be impressed by the misgivings of technical advisors with such high qualifications and experience as Admiral Webb and Admiral Duff, he was still clear and decided on one point: that if the existing system of trade defence needed reinforcing and supplementing, then this could only be done by instituting some kind of convoy system."⁵⁵⁸ Newbolt's history varies slightly from the remaining historiography in that Newbolt credits Jellicoe and not Admiral Duff with keeping an open mind regarding convoy operations as early as January 1917.⁵⁵⁹

After the war, there was a debate as to the catalyst for driving the implementation of the convoy system, and some give the credit to Sims. Elting Morison, for example, directly credits Sims with the push for convoy experimentation noting:

⁵⁵⁷ Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume IV 1917: The Year of Crisis*, Introduction by Barry Gough (Annapolis Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2014), Introduction.

⁵⁵⁸ Henry John Newbolt, *Naval Operations, Volume V*, History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1931), 3.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

Upon his arrival in London, he [Sims] was amazed to learn from Jellicoe that ‘no systematic study had been made of the [convoy] problem.’ After some discussion he convinced the Englishman that it was imperative that such a study be undertaken. This investigation was begun, apparently, by Commander Henderson in conjunction with Sir Norman Leslie of the Ministry of shipping. Sims may have taken part in the study, since he reported to the Navy Department on April 19 that he was ‘now consulting with the director of shipping as to the practicality and advisability of attempting some approach to such a plan [the convoy system].’ In the first week after his arrival he talked with Lloyd George and several Cabinet ministers. In these conversations he left no doubt of his belief that the convoy system should be adopted.⁵⁶⁰

In addition, Sims, in a letter to his wife on April 30, 1917 stated that at a dinner in London, Prime Minister David Lloyd George discussed the experimental convoy system. The letter notes:

When I [Sims] first came here I suggested that merchant ships would have to be convoyed eventually in fleets. There were many opinions about it, but no systematic study had been made of the problem. I urged Admiral Jellicoe at least to order the study made. This has been done, and the result seems very promising. They sent for me today and showed it to me and said they were going to send one convoy as an experiment, but that the Board of the Admiralty had not yet made a decision.⁵⁶¹

Sims goes on to note, “Lloyd George said he and the First Lord (Carson) had been discussing it with the Admiralty today and that he was much in favor of it. And, turning to me, he said: “You are responsible for this.” ”⁵⁶²

Sims himself, however, deflected the question of who deserved credit for influencing the adoption of the convoy system. Sims noted, “Our influence may have been the determining factor. It is at least probable that our influence accelerated the

⁵⁶⁰ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 348.

⁵⁶¹ *Sims letter to his wife Anne, April 30, 1917*, Naval War College Archives, Letters from Admiral Sims to his wife Anne, Sims Collection.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

decision, but there is no single authoritative statement to prove that this is true, much less to prove that but for our insistence the convoy would not have been adopted at all.”⁵⁶³ Lloyd George, however, credited Sims with his forward thinking about convoy operations noting, “Admiral Sims definitely favoured convoys. Writing on April 19 [1917] to his government, he [Sims] reported the British methods in use and their failure and expressed his dissent from the Admiralty view that convoys were impracticable.”⁵⁶⁴

In addition to the words of the Prime Minister, the most significant indication of Sims’ influence in advocating for a convoy system, however, is the recognition of Sims’ role delineated in the Committee of Imperial Defence’s official history, *Naval Operations, Volume 5*, with Henry John Newbolt noting:

...in September 1917 the leading naval authorities were by no means inclined to give the convoy system this pre-eminent position amongst the many other measures of anti-submarine warfare which they were trying. To them, the convoy system was an item on the list, a measure amongst many others; and Admiral Sims must be given the credit of being the first naval expert in high position who had the insight to realise that the remedy for which the Allies were still seeking had actually been found.⁵⁶⁵

This indication within the official history is important in understanding the influential role played by Admiral Sims in the maritime war as well as his level of operational and strategic influence in the Admiralty.

Even before the U.S. entry into the war, however, there were the traditional concerns, in part shared by Admiral Jellicoe, that convoy protection operations were

⁵⁶³ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 352.

⁵⁶⁴ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916-1917, Volume III* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 105.

⁵⁶⁵ Henry John Newbolt, *Naval Operations, Volume V. History of the Great War based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1931), 133.

too defensive. This resulted in spurious efforts to hunt submarines with individual platforms to later include aircraft under the theory that offensive actions would yield better results. The quest for offensive action, a trait that broadly characterized the First World War, also led to President Wilson's involvement in military strategy. In a fascinating example of the role of a Commander-in-Chief, on July 4, 1917 President Wilson cabled Sims noting:

From the beginning of the war I have been greatly surprised at the failure of the British Admiralty to use Great Britain's great naval superiority in an effective way. In the presence of the present submarine emergency they are helpless to the point of panic. Every plan we suggest they reject for some reason of prudence. In my view this is not a time for prudence but for boldness even at the cost of great losses....I would be very much obliged to you if you would report to me, confidentially of course, exactly what the admiralty has been doing and what they have accomplished and add to the report your own comments and suggestions based upon independent study of the whole situation without regards to the judgments already arrived at on that side of the water.⁵⁶⁶

Sims' reply, relayed to the President by Secretary Daniels, showed the extent of British operations and offered his recommendations for success. Sims noted:

...as requested by you, if I had complete control of our Sea Forces, with the success of the Allied cause solely in view, I would immediately take the following steps:

1st. Make immediate preparations to throw into the war area our maximum force. Prepare the Fleet immediate for distant service. As the Fleet, in case it does move, would require a large force of protective light craft, and as such craft would delay the Fleet's movements we should advance to European waters all possible craft of such description, either in service or which can be immediately commandeered and put into service. That is, destroyers, armed tugs, yachts, Light Cruisers, Revenue Cutters, Mine Layers, Mine Sweepers, Trawlers, Gun Boats and similar craft.

2nd. Such a force while waiting for the Fleet to move should be employed to

⁵⁶⁶ *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2017. Originally published in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson 1966-1994*, Princeton University Press. Accessed at <https://rotunda.ipress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS-01-43-02-0101-0002> on April 5, 2020.

the maximum degree in putting down the enemy submarine campaign and in escorting convoys of merchant ships and troops...

3rd. Prepare the maximum number of supply and fuel ships...

4th. Concentrate all naval construction on destroyers and light craft. Postpone construction of heavy craft.

5th. As far as consistent with the above building program of light craft, particularly destroyers, concentrate all other shipbuilding on merchant tonnage...

6th. As the convoy system for merchant shipping at present affords better promise than any other means for ensuring the safety of lines of communications to all military and naval forces on all Fronts, we should lend every support possible to ensure success...

I believe the above advice to be in accordance with the fundamental principles of Military Warfare. The first step is to establish here in London a branch of our War Council upon whose advice you can thoroughly depend...⁵⁶⁷

In his recommendations, Sims proposed some specific prioritisation of shipbuilding as well as the need for more forces in Europe to support the Allied cause. Curiously, when Secretary Daniels provided the document to President Wilson, he misled the President saying, “We are doing all that he [Sims] suggests except his idea of sending the dreadnaughts.”⁵⁶⁸ Wilson curiously did not expect a meaningful reply from Sims and told Daniels, “I was more foxy than you thought in my letter to S---[Sims]. His friends would say later ‘Sims is original. If he had been given his way, he would have started along lines of such vigor as to win success.’ Now he has advised only what the English are doing, &c.”⁵⁶⁹ This is an important remark because it highlights Sims’ professional reputation although President Wilson unfortunately concluded there was

⁵⁶⁷ *Letter from Sims to President Woodrow Wilson, July 7, 1917.* Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 91. Sims’ first recommendation to surge light small craft was presumably to make the light craft available for anti-submarine patrols in parallel to the way Great Britain employed such craft.

⁵⁶⁸ *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2017. Originally published in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson 1966-1994*, Princeton University Press at <https://rotunda.ipress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS-01-43-02-0128> accessed April 5, 2020.

⁵⁶⁹ David E. Cronon, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921*, Diary entry for July 16, 1917. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 178.

little action to be taken and thus gave more thought to the offensive.⁵⁷⁰ The American leadership, though new to the war and uninformed as to the geostrategic challenges posed by the U.S. naval commitment to the European theatre, was compelled to work through the questions of why a direct assault on German naval bases was not feasible and why the Allied navies could not stop the submarines from leaving their harbours in the first place.

Unfortunately, Sims' operational role in the Great War and his contributions are currently underestimated, and the American leadership certainly saw Sims as echoing the Royal Navy positions. When one looks at Sims' grasp of the technology regarding the mine barrages, the impracticality of offensive attacks on German strongholds, and the push for convoy testing in the face of Admiralty opposition, one sees that Sims was ultimately correct in his judgments and deserves higher regard for his contributions. It is clear that Sims was providing sound advice to his leadership, but given his well known bias towards Great Britain he may arguably have had less influence in Washington, D.C.

SIMS AS AN OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

One of the unresolved questions about the role of Admiral Sims is whether he was an operational commander, or was he merely running a rapidly expanding naval headquarters overseas? Up to the Great War, the American Navy and the American public were accustomed to naval heroes, such as Admiral George Dewey, executing nearly all aspects of a conflict. Accordingly, many in navy circles defined operational command as ordering the movement of ships and not the control exercised by a headquarters staff even if operational decisions were being coordinated in that

⁵⁷⁰ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 361.

headquarters.⁵⁷¹

The decision to support an amalgamated command structure with U.S. ships under British authority added another layer of confusion as to the issue of operational command. Admiral Albert P. Niblack recalls the integrated command relationship with the Royal Navy and the focus on convoy operations for the Strait of Gibraltar as follows:

As Rear Admiral in command, I was thus under the U.S. Force Commander in London, Vice Admiral W.S. Sims, but operated with the Allied naval forces under all kinds of signal systems, codes, orders, and agreements, the senior Allied naval officer present being in command of the combined forces for the time being. It was in effect one large ‘hat-pool’ from which were drawn every day the available ships of all nationalities for escorts to convoys, and the senior officer present on the occasion took charge of the escort. The convoy system, was however, practically under the British Admiralty in London, the British Vice Admiral in Malta, and the British Vice Admiral at Gibraltar, who actually issued orders to the convoys originating or formed up in the immediate waters under their control.⁵⁷²

The new means of commanding across a large theatre from ashore in the London Flagship contributed to the confusion of command relationships and Sims’ role as a Commander. Admiral Hugh Rodman, who commanded the U.S. Navy battleships under Admiral Beatty, for example, in his testimony before the Senate after the war suggests:

His [Sims] status in London, as I understand it, was that of a liaison officer, which later was combined with the duties of naval attaché there. His title as “Commanding United States naval forces in European waters” is particularly misleading. He was in reality a subordinate part of Naval Operations, with his office in London; he was its advanced agent; his was the relay office for all

⁵⁷¹ Dr. Andrew Gordon gives a shipboard perspective on this issue in his “Operational command at sea” in John Reeve and David Stevens, eds., *The Face of Naval Battle: The human experience of modern war at sea* (Crows Nest, New South Wales, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 38-52.

⁵⁷² Albert P. Niblack, *Putting Cargo Through: The U.S. Navy at Gibraltar During the First World War 1917-1919* (Gibraltar: Calpe Press, 2018), 29 and 34.

communications between Washington and the forces in the field. He did not personally direct the movements of our fighting ships in the war zone, as the public generally believes. For example, every operation of the battleship force under my command was ordered and directed by Admiral Beatty, of the Grand Fleet, of which my command was a part...I understand that the destroyers based on Queenstown were operated under Admiral Bayly, of the British Navy; that Admiral Wilson directed the movements of ships in and out of the French ports; that the ships of Admiral Strauss's command that laid the North Sea mine barrage were routed and protected by the Grand Fleet, and that the fighting ships in general operating in the war zone had their movements directed by someone other than Admiral Sims.⁵⁷³

Rodman's perspective was that Sims was only one of many commanders providing advice to higher authority and the rightful place for decision-making was in Washington, D.C. Admiral Rodman continues:

...I would naturally infer that when Admiral Sims sent his communications to the Navy Department bearing upon policy or any other subject, that they would have received due consideration the same as from any other officer, and that the most important would have been submitted to the General Board of the Navy for its opinion...And so, it seems to me, that unquestionably his communications would have received proper consideration, and that action would have been taken in accordance with the best advice offered and that which was considered best by operations. There is no doubt that when those officers who were entrusted with the policy of the Navy, had formulated an opinion, it was laid before the Chief of Naval Operations, who was not only influenced but very largely governed by the advice of technical experts, i.e., officers of the Navy Department....The whole responsibility of winning this war was not placed upon the shoulders of Admiral Sims in his London office; the Navy Department could not surrender to him all of its power and responsibilities.⁵⁷⁴

This account by Rodman may reflect the natural confusion of new command entities seen in a new office of the Chief of Naval Operations as well as the London Flagship. Additionally, there was a sense of confusion created by multiple hierarchical layers of

⁵⁷³ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 1, 843.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 844-845.

command that the United States Navy was not accustomed to. For example, the role of the Atlantic Fleet Commander --- who commanded all ships in the Atlantic and was the direct subordinate to Admiral Benson --- was simply ignored. Edward M. Coffman in his *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* notes:

...there was the matter of Sims's place in the navy's command structure. Neither Daniels nor Benson demonstrated in their post-war testimony a clear understanding of staff and command duties or relationship. The hierarchy of command which they created reflected this confusion. In June 1917 they named Sims a force commander. Two weeks later, they notified him that he was subordinate to the commander in chief of the Atlantic Fleet, who was in Yorktown, but that Sims was to continue direct correspondence with the Navy Department and that his orders would come from Washington. The Atlantic Fleet Commander, Admiral Mayo, who was already irritated because Benson had given orders direct to elements of his command without previous consultation, was understandably confused. In effect, Mayo had technical or "paper" command but neither the real authority nor the actual responsibility of the forces in Europe. Sims did not receive a single operational order from Mayo during the course of the war.⁵⁷⁵

Sims clearly served as "the representative of the Navy Department, attended Allied conferences and the Allied Naval Council, and was seen by the Department as the Commander of all forces in European waters, regardless of their geographical location or of the nature of their operations."⁵⁷⁶ Even Admiral Rodman, after reporting to the Grand Fleet, received direction to, "In future send all your reports and communications direct to Admiral Sims; so that I was placed under Admiral Sims'

⁵⁷⁵ Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Experience in World War I* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 105-106. Originally published in 1968 by Oxford University Press.

⁵⁷⁶ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 104-105. Originally published in 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

command by a telegram from the department.”⁵⁷⁷ Despite the confusion expressed by Rodman and others, there was sufficient clarity as to Sims’ leadership whilst commanding the forces in European waters despite testimony to the contrary. Moreover, from Sims’ perspective, the key issue was Washington’s lack of support for the commander in the field particularly at the critical stages between April and August 1917 although multiple information pathways added to the confusion.

At the end of the day, the London Flagship served to simplify a complex organization consisting of multiple Flag Officers that were subordinate to Sims. It clearly marked a new way to direct and command naval forces from ashore that was required because of the much larger scope of conflict and because of war fighting demands driven by multiple theatres of action. To control increasingly large numbers of naval forces across a dispersed theatre required a more centralized headquarters than the traditional Flagship, and wireless communications ability directly enabled theatre-wide control rather than a Fleet controlled by an individual Fleet Commander.⁵⁷⁸ Michael Palmer notes in his *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* that the actual shift in communications ability occurs in the “Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05” which “was the first major naval conflict in which the telegraph figured prominently.”⁵⁷⁹ In examining the advances during the First World War, Palmer notes, “The war that began in August 1914 spurred further advances in wireless communications that revolutionized the technical means of command and control at the tactical level much as land and submarine

⁵⁷⁷ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 1, 853.

⁵⁷⁸ Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 226-232.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 227.

cables and the first primitive wireless sets had done earlier at the strategic and the operational levels.”⁵⁸⁰ Most importantly, running the London Flagship ashore would be well understood in today’s U.S. Navy which has Fleet Commanders and a “functional” four-star assigned ashore for broader coordination and well as the management of political interfaces such as the Chief of Naval Operations.⁵⁸¹

SIMS’ MANAGEMENT OF RAPIDLY CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES

One of the main characteristics of the First World War that was effectively managed by Sims was the infusion of new technologies. Professor Geoffrey Sloan identifies the unprecedented change that marked that era noting:

What occurs at the beginning of the twentieth century, and had become fully established by 1945, was an enormous change in transport and weapons technology. This was facilitated by the development of the torpedo, mine and submarine. In addition, the First World War marks the embryonic stage of an air dimension to fighting a war at sea. In short, warfare at sea became truly three-dimensional in the twentieth century, and it was without historical precedent. Traditionally, relative movement had dominated the strategy of the sea. Consequently, speed of advance and radius of action had been the most important considerations in naval strategy; while these two factors did not become redundant, the changes in technology...attenuated the traditional geopolitical advantages that Britain had enjoyed up to the twentieth century: that of being of Europe, yet not in Europe.⁵⁸²

With his proven technical skills in gunnery and ship design, Sims certainly grasped the complex technological environment in which he operated, and he ensured technological considerations were a part of the work conducted by his American Naval Planning Section. Sims explored the technologies or innovations that were

⁵⁸⁰ Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 232.

⁵⁸¹ Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1 Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 25, 2013) Chapter IV, 12-17.

⁵⁸² G.R. Sloan, *The Geopolitics of Anglo-Irish Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London, Leicester University Press, 1997), 135.

impacting the strategic environment as well as their operational considerations.

Though not detailed in this thesis, for example, Sims' accurately details the evolving role of aviation noting:

At the cessation of hostilities we had a total of more than 500 planes of various descriptions actually in commission, a large number of which were in actual operation over the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the Bay of Biscay, and the Adriatic; our bombing planes were making frequent flights over enemy submarine bases and 2,500 officers and 22,000 enlisted men were making raids, doing patrols, bombing submarines, bombing enemy bases, taking photographs, making reconnaissance over enemy waters, and engaging enemy aircraft. There can be no doubt but that this great force was a factor in persuading the enemy to acknowledge defeat when he did.⁵⁸³

After the war, Sims recognized the vulnerability of surface ships and "it was a problem played out on the game board at the War College [in 1921] that convinced him of the superior strength of the air-borne weapon."⁵⁸⁴ This was a bold position given his background as a former battleship Captain, and, as early as 1922, "he took the position from which he never receded --- that the aircraft carrier was the capital ship of the future."⁵⁸⁵ Sims remained a vocal advocate for reform in the U.S. Navy after his retirement and published his advocacy for aircraft carriers in the *New York Times* in 1923, and, in 1925 he testified before the Congress noting, "no surface vessels can long escape disablement or destruction if they remain within reach of airplanes that are in control of the air...It follows from the above that an airplane carrier...is in reality a capital ship of much greater offensive power than any battleship."⁵⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that Sims was asked to testify nearly three years after

⁵⁸³ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

⁵⁸⁴ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 504.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 506.

⁵⁸⁶ "In Future Wars Aircraft Will Hold the Key to Power," *New York Times*, July 15, 1923. Also cited

his retirement, and his position was once again based on detailed analysis that was ultimately proven correct during the Second World War. In any case, Sims recognized the complexities of submarine warfare, naval aviation, the mine barrage, and the new role of command from the London Flagship ashore. He then effectively managed these innovations in the European theatre.⁵⁸⁷

SIMS' RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

A final research question is whether Sims' tense relationship with Secretary Daniels and Admiral Benson was symptomatic of the new communications technologies, or were there other factors at play? This question is germane because, as we have seen, modern historiography tells us that Sims' tense relationship with others hindered his effectiveness. In truth, however, Sims' ire was often reserved for his seniors. As a leadership study, Sims is credited with an extraordinary ability to inspire others although his contributions were arguably limited by his overbearing personality and air of self-righteousness.⁵⁸⁸ In fairness, Sims was apparently beloved by his subordinates but sometimes overly direct in dealing with his seniors.⁵⁸⁹ Accordingly, it is easy to see why Sims' colleagues would have regarded his Senate testimony in early 1920 as a fundamental breach of trust.⁵⁹⁰

in U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *Hearing Before the Select Committee of Inquiry into Operations of the United States Air Services*, Sixty-Eighth Congress, (United States House of Representatives), Sixty-Eighth Congress, Part 4 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), 2959-3015.

⁵⁸⁷ William S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 245. Originally published in 1920 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

⁵⁸⁸ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 531.

⁵⁸⁹ David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press 1990), 286.

⁵⁹⁰ Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 97-98.

There is no doubt that Sims had a professional but tense relationship with Admiral Benson during the war. They had a professional relationship that was severely strained by Sims' constant criticism in his communications although they both managed to project mutual tolerance during the war. The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations and protégé of Sims, Captain William Veazie Pratt was an effective intermediary between Sims and a heavily overworked Benson. Benson grew resentful of the critical tone of Sims' correspondence to the point where Benson refused to read Sims' cables and letters noting, "I requested him [Pratt] to not let me read any more of them as I was afraid that the constant spirit of criticism and complaint that pervaded them at all times, showing unmistakable inference that most of the good that was being accomplished in this office was due to Pratt and possibly Schofield, would gradually produce a state of mind on my part that was undesirable to say the least."⁵⁹¹ Benson thereafter allowed Pratt to manage the official correspondence from Sims where Pratt advocated for Sims' position but withheld any vitriolic commentary.⁵⁹²

The critical role of Pratt as an intermediary is highlighted by Gerald Wheeler in his biography of Pratt when he notes:

It became the task of Admiral Sims, once he understood the situation in Europe, to restore American confidence in British naval judgment and to devise his own strategy for defeating the German submarines. Important to the latter task was the education of Captain Pratt. Sims was confident that once his friend knew the facts, and accepted his approach, he would be able to bring the Operations Office around to his way of thinking... There was one important factor he did not have to worry about; Pratt was already an Anglophile and willing to do his best to ready the United States Navy for the relief of the watch in the North Sea and the Western Approaches.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 401.

⁵⁹² Gerald E. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy: A Sailor's Life* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 72.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*

It is important to note that other central figures such as Admiral Mayo also had a tense relationship with Benson.⁵⁹⁴

The other leader that Sims directly challenged was Secretary Daniels though the criticisms did not emerge until after the war. The inefficient leadership style of Secretary Daniels led Admiral Sims to openly criticise Secretary Daniels, but such critical communications during the war were limited. The testimony in the Senate Hearings after the war in 1920 identified Daniels' slow decision-making with Captain Harris Laning, who served in charge of the Officer Personnel Division and then as Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and briefly as Acting Chief of the Bureau of Navigation during the Great War, noting :⁵⁹⁵

But as the personal characteristics of executives often have profound effect on the organizations they direct, an understanding of those characteristics is essential to an understanding of the workings of that organization. In this case it was the personal characteristics of the Secretary of the Navy that often made it impossible to get approval of the really important policies. I found this myself, and many others found it... Whenever a plan or policy was presented to the Secretary he almost invariably delayed action on it... Frequently when it was followed up the paper could not be found. If it was found, there would usually be some reason for not approving it or of further delaying action. We always considered it much easier to get up a sound plan or policy than it was to get permission or authority to carry it out. It generally took longer to get approval, when we succeeded in getting it at all, than it did to formulate the plan or policy. This condition finally became so bad that officers used every means possible to put their plans and policies through without obtaining the required authority.⁵⁹⁶

Additionally, the naval officer who directly worked for Daniels as Aide for

⁵⁹⁴ James C. Bradford, "Henry T. Mayo: Last of the Independent Naval Diplomats" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 268.

⁵⁹⁵ Despite the title "Navigation," the Bureau essentially executed manpower and personnel decisions within the Department of the Navy and was renamed the Bureau of Naval Personnel in May 1942.

⁵⁹⁶ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 1, 399.

Operations, Rear Admiral Bradley Allen Fiske, elected to resign his position over what he perceived as Daniels' incompetence. Fiske went so far to rebuke Daniels in writing in the foreword to Tracy Barrett Kittredge's *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels*. Fiske harshly suggested:

...that the principal naval lesson of the war is the menace to the national honor and safety that was involved in committing the management of its navy to unworthy hands. The Secretary of the Navy should be a man of the highest order of ability, knowledge and foresight...Secretary Daniels was so far below this standard that the Navy would have been caught wholly unprepared when we entered the war, and would have been ineffective during the war, if certain navy officers had not sacrificed or endangered their positions, by putting through important measures, without his knowledge.⁵⁹⁷

It is obvious that many naval leaders were disaffected by Daniels' decision-making abilities.

Sims' criticisms of the Secretary of the Navy identified in his letter of January 7, 1920 and in his testimony on new military decorations in January of the same year were likely designed to embarrass Daniels and possibly cause his removal from office. Sims had hoped the public airing of the medals controversy where Daniels made personal selections for the post-war awards would highlight the failures of the Secretary. The Senate majority, however, was of the Republican Party, and they used the hearings to embarrass the Democratic Wilson Administration although the committee voted to allow Daniels to award the medals in accordance with his determination.⁵⁹⁸ Clearly, however, Sims was increasingly disturbed by the leadership

⁵⁹⁷ Foreword by Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske in Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017). Originally published 1921 by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

⁵⁹⁸ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 443.

of Secretary Daniels and had hid his misgivings since the end of the Great War.

It is an interesting, if subjective, question to ask if the new communications modalities available in the First World War affected the relationship between Sims and his leadership in Washington, D.C. The mechanics of communications in Sims' era involved cables that were relatively rapid although coding and decoding was cumbersome and added hours to any communications.⁵⁹⁹ Even so they would be considered real-time or "near-real" time --- that is, like telephone communications there is minimal delay in receiving a message. Letters were also employed as a means of communications and a large volume travelled by a mail pouch on ships from Great Britain to Washington D.C. We have already seen how such communications affected the command of ships as well as intelligence, but the speed of communications also increased the sheer volume of cables and letters in part because responses were received more rapidly. Early in the war, Sims was overwhelmed by the volume of correspondence and augmented his staff with stenographers paid for by an American businessman, unpaid volunteers, the staff of the Attaché's office, and personnel from the ships assigned to Queenstown.⁶⁰⁰

Sims believed that real-time decision-making was critical given the scale of the war and that he should have been given authority to make the decisions in theatre.

Sims noted after the war:

I realized, of course, that a correct policy [of decision-making in theatre] would have placed a heavy responsibility on me, but as it was impossible to decide such questions efficiently and rapidly without opportunity for personal conferences, either this policy should have been adopted or else the person or

⁵⁹⁹ An excellent history of communications advances in this era may be found in Jonathan Reed Winkler, *NEXUS: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁶⁰⁰ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 443-444.

persons in Washington assumed to be competent to decide such matters from a distance should have been transferred permanently to headquarters in Europe where personal contact, all available information, and continuous conferences would have been possible.⁶⁰¹

Sims bemoaned the lack of personal conferences and real-time decision-making with Washington that resulted in personal embarrassment or delayed decisions that were critical to the operations of the war.

Despite the stress of the high volume of communications and the rapidity with which communications were transmitted and received, it is unlikely to be the cause of the tense relationship that Sims had with Benson and Daniels. I suggest there are four factors that contributed to the tense relationships. The first factor would be the complexity of the strategic environment. We have seen the lack of preparedness on the part of the United States Navy as well as the lack of a plan for U.S. execution in the war.⁶⁰² The complexity of the environment coupled with the limitations in coordination due to multi-front theatre requirements no doubt created tension. This was exacerbated by the thinking of that era that commanders at the front should be left to exercise their military judgment. This was not an authority that was granted to Sims despite his increasing responsibilities and naval rank.⁶⁰³ As we saw in the January 7, 1920 letter from Sims to Daniels, this lack of authority created resentment.

A second factor in the tense relationships was a relatively undefined hierarchy of command. The Secretary of the Navy reserved operational decision-making at his level, and the lobbying of coalition partners such as British Vice Admiral Sir

⁶⁰¹ *Admiral Sims Letter to Secretary Daniels, January 7, 1920*, paragraph 66. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Unsorted Anne Hitchcock Sims Box, Letters to Secretary Josephus Daniels.

⁶⁰² Tracy Barrett Kittredge, *Naval Lessons of the Great War: A Review of the Senate Naval Investigation of the Criticism by Admiral Sims of the Policies and Methods of Josephus Daniels* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 130.

⁶⁰³ David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 296.

Montague Browning and French Rear Admiral Maurice Ferdinand Albert de Grasset led to decisions that were made without consulting Sims as the commander in the field.⁶⁰⁴ It is evident that these strategic-level discussions sometimes worked at cross purposes, and the most notable example was Sims requesting more forces whilst Daniels initially agreed to a coastal defence scheme with the British delegation.⁶⁰⁵ Additionally, the uncertainty of the role of Admiral Mayo and the direct reporting of Sims to the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy created confusion that contributed to tensions between the personalities involved.

A third factor that is overlooked in the historiography is that the *office* of the Chief of Naval Operations was, by design, incapable of exerting the cohesive leadership that would create a unity of effort. Sims supported Rear Admiral Bradley Fiske's reform efforts in 1915 that sought to create a powerful position of the Chief of Naval Operations that would place a military leader in operational control of the naval forces as well as create a unity of effort over the disparate bureaus that ran their respective components of the navy.⁶⁰⁶ Daniels, however, was able to effectively control the legislative outcome that created a Chief of Naval Operations without any authority over the operational forces.⁶⁰⁷ Instead, that authority was retained by the Secretary creating possible tensions with Daniels but also with Benson who was unable to lead the U.S. Navy as one might expect. Additionally, and because of the late creation of the office, Benson's command was still attempting to organize for

⁶⁰⁴ James C. Bradford, "Henry T. Mayo: Last of the Independent Naval Diplomats" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 268.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 316.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid, 316-317.

success when the need for critical decisions were upon him.⁶⁰⁸

Finally, much of the blame for tensions must fall upon Sims' personality and his unrelenting push for action and reform.⁶⁰⁹ The reality is that Sims was professionally reserved towards a Secretary that he found to be lacking. He was, however, less reserved in his letters to Benson presumably because he felt he could be brutally blunt with his military leadership and with acolytes like Pratt that would provide the in-person explanation as to Sims' reasoning on complex issues.⁶¹⁰ The speed of communications certainly caused stress for all the leaders of a war being fought on an unprecedented scale, and the explanation of the tense relations with his seniors is, in large part, due to Sims' personality and the overriding conviction that he was always right.

SUMMARY OF NEW INSIGHTS

This thesis has provided a number of new insights. First, new archival material donated to the U.S. Naval War College provided an updated assessment or at least a confirmation of Sims' leadership as Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters with an amalgamated force integrated with Royal Navy assets and commanders. Secondly, the thesis provided a detailed review of the operational structures created by Sims to execute the war from the London Flagship. This included an analysis of the planning integration between the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy as well as the lessons of the Great War based on the multi-volume investigation

⁶⁰⁸ *Naval Investigation Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs* (United States Senate), Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session in two Volumes (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921) Volume 2, 1820.

⁶⁰⁹ David F. Trask, "William Sowden Sims: The Victory Ashore" in James C. Bradford, ed., *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1880-1930* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 297.

⁶¹⁰ Gerald E. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy: A Sailor's Life* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office), 72.

of U.S. naval readiness conducted after the First World War. Finally, and most importantly, there was an assessment of how the wartime naval coalition built by Sims might apply to the creation of modern-day coalitions. Examining the characteristics of a special relationship and the lessons of the Great War as illuminated by Sims, these elements combine to offer a model for effective modern coalitions. The noteworthy goals for modern day coalitions therefore would include an alignment of policies between coalition partners, interoperability based upon effective management of fast-growing technologies, and an integrated understanding of the role of international law in maintaining the international order. Much as we saw in the coalition between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy, a coalition can be enhanced through networking, operational liaisons and personnel exchanges including intelligence sharing, modern command and control networks, constant interaction where practicable, mutual access and trust, and cultural awareness.

Despite these new insights, there are many gaps in knowledge that need further exploration. An updated biography of Sims based upon a more balanced assessment than that offered by Elting Morison or David Trask would be invaluable. A book that publishes Sims' letters to his wife during the war would also be beneficial for its unique and candid view of the issues of the day. Although there has been a modern biography of Admiral William Shepherd Benson, a published work on the intricacies of the London Flagship would be beneficial as would updated biographies of key personnel such as Tracy Barrett Kittredge and Dudley Knox. The inner workings of the various Allied councils would also be invaluable in determining the policies of the United States Navy. Though lightly touched upon in this thesis, an in-depth understanding of Japan's role in the First World War would provide better understanding of alliance between Great Britain and Imperial Japan. Additionally, greater focus on modern coalitions and the expanded use of soft power constructs

would be helpful.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the development of an extraordinary naval coalition in war as well as the elements that bridged the relationship to the Second World War.

Specifically, there are several factors that facilitated building a wartime naval coalition including personal relationships, organizational structures, and soft power elements like cultural bridges and fraternal organizations designed to foster the coalition and a long-term relationship as well. The combined effect was a greater efficiency during the war and the roots of a special relationship that would readily transition into the Second World War and to the present day. In the Great War, the relationship between the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy was a necessary but not sufficient cause of the subsequent special relationship between the two nations.

Instead, the characteristics of a special relationship were pioneered --- that is, the United States and Great Britain were ultimately connected by a cultural similarity and a history of cooperation in the war and in the interwar years that, contrary to historiography, demonstrated a continuity particularly in the maintenance of personal relationships that was the equivalent of a continuing convergence of professional practice. For all the diplomatic rivalry, both nations ultimately compromised to avoid an arms race, and the mantle of maritime leadership was gradually transferred from the Royal Navy to the United States Navy.

To research this thesis, a qualitative research design was developed to analyse the research question and its sub-questions. Specifically, this thesis provided a historical case study of Admiral William Sims and his contributions to establishing an effective maritime coalition as well as examining cooperation in the interwar years. Sims' motives and aims were important, and not just the behaviour of Sims in his role

as an operational Commander in the Great War. It is, of course, the study of this complex human dimension that makes qualitative research so valuable in looking at the lessons of a conflict and the evolution of relationships between individuals and the nations they represent.

Through a focused examination of the many contributions of Admiral Sims before, during, and after the First World War, we saw how his efforts and interwar structures pioneered the foundation of the special relationship that is generally attributed to the Second World War. Additionally, we used a historical case study to document and evaluate the eleven “charges” made by Sims against the Department of the Navy in January 1920 regarding the direction and execution of the war. Examining the charges allowed us to identify key attributes for of coalitions. Additionally, a narrower form of content analysis was ideal to decipher the intent of key actors in what is otherwise a conflicting body of ideas.

To achieve a broadening within historical analysis, and particularly for the application of lessons to the current day, we scanned the entire context that includes the phenomena to be investigated as well as “the projection of future events...and the invention, evaluation, and selection of policy options...”⁶¹¹ Accordingly, this enabled a deeper understanding of the historical structures --- such as the American Naval Planning Section and Intelligence Section of the London Flagship --- put in place by Sims that were simply reinvented in the Second World War.

As demonstrated by Admiral Sims, we can readily see the role that individual relationships, continued liaisons, and interoperability can have in creating effective coalitions. Despite a perception that Sims was not the architect of American naval

⁶¹¹ See Harold D. Lasswell, “The Future of the Comparative Method,” *Comparative Politics*, October 1968 (Volume 1), 3-18.

success in Europe, his contributions in executing the Great War were nonetheless extraordinary. At the end of the day, his many contributions can now be clearly examined, and Sims' efforts now provide an understanding of some of the qualities of coalition warfare. Finally, although the phrase special relationship was not coined until the Second World War, Sims and U.S. naval operations in Europe and the British Isles were responsible for laying a number of foundation stones of this relationship.

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APPENDIX A

KEY DATES IN THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL SIMS

October 15, 1858	Sims born in Port Hope, Canada to Alfred and Adelaide Sims.
September 1872	Sims family moves from Canada to Orbisonia Pennsylvania.
June 1876	William Sims sits for retake of Naval Academy entrance examination.
June 1880	Naval Academy two-year cruise required to commission.
~June 1880	Embark USS TENNESSEE, Flagship of the North Atlantic Squadron.
June 1882	Naval Academy final examinations.
January 10, 1883	Sims reports onboard USS SWATERA (Sloop of War, 1900 tons)
	(multiple deployments to West Indies and Central America, commanded force allowing train safety along isthmus of Panama).
~1886	Transfer to USS YANTIC (where Sims learns French).
January 1889	Personal leave approved by Navy Department, departs for Paris.
~December 1889	Time with family in Pennsylvania.
January 1, 1890	Reports to SARATOGA (training ship owned by Philadelphia to teach navigation for young men aspiring to Merchant Marine. Drafts navigation textbook).
February 1893	Examination for Lieutenant in Washington, D.C. Returns home to Pennsylvania.
June 1893	Reports onboard USS PHILADELPHIA (4324 tons) in New York en route Hawaii (Hawaii sugar revolution against Queen Liliuokalani).
August 1894	PHILADELPHIA ordered to San Francisco after 11 months in Hawaii. After arrival San Francisco, ordered to USS CHARLESTON en route China Station. Sims assigned as Intelligence Officer.
November 10, 1894	CHARLESTON arrives Seoul Korea (400 pages of intelligence reports to include gunnery comparisons).
~June 1896	CHARLESTON departs Nagasaki Japan for San Francisco.
August 1896	Leave in Pennsylvania with Family.
March 1897	Arrived Paris for duty as Naval Attaché.
August 19, 1897	Navy Department letter of recognition of intelligence reporting to Lieutenant Sims endorsed by Secretary Theodore Roosevelt. By the completion of this tour, Sims completes 11,000 pages of reports on ship construction and gunnery practices.
November 1900	Sims joins USS KENTUCKY (11,4500 tons) in Gibraltar en route China Station.
February 2, 1901	Sims submits report on USS KENTUCKY deficiencies based on his comparison to European ships seen whilst serving as Attaché.
March 1901	Sims detached from KENTUCKY ordered to USS MONTEREY at Canton. En route, Sims meets Captain (later Admiral) Sir Percy Scott.

May 19, 1901	Sims submits report on deficiencies of USS KENTUCKY and sister ship USS KEARSARGE.
Summer 1901	Chief Constructor Rear Admiral F.T. Bowles shares with Sims the Secretary of the Navy's desire to resolve questions of turrets and caliber size requirements in pending construction of Battleships.
September 1901	Sims submits comments and recommendations directly to Secretary of the Navy copying Admiral Bowles.
October 1901	Sims transfers to USS BROOKLYN (9215 tons), Asiatic Fleet Flagship. Rear Admiral Remey, Commander in Chief of the Naval Force on the Asiatic Station.
November 7, 1901	Sims submits intelligence report on Russian ship GROMOBOI whilst in Vladivostok.
November 16, 1901	Sims sends letter directly to President Roosevelt regarding need for gunnery reforms.
December 12, 1901	President Roosevelt responds by letter to Sims, and "ordered that all the reports which Sims had written from the China Station should be printed and distributed to every officer in the service." ⁶¹²
February 15, 1902	Sims submits report titled, "The Crushing Superiority of British Naval Marksmanship over Ours, as Shown by Comparison of Recent Record Practice."
February 24, 1902	Sims transferred to USS NEW YORK, Southern Squadron of the Asiatic Fleet Flagship. Sims assumes duty as Fleet Intelligence Officer and China Station Inspector of Target Practice.
March 5, 1902	Sims submits report detailing the lack in "The Fighting Efficiency of the <i>Brooklyn</i> ."
March 11, 1902	Sims submits second letter to President Roosevelt though this letter was unanswered.
September 28, 1902	Sims ordered to report to Chief of the Bureau of Navigation immediately, and without explanation.
October 1902	Sims assumes duty as Inspector of Target Practice in the Bureau of Navigation.
~1902	Sims commences courting of Anne Hitchcock.
June 1903	Sims and Assistant Inspector of Target Practice Ridley McLean issue a booklet titled, "Instructions Governing the Training and the Target Practice Required for the Development of Expert Gun Pointers and Gun Crews."
August 1907	Sims provides input on design of USS IDAHO and MISSISSIPPI in response to request of nine-line Officers by Secretary.
January 1904	Sims meets with President Roosevelt for the first time at the behest of Captain Wainwright. Offered a Cruiser command,

⁶¹² Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern America Navy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Riverside Press Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942) 105.

	Sims refuses based on lack of seniority as a Lieutenant Commander.
October 6, 1904	Sims letter to President Roosevelt in response to President asking for thought on an all big-gun ship. Sims noted “the great majority of our naval officers who interest themselves in such matters have long since been convinced that this is the only logical battery for a fighting vessel.” ⁶¹³
November 21, 1905	Sims marries Anne Hitchcock at St. Johns’ Church attended by the President
July 5, 1906	Sims sends letter to Roosevelt details gunnery improvements
September 24, 1906	Sims’ letter challenges Alfred Thayer Mahan’s analysis of Russo-Japanese War in which Mahan concludes mixed caliber Battleships were appropriate for U.S. navy based on history of that war.
December 1906	Sims visits Great Britain for meetings with Scott and Jellicoe. Secretly tour the newly commissioned DREADNAUGHT.
January 1907	Sims submits DREADNAUGHT report praising all big gun ships.
November 21, 1907	Sims serves as Aide to President Roosevelt
June 29, 1908	Sims writes White House to recommend a Newport Conference of the General Board to President Roosevelt
March 1, 1909	Sims assumes command of Battleship USS MINNESOTA (16,000 tons).
December 3, 1910	Sims delivers famous Guildhall speech in London
January 13, 1911	President Taft issues General Order 100 reprimanding Sims for the Guildhall Speech
1911	Sims assigned as student to U.S. Naval War College completing Summer Conference, year of studies, and year as instructor.
July 1913	Sims assumes command of Atlantic Fleet’s Destroyer Flotilla in Newport.
1915	
July	Vice Admiral Lewis Bayly assumes command of Queenstown Forces as Senior Officer on the Coast of Ireland and Deputy to the Admiral Commanding Coastguard and Reserves for Coastguard Duty in Ireland. Bayly assumed command from Vice Admiral Charles Henry Coke who was relieved after the sinking of <i>Lusitania</i> . ⁶¹⁴
October 25	Sims relinquishes command of the Atlantic Fleet Destroyer Flotilla

⁶¹³ *Sims letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, October 6, 1904.* National Archives, President’s Secretary Files.

⁶¹⁴ *Coke, Charles Henry.* National Archives at Kew, ADM 196/138.

1916

March Sims assumes command USS NEVADA (27,500 tons)
August 29 Sims selected for Rear Admiral but is not promoted until billet becomes available 23 March 1917
November John Rushworth Jellicoe appointed First Sea Lord

1917

February 16 Sims assumes duty as President, U.S. Naval War College
March Sims ordered to Washington for secret discussions
March 28 Sims receives orders to execute his secret instructions
April 3 Sims and Commander Babcock sail on SS NEW YORK
April 9 SS NEW YORK reaches Liverpool after striking a mine. Sims met by Rear Admiral Hope
April 10 Sims meets with Jellicoe
April 14 Sims' first telegram requesting maximum number of destroyers
April 24 Six U.S. destroyers depart Boston en route Queenstown
April 28 Sims ordered to assume command all American ships operating from British bases
May Admiral Bayly, Royal Navy, appointed Commander in Chief Coast of Ireland
May 4 Six U.S. destroyers arrive in Queenstown Ireland followed later in May by 12 more U.S. destroyers plus the Destroyer Tender DIXIE
May 26 Sims promoted to Vice Admiral
June 14 Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels designates Admiral Sims as the Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters
June 18-23 Sims flies his Flag at Queenstown, Ireland commanding the Western Approaches in the Coast of Ireland Station.
July Nine additional U.S. destroyers arrive Queenstown
November Allied Naval Council created (U.S., England, France, Japan and Italy)
December American Battleships arrive in European theater
December 24 Jellicoe dismissed as First Sea Lord by First Lord of the Admiralty

1918

July 4 Army-Navy baseball game, London attended by King George V
December Sims awarded 4 star rank of Admiral
December 31 Sims receives notification of assignment as President, Naval War College

1919

January 15 Sims writes letter to Daniels regarding plans for Naval War College
March Sims departs United States in RMS Mauretania
April 11 Sims arrives Newport and resumes duty as President, U.S. Naval War College and reverts to Rear Admiral
July 1 Naval War College reopens

July Sims writings on *The Victory at Sea* appears serially in *World's Work* magazine

1920

January 7 Sims writes letter to Daniels "Certain Lessons of the Great War"

January 17 Sims testifies before Subcommittee on Naval Affairs, 66th Congress

March 9-May 28 Hearings before Senate based on January 7 letter to Daniels

1921 AND BEYOND

May 31, 1921 Sims granted Honorary Degree from Cambridge

June 7, 1921 Sims speaks at English-speaking Union luncheon and is critical of Sinn Fein

June 24, 1921 Sims reprimanded for June 7 speech by Secretary of the Navy Denby

October 14, 1922 Sims relinquishes command of U.S. Naval War College and retires from naval service as Rear Admiral

June 21, 1930 Sims granted rank of Admiral on the Retired List in accordance with Congressional Act authorizing advancement in rank for those who distinguished themselves in the First World War

September 25, 1936 William Sowden Sims passes at age 77 from heart failure after a summer surgery, survived by his wife and children Margaret, Adelaide, William, Anne, and Ethan.

APPENDIX B

MARITIME TIMELINE TO WAR⁶¹⁵

June 28, 1914	Archduke Ferdinand assassinated in Sarajevo
August 19, 1914	President Wilson’s address to Congress calling for a “true spirit of neutrality.”
October 20, 1914	British SS <i>Glitra</i> sunk by German U-17 in accordance with prize rules
November 4, 1914	Britain declares the North Sea as a war zone
January 22, 1915	British steamship <i>Durward</i> sunk by German U-21 in accordance with prize rules off the coast of Belgium
January 29, 1915	U-21 sinks three British merchants causing British government to tell merchant ships to evade and ram submarines
February 4, 1915	Germany declares war zone in the English Channel and seas near Great Britain and Ireland
February 10, 1915	U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan issues diplomatic not expressing U.S. concern with creation of a war zone because such actions impacted the rights of neutral shipping
February 15, 1915	Germany advises the United States that Germany could not offer neutral rights to shipping because Britain had started arming its merchant ships
March 1, 1915	Allies invoke full blockade of Germany
March 3, 1915	Congress Naval Appropriations Act, 1916, authorizes largest buildup of naval ships in U.S. history
March 28, 1915	German U-28 sinks RMS <i>Falaba</i> off Africa after signaling the merchant to stop and after <i>Falaba</i> elected not to stop. A passenger named Leon Thrasher was first American casualty of the war.
April 28, 1915	U.S. merchant <i>Cushing</i> off of Netherlands attacked by German aircraft causing Germany to offer reparations
May 1, 1915	German submarine torpedoes and damages U.S. merchant <i>Gulfight</i> causing Germany to offer reparations
May 7, 1915	RMS <i>Lusitania</i> sunk killing 1,198 and 128 Americans
May 13, 1915	U.S. demarches Germany for submarine attacks on <i>Falaba</i> , <i>Gulfight</i> , <i>Cushing</i> , and <i>Lusitania</i> and insists on respect of neutral rights
May 24, 1915	German U-24 sinks British <i>Arabic</i> off of Ireland killing forty-four of the 433 passengers including two Americans
September 1, 1915	Germany issues the “Arabic Pledge” directing that no merchants would be sunk “without warning or heed to the lives of noncombatant” if the vessels did not resist. ⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁵ This Appendix is derived from Rodney Carlisle’s *Sovereignty at Sea: U.S. Merchant Ships and American entry into World War I* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida 2009) and James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland; Naval Institute Press 2018).

⁶¹⁶ James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation*

November 9, 1915	U.S. Department of the Navy General Board calls for expanded Navy
December 7, 1915	Wilson's State of the Union refines the Naval Appropriations Act calling for "27 battleships of the first line, 6 battle cruisers, 25 battleships of the second line, 10 armored cruisers, 13 scout cruisers, 5 first-class cruisers, 3 second-class cruisers, 10 third-class cruisers, 108 destroyers, 18 fleet submarines, 157 coastal submarines, and sundry other ships." ⁶¹⁷
March 24, 1916	German U-29 torpedoes French SS <i>Sussex</i> passenger steamer causing bow explosion that killed 80 of 325 passengers including two Americans
April 18, 1916	American demarche to Germany regarding the attack on SS <i>Sussex</i>
May 4, 1916	Germany issues the "Sussex Pledge" vowing to follow international law except in cases of resistance or escape
May 8, 1916	United States reiterates the rights of neutral shipping
January 22, 1917	President Wilson delivers "peace without victory speech marking the first use of peacetime free seas with neutral rights during war" ⁶¹⁸
January 31, 1917	Germany resumes unrestricted submarine warfare
February 3, 1917	United States severs diplomatic relations
February 3, 1917	German U-53 <i>Housatonic</i> scuttled southwest of Britain although U-boat tows lifeboats to vicinity of a British trawler
February 12, 1917	German U-35 sinks American Schooner Lyman M. Law off Italy
February 25, 1917	RMS <i>Laconia</i> passenger liner sunk by U-50 causing 3 American deaths and violating the Sussex pledge
March 1, 1917	Zimmermann telegram released to media
March 12, 1917	President Wilson orders U.S. merchant vessels to be armed
March 12, 1917	U-62 sinks U.S. steamship <i>Algonquin</i> after the crew evacuated. The ship that had been transferred to U.S. flag though the transfer was not allowable per the 1909 Declaration of London.
March 16, 1917	U.S. steamship <i>Vigilancia</i> sunk by U-70 west of Britain ⁶¹⁹
March 17, 1917	U.S. <i>City of Memphis</i> sunk without cargo
March 18, 1917	U.S. <i>Illinois</i> sunk in the British Channel with no cargo
March 20, 1917	White House Cabinet meeting to discuss state of war with Germany
March 21, 1917	U.S. tanker <i>Healdton</i> sunk north of Holland by either torpedo or British mine

(Annapolis, Maryland; Naval Institute Press 2018) 83.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid, 83.

⁶¹⁸ James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland; Naval Institute Press 2018) 85.

⁶¹⁹ Kraska and Pedrozo assert that *Vigilancia* was the incident that was a likely precipitant of war since the ship was "American-owned, American-flagged, and American-operated, and it was flying the American flag." Ibid, page 88. The sinking also led to the loss of 15 American lives when lifeboats swamped.

March 30, 1917	U.S. Secretary of State Lansing compiles list of German offenses
April 1, 1917	U.S. merchant <i>Aztec</i> sunk although armed
April 2, 1917	President Wilson asks Congress for declaration of war

APPENDIX C

THE AMERICAN NAVAL PLANNING SECTION LONDON MEMORANDUMS

- Number 1. The North Sea Mine Barrage, 31 December 1917. This memorandum explored the mission of closing the northern exit of the North Sea to contain the German submarine threat and possible raiders, and hesitantly approved moving the position of the original barrage position (Aberdeen to Eckersund) in deference to the British Admiralty whose Grand Fleet would bear responsibility for patrolling the barrage.
- Number 2. Duties of Planning Section, 2 January 1918. This memorandum documents the order from Admiral Benson to create the American Planning Section and outlines draft topics to be explored by the new Planning Section.
- Number 3. Further Characteristics of Northern Barrage, 5 January 1918. This memorandum provides a technical review of the specific mine characteristics (antenna length and levels of mines) with a recommendation for the U.S. Navy Department to push for deeper mines (to prevent submarines transiting the field safely) and that the barrage be extended from coast to coast of Great Britain and Norway.
- Number 4. Notes on Submarine Hunting by Sound, 4 February 1918. This memorandum consolidates lessons to date for the use of sound listening devices such as “the fish,” K. tube, S.C. tube, and a “trailing wire” describing optimal employment for each to include organizational recommendations and detailed tactics for pursuing and attacking submarines.
- Number 5. Employment of Auxiliary Cruisers, 10 January 1918. This memorandum urges the Admiralty to optimize the employment of merchant vessels as auxiliary cruisers to increase the tonnage of food and munitions transported in support of the war. It provides constructive criticism of British practice by identifying forty-two Royal Navy ships that were not being properly employed in support of urgent transport requirements.
- Number 6. Closing the (sic) Skagerrack, 11 January 1918. At the request of the British Admiralty, this memorandum explored the potential for closing

the Skagerrak to preclude German naval forces exiting the Baltic into the North Sea. The recommendations were highly skeptical of success and led the American Naval Planning Section to conclude that they would set their own planning priorities where possible.

- Number 7. Assignment of Destroyers to the Grand Fleet, 14 January 1918. This memorandum was prepared in response to a request from the American Battleships serving in the Grand Fleet to allow Queenstown destroyers to serve in the Grand Fleet for greater experience. The memorandum concluded that service with the Grand Fleet was of secondary importance to the convoy and anti-submarine mission but recommended a swap of 12 U.S. Navy destroyers from Queenstown in exchange for 12 British destroyers from the Grand Fleet.
- Number 8. Estimate of the General Naval Situation, 21 January 1918. This memorandum provided a highly detailed review of the execution of the war concluding that “our special and immediate mission therefore becomes” --- “To obtain subsurface command of the sea, while still retaining command of the surface of the sea.” From a sea power perspective, the memorandum is noteworthy in that it determines, “the fundamental end in view of sea power is the support of land power. Success on the sea alone (sic) can not force peace terms as favorable as those to be gained by corresponding success ashore.”⁶²⁰
- Number 9. Adriatic Situation, 30 January 1918. This memorandum reviewed how to reduce shipping losses in the Mediterranean while reducing the bases of enemy submarine operating from the Adriatic. To achieve these ends the memorandum recommended seizure of a naval base between the Sabioncello Peninsula and Curzola Island (both in modern-day Croatia).
- Number 10. Cruiser-Submarines, 30 January 1918. This memorandum explored the problem posed by Germany’s cruiser-submarines capable of an enhanced capability of “having a speed of 16 to 18 ½ knots on the

⁶²⁰ Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section, *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923), Publication Number 7, 39-40.

surface, 9 to 10 knots submerged; cruising radius about 20,000 miles. Armament, two 5.9 inch guns, two 4.1 inch guns, or four 4.7 inch guns; eight inboard torpedo tubes.”⁶²¹ Given the superior gunnery capabilities of the new cruiser submarines, the memorandum recommended destroying the vessels near their bases and implementation of convoy systems.

- Number 11. *Morale---Allied and Enemy*, 13 February 1918. This memorandum proposed psychological methods to “strengthen our own morale and weaken that of the enemy” by creating teams of psychologists to study and exploit morale while building a religious revival.⁶²² The memorandum was created in response to the Planning Section’s observation that Allied morale was near impairment.
- Number 12. *Further Development of United States Naval Air Effort in European Waters*, 15 February 1918. This memorandum explored the optimal employment of increasing numbers of aircraft being assigned to the theater and recommended any additional aircraft be employed in attacking enemy submarine basing.
- Number 13. *Employment of K. Tubes*, 23 February 1918. This memorandum documents the proper employment of K-tubes to forestall German attacks on the Dover barrage patrol.
- Number 14. *Denial of English Channel to Enemy Submarines*, 25 February 1918. This memorandum explored how to reduce shipping losses within the English Channel (then reflecting 50 percent of losses outside the Mediterranean) and provided recommendations to the British Admiralty ranging from unifying the current British and French Commands, creating additional mine barrages, better exploiting new technologies of the K-tube hydrophones and kite balloon, and enhancing convoys for those waters.

⁶²¹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923, Publication Number 7*. Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923) 78.

⁶²² *Ibid*, 88.

- Number 15. Peace with Turkey, 4 March 1918. This memorandum reviewed the Allied strategy in light of a peace treaty between Germany/Austria and Ukraine and recommended an Allied peace treaty with Turkey to counteract the Ukrainian peace treaty.
- Number 16. Memorandum on Adriatic Project, 7 March 1918. This memorandum reflected the recommendation of the British and American Planning Sections to pursue an Adriatic mine barrage and anticipated the additional force requirements to be provided by Italy, France, Great Britain, and the United States.
- Number 17. Review of Mining Policy, 12 March 1918. This memorandum explored mining policy one month before U.S. efforts in pursuing the Northern Barrage. It recommended a focus on the Northern Barrage and Dover to the exclusion of other auxiliary mining efforts.
- Number 18. Antisubmarine Policy, 28 March 1918. This memorandum sought the best employment of forces given the critical nature of shipping losses. The recommendations are doctrinal in nature and include more offensive orientation and indoctrination, expanded use of non-military vessels for slow convoys to free destroyers, increased air patrols, and reorganized forces to allow greater hunting of submarines.
- Number 19. Reorganization of United States Naval Forces in European Waters, 26 March 1918. This memorandum sought to reorganize the growing number of forces assigned to the U.S. Naval Forces in European Waters using titles that reflected the task they were assigned to execute whilst forces administered from ashore would carry geographic titles.
- Number 20. Doctrine of Antisubmarine Attack, 3 April 1918. This memorandum asserts that contact with any enemy submarine must be tactically exploited to destroy the submarine. It opined that a more offense-minded approach was needed when escorting other vessels.
- Number 21. Omitted from publication when published in 1923 and was titled "U.S. Naval Building Policy."⁶²³ The American Naval Planning Section

⁶²³ "U.S. Naval Building Policy," *Planning Section Memorandum Number 21*, May 1918. TX File Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D.C.

responded to a request from the CNO's office asking as to "when we should begin to change our present building policy (which you know is a drive on the destroyer, chaser, submarine, and merchant ship programme) and return to the big ship program."⁶²⁴

- Number 22. Visit to Dover, 10 April 1918. This memorandum detailed a visit to Dover by the American Naval Planning Section where they had the opportunity to review the barrage employment and characteristics as well as visit the air station.
- Number 23. Military Uniforms, 23 April 1918. This memorandum responded to Admiral Sims' questions about the role of uniforms and the thinking behind shifting to a U.S. Navy uniform that would be similar to that worn by the Royal Navy. Sims was aware of conversations that desired to change the American uniform to be more like that of the Royal navy. By the tone of Sims' questions it appears that Sims opposed any change to the uniform style for the American uniforms.
- Number 24. Tenders, 2 May 1918. This memorandum recommended one destroyer tender be provided in the war zone for every 24 destroyers assigned in theater.
- Number 25. Convoy Orders, 8 May 1918. This memorandum recommended a more streamlined and uniform system of issuing orders for convoys consisting of sailing orders, instructions to ship Masters, and sealed instructions.
- Number 26. Battle-Cruiser Raid, 17 May 1918. This memorandum offered an updated perspective on how to approach a Battle Cruiser raid in the Atlantic and was submitted due to the American Naval Planning Section's belief that the Grand Fleet's proposed action to manage the raid upon entering or leaving port. Finding this inadequate because of the accelerated transits of troop convoys, the American Naval Planning

⁶²⁴ *W.V. Pratt letter to Sims, April 2, 1918*, TD File. Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D.C.

- Section proposed updated scouting tactics and ship hunter tactics that included U.S. Battle Cruisers as well as Battleships.
- Number 27. The Adriatic, 16 May 1918. This memorandum considered proposals to employ U.S. battleships to the Mediterranean but recommended the battleships be sent to the Grand Fleet instead to relieve Royal Navy battleships so as to not add a fourth, and therefore potentially confusing, nationality to the Mediterranean.
- Number 28. United States Relations with Turkey and Bulgaria, 17 May 1918. This memorandum was prepared for Admiral Sims in preparation for an Inter-Allied Naval Council advising him of President Wilson's position against declaring war on the Ottoman Empire or Bulgaria.
- Number 29. Submarine-Chaser Bases, 25 May 1918. This memorandum recommended force disposition assignments for the 108 U.S. submarine-chasers expected to arrive in Europe between 15 June and 15 August 1918 with the recommendation for 36 to be based at Plymouth, 38 at Brest, and 36 at Berehaven or Queenstown.
- Number 30. Visit to Rosyth and Mine Bases (by Captain D.W. Knox), 24 May 1918. This memorandum documented Captain Knox's visit to the Grand Fleet in Scotland where Knox noted the soundness of Admiral Beatty's Battle Orders and a curious lack of concern regarding submarines. In Hawk Craig, experimental hydrophones and mining technologies were examined.
- Number 31. Development of Special Mine, 27 May 1918. This memorandum urgently requested the U.S. Navy Department to develop a mine capable of use at 500 fathoms.
- Number 32. Base at Plymouth, 30 May 1918. This memorandum reflected a site visit to Plymouth in preparation to berthing 36 submarine-chasers and made recommendations for providing barracks for the ship's crews.
- Number 33. Land Batteries for Defense of Air Stations, 3 June 1918. This memorandum concurred with a decision by the U.S. Naval Aviation Forces Commander to not place land batteries at naval air stations since the likelihood of a land attack by submarines was remote.
- Number 34. Allocation of Submarine Chasers, 7 June 1918. This memorandum offers suggestions as to the allocation of additional submarine chasers

and recommends stationing in large groups of 36 vessels and to provide focus in the Western Approaches, English Channel, and off France.

- Number 35. Northern Mine Barrage---Area A, 11 June 1918. This memorandum proposed increasing the effectiveness of the Northern mine barrage (in Area A) by adding a layer that was more focused on surface transit in line with the geographic conditions of the area.
- Number 36. Depth-Charge Equipment of Submarine Chasers, 12 June 1918. This memorandum recommended that submarine chasers be fitted with new depth charge racks to enable easier employment in combat operations.
- Number 37. Estimate of General Situation in the Mediterranean, 17 June 1918. This memorandum explored condition in the eastern Mediterranean and particularly the Adriatic and Dardanelles. It confirmed the desirability of a barrage near Sabbioncello, a barrage from Otranto to Corfu, a barrage from Euboea to Cape Karrapitza, and construction of a mine base in Bizerta, Tunisia or Malta.
- Number 38. Use of Grand Fleet Destroyers on the Northern Patrol (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections), 13 June 1918. This memorandum was initiated by the British Planning Section and suggested that the likelihood of a High Seas breakout was remote enough to justify the risk of utilizing some Royal Navy destroyers to perform anti-submarine warfare duties. The American Naval Planning Section concurred though the proposal was tabled for more appropriate timing given the nature of events in France.
- Number 39. Tests of Surface Mine Barrage and of loop Laying by Single Vessel, 27 June 1918. This memorandum documents the testing of a surface mine barrage using a test submarine. The results were satisfactory and led to the conclusion that a surface mine barrage in the Dover Strait was warranted.
- Number 40. German High Seas Fleet Activity, July 1918. This memorandum explored the potential for Germany to more effectively employ her surface craft to support land operation and was analyzed as if the plans were being developed by German naval officers. As an intellectual exercise the memorandum concluded the German Navy could conduct

more small craft operations in the North Sea to distract the Grand Fleet away from anti-submarine operations. The recommended British counter to this action would be a more definitive surface “defensive” posture to counter any German efforts.

- Number 41. Antisubmarine Tactics, 13 July 1918. This memorandum codified anti-submarine tactics with a broad assessment of all methods used to date.
- Number 42. Testing Mines, 30 July 1918. This memorandum urged the testing of mines and their depth capacities in Loch Ness to ensure the viability of the mine barrage efforts.
- Number 42A. Notes on Visit to France (by Captain D. W. Knox and Captain H.E. Yarnell) related to French Ports and Facilities), 5 August 1918. This memorandum documents Captain Knox’s inspection tour of French ports to examine their capacity for troop throughput and improvement. A number of recommendations resulted including better allocation of destroyers, means to improve bombing and seaplane operations at Dunkirk, and the need for naval control of the Shipping Board ships.
- Number 43. British Admiralty Memorandum---“History of Northern Barrage from its Inception to 28th July 1918,” 21 August 1918. This memorandum provided a historical summary to date of the efforts to approve and build a mine barrage for the North Sea.
- Number 44. Enemy Raiders, 6 August 1918. This memorandum proposed communications with the British Admiralty to express concern regarding German Navy raiders escaping to open seas because of the ever-increasing number of troop transports. It urged immediate completion of the barrage.
- Number 45. Organization of a Plans Division for Navy Department, 10 August 1918. This memorandum was drafted in response to a cablegram requesting the American Naval Planning Section in London submit recommendations on how to organize a Plans Division within the Navy Department in Washington, D.C. The implication is that the CNO was pleased with the success of the American Planning Section and desired to have a section of his own in Washington, D.C.

- Number 46. Execution of Navy Department's Plan for Battle-Cruiser Raid, 10 August 1918. This memorandum details a plan to counter a German Battle-Cruiser raid using three Battleship Division geographically deployed to protect convoys and defeat the raids.
- Number 47. Notes on Visit to Grand Fleet and Mine Bases (by Captain H.E. Yarnell), 3 September 1918. This memorandum documents Captain Yarnell's underway period with American Battleships in which Admiral Rodman requested ships with 14 inch guns to replace the current 12 inch guns. A review of the Northern Mine Barrage also led to a better understanding of the weather in the Summer that may allow small boats as chasers to preclude submarine contravention of the barrage.
- Number 48. Military and Naval Raid on the East Coast of England, 22 August 1918. This memorandum considered the possibility of a raid on the east coast of England as a means to draw the Grand Fleet into a position favorable to an attack by the High Seas Fleet. After submission and review by the British Planning Section, it was determined that defensive measures for coastal defence were already in place.
- Number 49. The Submarine Situation in General, AntiSubmarine Measures, and the Utility of American Shipyards (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections), 30 August 1918. This memorandum documents separate memorandums from the British Planning Section and the American Naval Planning Section to support a meeting between the First Sea Lord Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rosslyn Wemyss and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt. The American memorandum notes the value of the convoy system as the only effective anti-submarine measure to date and suggests the barrage efforts may again yield the opportunity to achieve force concentration so far denied by the submarine threat. The British memorandum draws similar conclusions but emphasizes the urgency in completing the barrage system.
- Number 50. Battle Cruiser Raid, September 1918. This memorandum further details the implementation of plans in the event of a Battle Cruiser raid

- by the German Navy and specifically denotes Battleship assignments and plans for specific troop convoys in view of British Admiralty differences in managing the planned troop convoy operations.
- Number 51. Proposals for Dealing with Convoys during A Battle-Cruiser Raid (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections and the Director of Mercantile Movements), 26 September 1918. This memorandum expanded the scope of the plans in response to a battle Cruiser raid to consider actions to be taken by convoys other than troop convoys that were addressed in the original planning decisions.
- Number 51A. Testing of Northern Barrage, 18 September 1918. This memorandum requests the near-surface portion of the North Sea mine barrage be tested to validate the operational capability of the mine fields laid to date.
- Number 52. Appreciation by British Plans Division---Offensive and Defensive Alliance with Bulgaria (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections), 15 September 1918. Appreciating growing hostility towards Germany by Turkey and Bulgaria, this memorandum examined which nation was more desirable in concluding a separate peace. It concluded Bulgaria would be the more strategic ally due to its troop strength within the German ranks.
- Number 53. Mine Base in Mediterranean, 23 September 1918. In view of proposals to build two mine barrages in the Otranto Straits and in the Aegean, this memorandum explored basing options from which to coordinate the building and execution of the barrages with Bizerta, Tunisia being the favoured base.
- Number 54. Increasing the Probability of Torpedo Hits, 23 September 1918. This memorandum reviewed the technical specifications of torpedoes at the request of the Bureau of Ordnance and recommended a magnetic firing capability when within 70 feet of a target, improved depth capacity to 100 feet, and develop the ability for the torpedo to drive in circles when near maximum range to enhance torpedo effectiveness.
- Number 55. Kite Balloons in Escorts, 23 September 1918. This memorandum examined the value of using kite balloons by destroyer escorts in order to improve submarine sightings whilst escorting convoys. The

memorandum concluded that kite balloons enabled detection of submarines at greater distances, and Admiral Sims directed further study and experimentation.

- Number 56. British Plans Division Paper on Allies' Trade with Scandinavia (prepared by the Admiralty Plans Division), 26 September 1918. This memorandum reviewed Scandinavian trade in depth and proposes the mining of Norwegian territorial waters to seal off German submarine transit routes.
- Number 57. Hunting Enemy Submarines in the Bay of Biscay Area (a Joint Submission of the American and British Planning Sections), October 1918. This memorandum explored optimizing submarine hunting off the coast of Brest after British submarines were dispatched there because of the number of German submarines in this vicinity. The proposal was for American destroyers to alternate with British submarines to avoid fratricide, but enemy submarine activity decreased, and the proposal was held in reserve.
- Number 58. Naval Use of Long-range Guns, 19 October 1918. On the heels of a gun test in Paris that had a range of 68 miles, this memorandum reviewed the utility of such a gun on naval ships or for use in land bombardment. It concluded that for the current war, there was no use at sea and modest use against two potential targets ashore.
- Number 59. Armistice Terms, 24 October 1918. This memorandum reviewed armistice terms proposed at the Paris Conference concluding that Allied strength could demand the equivalent of an unconditional surrender.
- Number 60. German and Austrian Submarine Campaign, 12 October 1918. This memorandum reviewed the effectiveness of the submarine campaign from a German perspective to illuminate possible Allied responses.
- Number 61. Demobilization Plan, 4 November 1918. This memorandum constituted a demobilization plan for the U.S. naval forces in Europe in support of Admiral Sims' attendance at the Inter-Allied Naval Council as well as Admiral Benson who also attended.
- Number 62. Steps to be Taken to Execute Armistice Terms with Austria-Hungary, 4 November 1918. This memorandum directed the naval conditions to

- be implemented for the armistice with Austria-Hungary as well as Germany.
- Number 63. Proposed Decisions in the Event of a Revolution in Austria-Hungary, 3 November 1918. In view of probable armistice, the Planning Section recommended taking over maritime vessels and fortifications as well as sending a U.S. Flag Officer as a liaison in the event of any activity that disrupted the existing government.
- Number 64. Principle Governing Disposition of German Vessels that are Surrendered, 30 October 1918. This memorandum was submitted to Admiral Benson in Paris advocating the principle that “no vessel surrendered by Germany shall ever be used to increase the naval armament of any power whatever.”
- Number 65. United States Naval Interests in the Armistice Terms, 4 November 1918. This memorandum analyzed the potential impact on post-war implications relative to German and Austrian ships being added to the inventory of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan with the United States being excluded.
- Number 66. Steps to be Taken to Execute Armistice Terms with Germany, 6 November 1918. This memorandum examined proposed naval conditions to be met in the event of an armistice with Germany.
- Number 67. Omitted from publication when published in 1923 because this memorandum explored the possibility of a post-war conflict with Great Britain.
- Number 68. Future Submarine Warfare, undated. This memorandum explored world and national interests for future submarine warfare and recommended the abolition of submarine warfare. Admiral Sims found the argument illogical but forwarded the memorandum to the Navy Department for consideration.
- Number 69. Steps to be Taken by the Navy for Demobilization of the United States Army in Europe, 14 November 1918. This memorandum proposed options for troop transport in support of U.S. Army demobilization in Europe.
- Number 70. Freedom of the Seas, 7 November 1918. This memorandum proposed changes to the body of international law as a function of the lessons of

the Great War. It noted that “absolute freedom of the seas is at present impracticable” and made legal proposals to accommodate elements of blockade policies.

APPENDIX D
LETTER FROM SIMS TO JOSEPHUS DANIELS DATED JANUARY 7, 1920

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
7 January 1920

From: Rear Admiral William S. Sims, U.S. Navy
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Certain Lessons of the Great War.

1. Upon the conclusion of a war in which large naval forces have been engaged, and after a sufficient time has elapsed to permit of a careful estimate of the manner in which the war was conducted, it is of the first importance that the lessons to be derived from this experience be recorded in order that they may serve as a guide in future wars.
2. This is especially true of a naval war of such peculiar character that the experience of former wars was of little assistance in determining the proper policy and developing the unusual tactics that were rendered necessary by the number, geographical position and resources of the countries involved, and by the enemy's method of submarine attack upon merchant shipping in disregard of the tenets of international law and the laws of humanity.
3. In this respect it is particularly important that a just estimate be made of the errors of policy, tactics, strategy, and administration that were committed by our Navy.
4. It is to this end that I submit the following account of what appear to me to be the most serious of these errors, and the circumstances that led up to them, followed by a brief summary of the lessons to be derived therefrom.
5. This is not presented solely from the commander of our relatively small naval forces in Europe, but specifically as the result of the experience necessarily gained in the unusual and very responsible position of the Navy Department's representative in the Naval Council of the Allies, where only all Allied plans and policies could be continuously discussed, and where only all essential information, both current and general, was at all times available.
6. In the latter part of March, 1917, in response to a request from the American Ambassador in London, expressing the desire of the British Government that a naval officer of high rank be sent to secure the closer cooperation which our Navy Department had suggested, I was ordered abroad on barely 48 hours notice.
7. Brief orders were delivered to me verbally in Washington. No formal instructions or statement of the Navy Department's plans or policies were received at that time, though I received the following explicit admonition: "Don't let the British pull the wool over your eyes. It is none of our

business pulling their chestnuts out of the fire. We would as soon fight the British as the Germans”.

8. I assumed that my mission was to confer with the heads of the allied navies to learn the actual situation and to discuss means for naval cooperation in case the United States declared war against the Central Powers. A lieutenant commander accompanied me as Aide. We were directed not to take uniform and to travel under assumed names. I expected to return and supplement my cables by reporting the situation in person. I had no idea that I would be designated to command the naval forces in Europe in case of war.
9. I arrived in Liverpool on April 9th, and in London on April 10th, 1917, and went immediately to the Admiralty, where the naval situation was fully explained by the responsible officials. This explanation showed that the Navy Department did not understand the seriousness of the submarine situation: that its information was very incomplete and inaccurate. This was due to the insufficient scope of its intelligence service, very few naval officers having been sent to Europe for information before we entered the war.
10. A review of the cables sent to the Department in April, 1917, shows that the situation was very serious and that the enemy was rapidly winning the war by the destruction of merchant shipping. Throughout the following year numerous cables and letters of the most urgent possible character were sent with the object of impressing upon the Department the vital necessity of our maximum effort being exerted in the European Waters with the least possible delay, but without producing the desired results.
11. Attention was frequently invited to the fact that shipping was being sunk much faster than it was being built, and that it was a simple arithmetical calculation to determine when the Allies would have to sue for peace if the rate of loss continued.
12. It may be well to state here that the delays in taking action, and the lack of support, involving the efficiency of the United States naval assistance in the war, can be fully understood only through an examination of the communications exchanged between the Department and the naval headquarters abroad.
13. For some reason which has never been explained, the Navy Department, during at least the first six months of the war, failed to put into actual practice a wholehearted policy of cooperation with the Allies -- the policy required for winning the war with the least possible delay.
14. The headquarters in Europe was not infrequently left in ignorance of the Department's policies, plans for operation of United States forces, and its intended action upon my many dispatches. Not until July 10, 1917, did the Navy Department outline a policy as regards naval cooperation with the Allies -- in a cable quoting a letter to the State Department.

15. As usual in such cases, the policy thus set forth was academically sound, but that it was not carried out, or was not understood by the Department, is shown by the fact that for ten months after its receipt I was still urgently recommending an increase of forces – still trying to convince the Department that the war was in the Eastern Atlantic; that the United States naval “Front” was off the European coast and not off the United States coast; that it was there only that the naval enemy was operating: that it was there only that United States shipping, let alone allied shipping, could be protected with the maximum efficiency.
16. A review of the dispatches makes it apparent that the Department did not accept my reports and recommendations with the seriousness that the critical situation demanded. There are many instances that illustrated this. One that may be cited is the case of our battleships that were required as reinforcement of the Grand Fleet.
17. Following a conference with Admiral Jellicoe, then First Sea Lord, or “Chief of Naval Operations,” of the British Admiralty, and Admiral Beatty [on July 19, 1917], the Commander-in Chief of the Grand Fleet, it was strongly recommended, on July 21, 1917, that four of our coal-burning battleships be sent at once. There was great delay before there was even an acknowledgment of this request. This naturally subjected me to much embarrassment. The request, though repeated, was finally refused [until November 28, 1917].
18. In the following November the Chief of Naval Operations arrived in England with the Colonel House Mission. After discussing this question of the necessity of sending our battleships, with the same officials with whom I had discussed it, he cabled at once recommending that they be sent. The result was that it was over four months after the original request (November 28th) that the four ships sailed from the United States.
19. This is but one of a number of examples of a similar kind, and strikingly illustrates the nature of the delays caused by the Department’s insistence upon trying to understand the intricate details of rapidly changing conditions 3,000 miles away. As it was of course a physical impossibility to keep the Department fully and accurately informed, and as the Department insisted upon making decisions, concerning both the disposition and the actual operations of the European forces, the inevitable result was unsound decisions, and in some cases long delays before the Department was induced to accept the original recommendations that were based on exhausting discussions with the heads of the allied navies.
20. Judging from the actions that were finally taken, after extensive cabled and written communications, and consequently long delays, it is apparent that if I could have appeared dialed in Washington to explain fully my recommendations, and the discussions before the conferences upon which they were based, they would undoubtedly have been carried out from two to six months earlier. The point is that if the Department considered that

there was any one in Washington more competent to form just conclusions, he should have been sent to Europe for that purpose; but, failing this, the recommendations of the Navy Department's representative, based upon conferences with the Allied commanders, should have been accepted and immediately acted upon. The action of the Department in this respect was a violation of a fundamental principle of warfare – see Mahan, or any authority – and it was continuous throughout the war. It added greatly to the burden of my work.

21. There was great delay and reluctance in accepting the (sic) disputable fact, which should have been apparent to anyone that the critical sea area was in the Eastern Atlantic in the so-called submarine war zone; that the submarine campaign could be critical and could (sic) effect the ultimate decision of the war only in that area.
22. This attitude in Washington greatly slowed the sending of the necessary assistance, and *necessarily resulted in prolonging the war.* (italics added)
23. It would seem to be self-evident that the Department could not possibly have been kept completely informed in detail, by cable code messages, of the actual situation in the war zone, and, particularly, of the rapidly changing conditions during the critical period of the war in the summer of 1917.
24. As a matter of fact this was a physical impossibility during all of that most critical period. The work of collecting the necessary information, or even the purely mechanical work of transcribing it, would have been away beyond the physical capacity of one man assisted by the one Aide I was allowed during that time. The best that could possibly be done was to keep the Department informed by cable in a general way of the conclusions reached by the various discussions with the Allied commanders at the “front”, and of the decisions based thereon.
25. In cases where the Department declined to approve such decisions, the only recourse was to try to explain by letter, as fully as time and insufficient assistance would permit. The result was, of course, long, embarrassing and dangerous delays.
26. If the Department had promptly accepted the recommendations made, beginning four days after my arrival abroad, and continuing for some months, and had sent at once all the destroyers and other craft which were finally sent in the next four or five months, it follows that the United States naval intervention would have much more efficient.
27. I realize that it is difficult at the present time to believe that any policy involving such delays could have been persisted in, particularly when combined with a failure to comply with my requests for additional staff officers to assist my one Aide; but a review of the dispatches and letters exchanged with the Department during this period (the first four months of the war) will show that the Department during this period insisted upon the impossible, that is, upon full and detailed substantiation of every

- proposition advanced, even many of those concerning the disposition and handling of the naval forces in actual contact with the enemy.
28. For example, in the above-mentioned statement of policy, from the Navy to the State Department, a copy of which was sent to me, it is clearly set forth that readiness completely to cooperate by sending our light forces abroad was dependent upon the condition that the Allies should keep the Department fully informed through me of their plans and intentions.
 29. In other words, while the Department's first statement of policy (which was dated July, 1917, or three months after we entered the war) was what I had recommended since the beginning, it nevertheless withheld putting it into effect, apparently because of a conviction that the Allies were not fully informed of their plans.
 30. The truth of the matter was that nothing was being withheld, and all policies and plans which were in writing, which were actually of an official nature, and which in any way affected United States naval cooperation, had been transmitted to the Department as completely as long distance communication – coded messages – permitted.
 31. Certain suggestions were made by the British Admiralty as to uses of our forces in the campaign. For example, in April, 1917, there was anxiety lest the enemy should attempt a raid in the Channel with a heavy force and get away before he could be intercepted by a force from the Grand Fleet, the nearest base of which was at Rosyth, near Edinburgh. Accordingly, the Admiralty suggested that a Squadron of our battleships be based at Brest or in the Channel. No reply was made to this suggestion. Also, the value of submarines in the campaign was first explained April 19, 1917. None were sent until October, 1917, when five arrived in Ireland, followed by seven more in January and February, 1918.
 32. In spite of the numerous messages sent in April, the only information received up to April 27, 1917, was that six destroyers only would be sent. The situation was then so very critical that I appealed to the American Ambassador in London, who sent a most urgent message to the President, and on May 3, 1917, the first definite information was received of the Department's intention to send more than six destroyers, that ultimately 36 and two repair ships would be sent.
 33. Most earnest requests were made for tugs because of the urgent need for them in the submarine zone. These requests fully explained how many torpedoed ships could have been beached and salvaged if these tugs had been available. Experience had shown that such vessels could be repaired and put in service again in a short time – a very short time compared to that required to build new ships – thus resulting in a great saving of tonnage.
 34. A year after we entered the war but four tugs had been sent, and two of these were specifically allocated to Italy by the Department. Nine more were eventually sent at various times, but none before April 23, 1918.

35. The Department caused serious embarrassment and delays in putting into effect the convoy system which was the most important of all the measures used in defeating the submarine war against allied shipping.
36. The Department was repeatedly assured that the Allies at all times had remarkably accurate information as to the movement of submarines, and that it was practically certain that they could not reach our coast, or even leave European waters, without advance information being supplied. Subsequent events proved this assurance to be correct.
37. No submarines visited our coast until May, 1918, and the Department was in all cases informed when they started across, and often as to their exact destination – where they were to lay mines, etc.
38. My dispatches show that with all possible emphasis I tried to induce the Department to view the campaign as a whole; to consider our naval forces as but one relatively small item of an allied naval team; that our mission was the protection of all allied lines of communication, and not the United States lines of communication alone; that, particularly in the early part of the campaign, the strictly United States lines of communication, as compared to allied lines, were inconsiderable; and that it was quite possible to give our relatively small commerce quite superior protection at the expense of losing the war by denying essential protection to the vastly greater allied commerce upon which the success of our common cause chiefly depended.
39. There was naturally a strong inclination on the part of the various powers, including the United States, to resist this policy in favor of a disposition of forces that would afford superior protection to their respective commercial vessels.
40. War is always a dangerous game. Military operations conducted by several allied powers should never be based upon a policy of “safety first” as regards the interests of any particular ally. This is especially true where success depends upon the maximum possible protection being given to the allied commerce as a whole.
41. As the possession of adequate shipping was an imperative requirement in this war, it follows that the essential policy was to pool all anti-submarine forces and use them to the best possible advantage for the protection of all shipping, regardless of the flag that it happened to be under. As the winning of the war was the paramount object, and as our anti-submarine forces and those of the Allies were always inadequate, and as it was consequently impossible to prevent a certain amount of loss, it is apparent that the game was to reduce the combined loss of allied shipping below a point which would defeat the objective of the enemy and thus insure victory of the common cause as a whole.
42. It was repeatedly explained that if we could actually entice the enemy into shifting his submarines to our coast, it would be greatly to the advantage of the common cause, even granting that our shipping would suffer somewhat

more severely; that the chances of the enemy shifting any of his operations to the United States coast without our having but advance knowledge, while remote, was a fully justifiable risk; and therefore that such considerations should not deter us in any way from throwing every possible bit of naval strength into the fight on the actual “front”, that is, in the “war zone” in European Waters. Moreover, that the risk was slight, as vessels could be sent back, if necessary, before submarines could reach our coast, or could do much damage. In making long passages, submarines necessarily steam at a slow speed – from 5 to 6 knots.

43. Submarines attacked almost exclusively merchant vessels, thus cutting off supplies essential to the armies. This was their correct mission and they wisely avoided conflict with allied naval vessels, while protecting the merchant shipping. This meant anti-submarine craft in such numbers that the submarines could not reach their prey without encountering them. It was for this reason that it was continuously urged that everything be sent, not only destroyers, which are pre-eminently the best anti-submarine craft, but also yachts, gun boats, tugs, etc., -- in fact any craft that could steam across the ocean or be towed across.
44. It is quite true that there were many naval activities outside of the Eastern Atlantic, such as in Caribbean, South Atlantic, Pacific and Asiatic Waters. But, considering the rapidity with which at the time in question we were losing the war in the submarine zone, these forces were of little importance – practically none as regards ultimate success. A great deal of unnecessary effort was expended in these areas. It was repeatedly pointed out that we could afford to lose some anti-submarine craft but could not afford to continue the loss of merchantmen at the rate then being sustained.
45. It was realized of course that if a considerable number of anti-submarine vessels was not kept on our coast, there would be risk of public criticism which in time of war must be based upon inadequate information, because to inform the public would be to inform the enemy. But I strongly advised that this risk be accepted; that we should not be influenced in our war measures by the possibility of such adverse criticism; that the situation made it imperative that every possible means be used to defeat the enemy as speedily as possible, regardless of other considerations, and *thus save many valuable lives*. (italics added)
46. Perhaps the most remarkable situation disclosed by the correspondence with the Department is that during the most critical period – the first four months after we entered the war –I had but one Aide, and that for more than the first year I had a wholly inadequate staff.
47. With all the insistence possible, it was explained in numerous cables and letters, for four weary and anxious months, the absolute necessity of further assistance in order to handle the situation effectively, but only to receive always the same answer, namely, that officers were “not available.”

48. Finally, in July, 1917, my only aide was unable longer to support the continuous strain of the past four months' work, including the very anxious task of planning for and handling the troop convoys then arriving. And it was only after this fact had been cabled that three officers were sent out, though the Department still declined to provide the adequate staff that had been requested, with full explanations of the types of officers required and the necessity for each. I urged the Department to give me at least the staff that the commander of one flotilla of destroyers would have in time of peace. But all in vain.
49. As it gradually became apparent that support in this matter need not be expected, I began slowly building up a staff by detaching officers from some of the ships. This was of course regrettable, as many of the ships were at that time short of officers, but it was necessary on pain of the whole force becoming ineffective through the rapidly growing and essential administrative work getting beyond the capacity of the headquarters' force. Ultimately this force consisted of about 60 regular and 140 reserve officers, and 1,000 enlisted men and clerical force for the administration, supply and operation of widely dispersed forces of about 370 ships of all classes, 5,000 officers and 75,000 men. Its necessity was finally, I believe, tacitly recognized by the Department, but not until near the end of the war, when a few officers were sent for staff duty. *If it had been recognized from the beginning, as well as the necessity of sending all possible anti-submarine forces, there can be no doubt that the end of the war would have been hastened, and hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping and many lives would have been saved.* (italics added)
50. It needs little explanation to understand what I and my single Aide were up against. For the efficient handling of such a difficult and complicated situation I should have had a staff capable of:
- (1) Obtaining complete information of the various phases of the naval campaign which had been in operation for over two years.
 - (2) Keeping up to date with the developments which were rapidly changing, almost from day to day.
 - (3) Efficiently administering, supplying and operating the entire force.
 - (4) Coordinating our work with that of the Allies.
51. The work of such a staff not only involved attempting to survey the disposition of all enemy forces, but also of all allied forces operating in the North Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean. It was also necessary to keep track of the results of the naval campaign in all its details both from the side of the Allies and from that of the enemy, and to solve the problems of supply, repairs, etc., which would affect any United States naval forces that might be sent abroad. The above to say nothing of having to solve problems relating to the entirely new forces introduced into this war, such as aviation – a tremendous problem in itself.

52. It would take many pages to set forth all the activities and information which were to be studied and reports of which, of course, could have been transmitted to the Department if the staff had been adequate.
53. If the Department realized these conditions, it is made clear by the records that it was not influenced by them. The correspondence shows that I was trying to get the Department to understand that I was confronted with an impossible task – that it was actually physically impossible for me and one Aide to carry on efficiently the necessary operations of the forces, let alone comply with the Department's demands for the details of information concerning all of the various plans of the Allies, the details of all the methods and appliances used, etc. All this not to mention the details required concerning new construction, new types of vessels, new methods of gun-fire, etc.
54. In a word, it would hardly be possible to conceive of a more complete misunderstanding by the Department of the actual situation that confronted me on the other side, particularly during the critical period of the war.
55. On a number of occasions I invited the Department's attention to the fact that it was impossible intelligently to direct the operation of our forces from Washington; that if we were to cooperate with the allied navies, which was the only efficient way of participating in the war, it was essential that we keep in close personal touch with the heads of the allied navies in the war area.
56. To this end it was pointed out that our organization abroad should be considered as the Department's advance headquarters in the field, similar to the General Headquarters of the army in the field, that the personnel of the organization at these advance headquarters should be more than adequate rather than inadequate, in order to avoid the great danger of basing the navy's part in the war upon incomplete information.
57. When General Pershing arrived in Europe in May, 1917, he was accompanied by a nucleus staff, consisting of five colonels, six lieutenant colonels, sixteen majors, eighteen captains, and eight lieutenants, or fifty-three commissioned officers in all, besides many writers and orderlies. Ultimately this staff was expanded to about 1,500 commissioned officers.
58. As was repeatedly pointed out, such was the necessity for an adequate organization abroad that the term "not available" should have applied to other activities of vastly less importance; that the headquarters' organization abroad, as well as that in Washington, should be adequate, even if it meant laying up a couple of old ships – especially those of a class which could not possibly be used in war.
59. The policy indicated by the dispatches in question may be summed up by the statement that ships as well as troops in the field, no matter what their individual skill, would be very heavily handicapped if their combined efforts were not coordinated and directed from the most central source of all available information.

60. The Department frequently omitted to keep its naval representative abroad informed of its plans, intentions, and sometimes even the movements of forces in the European area, and there was at times embarrassment caused by lack of general information concerning the navy's activities in other areas, such as the South Atlantic, Pacific, etc. As foreign forces and shipping were also operating in those areas, it was embarrassing not to be able to answer, in conferences with the Allies, all questions concerning our actual naval activities as well as prospective plans, the carrying out of which would necessarily influence allied plans.
61. It requires little imagination to understand the great embarrassment of my position. It was of course impossible even to attempt any explanation of the evident fact that the Allies were not receiving the easily possible naval support in ships, and that I was not receiving adequate assistance in personnel.
62. Apart from the resulting lack of coordination, it was very difficult – I fear sometimes impossible – to avoid the impression conveyed thereby to the heads of the allied navies that I was not being supported or was not in the confidence of the Department.
63. Delays and confusion were caused by the Departments dealing directly from Washing with European naval officials in Europe without using its own representatives there to investigate conditions at the “front”, discuss all details with the allied navies, and thus coordinate effort.
64. For example, on May 8, without previous explanation, the Department announced its intention to establish naval bases at Bordeaux and Brest, although on May 5, it had been informed of the results of a conference with the French naval authorities and their agreement that our forces should remain concentrated at that time in the area of greatest enemy activity.
65. Delays and confusion were also caused by dealing with representatives of foreign countries stationed in America, who made independent and strenuous demands for ships, coal, and other supplies, etc., without reference to the demands or necessities of others. The Department thus ignored its own representative who was manifestly abroad for the paramount purpose of investigating the details of all such requests. And determining, after conferences with the allied navies, their relative merits and, particularly, their relation to the necessities of the anti-submarine campaign.
66. I realized, of course, that a correct policy would have placed a heavy responsibility on me, but as it was impossible to decide such questions efficiently and rapidly without opportunity for personal conferences, either this policy should have been adopted or else the person or persons in Washington assumed to be competent to decide such matters from a distance should have been transferred permanently to headquarters in

Europe where personal contact, all available information, and continuous conferences would have been possible.

67. It is essential clearly to understand the vital importance of continuous conference with those officials of the allied navies and governments who were directly concerned that nothing should be neglected to render decisions sound.
68. In many cases such was the mass of details involved in a decision – not only the details of the actual situation, but those based upon actual experience in similar cases and discussed at former conferences – that it was of course impossible for officers sent abroad to attend special conferences to acquire this information in time to make use of it. The almost inevitable result in such cases would be unsound opinions presented by them at conferences.
69. There was an insistence by the Department upon finding new naval plans – a royal road to victory – such as blocking the enemy in his ports. The objection to radically new plans was that the situation was critical and their preparation would delay striking quickly with all available forces. This insistence assumed that the Department, incompletely informed as it necessarily was, and without previous experience in the war, was more competent to decide upon practicable plans than their own representative in continuous conference with the leaders of the allied navies who had nearly three years experience. This attitude was maintained until after the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet and the Chief of Naval Operation had visited Europe and learned something of the situation.
70. During the first year of the war the Department refused to permit me to enroll in the Naval Reserve capable Americans who had special knowledge and who offered their services. Many of these men possessed special European experience which could not be obtained at home. Some of them felt so impelled to do their part that they actually returned to the United States in order that they might be enrolled there.
71. Throughout the war the Department refused to trust to my discretion in the promotion of reserve officers, both for gallantry in action with the enemy and for conspicuous ability. Many of these officers were performing services the value of which was out of all proportion to the rank they held, and were far junior to the corresponding officers of allied services with whom they necessarily worked.
72. This was not only a grave injustice to these fine men, but the policy deprived me of the great advantage of increasing the morale of my forces by prompt rewards, instead of obliging me to assume the attitude of indifference to their demonstrated merits, thus inevitably decreasing their morale.
73. These officers for the most part did not care for the increase of pay, but it was a serious handicap, as well as an embarrassment, not to have the insignia corresponding to their age, experience, and the services they were

actually performing, and corresponding to those of foreign officers with whom they were officially associated.

74. At no time during the war was I permitted to select my subordinate flag commanders, and but very few of my other subordinates.
75. Efficiency in war depends so much upon complete mutual confidence and sympathy between subordinates and their superiors, that it seems hardly necessary to state that I should at least have been consulted as to these important assignments, and of course held responsible for the results attained.
76. In the course of time, in the ninth month after our entry into the war, the lack of support referred to above, particularly in respect of the lack of adequate personnel for necessary staff duties abroad, became known in Washington. This was brought to my attention by the following cable messages:

“From: The Secretary of the Navy. December 22, 1917

To: Vice Admiral Sims, London

“1732. At House Committee Hearing of conduct of navy representative Britten said quote I would like to have copy of complaints which have come from Admiral Sims on the other side unquote If you desire to make statement of action of Department in reference to sending and supplying force under your command since war began please send in code. Daniels.”

“From: The Chief of Naval Operations. December 22, 1917

To: Vice Admiral Sims, London

“Effort being made to credit impression you have been hampered by failure of Navy Department to meet your request for various things particularly personnel. I feel that a strong positive statement on this subject from you is highly desirable. Benson”.

77. I was thus confronted with a situation, not uncommon in warfare, that demanded a decision that no military commander should hesitate to make; that is, such a decision as would be most likely, while avoiding conflict, to advance the common cause through the loyal support of superior authority by making the best of existing conditions, no matter how unsatisfactory. As the subject was one the public discussion of which in congress would have supplied valuable information to the enemy, not to mention increasing his morale and decreasing that of our own fighting forces, it was manifestly desirable that it should be discouraged, and particularly that no information should be supplied that would render the discussion

inevitable. The following cablegram was therefore designed to accomplish this purpose:

“From Vice Admiral Sims 23 December, 1917

To The Secretary of the Navy.

“2366. Your 1732. I strongly deprecate any efforts to create an impression that our naval forces in European Waters have been avoidably hampered by failure of the Navy Department to comply with my recommendations for various things, particularly personnel.

“It is of course well known that the anti-submarine campaign and the protection of allied shipping have been and still are hampered to a considerable extent by insufficient numbers of certain types of vessels, especially destroyers, and by certain classes of personnel, and I have repeatedly made recommendations in accordance with the requirements on this situation. To these recommendations the Department has always responded with the assurance that reinforcements of both vessels and personnel were being sent to the maximum extent consistent with the many other requirements of the Department in these respects.

“The decision as to the relative importance of the employment of our naval vessels and personnel in the theatre of actual war operations in European Waters and at home must necessarily rest with the Department and I consider it the first duty of those at the front loyally to accept such decisions and to make the best of conditions which are at present admittedly unsatisfactory and must so remain until the energetic measures now being taken to increase our anti-submarine forces produce the necessary reinforcements. Sims”

78. The above brief account of the manner in which our naval operations were conducted, clearly shows that the following grave errors were committed in violation of fundamental military principles; and it is manifestly desirable that such violations should be avoided in the future:

(1) Although war with Germany had been imminent for many months prior to its declaration, there was nevertheless no mature plans developed or naval policy adopted in preparation for war insofar as its commander in Europe was informed.

(2) The Navy Department did not announce a policy until three months after the war was declared – at least not to its representative and the commander of its forces in Europe.

(3) The Navy Department did not enter wholeheartedly into the campaign for many months after we declared war, thus putting a great strain on the morale

of the fighting forces in the war area by decreasing their confidence in their leaders.

(4) The outbreak of hostilities found many important naval units widely dispersed, and in need of repairs before they could be sent to the critical area. Destroyers arriving in the war zone had been cruising extensively off our seaboard and in the Caribbean, and, when war was declared, were rushed through a brief and inadequate preparation for distant service.

(5) During the most critical months of the enemy submarine campaign against the allied lines of communication, the Department violated the fundamental strategical principle of concentration of force in the critical area of the conflict.

(6) The Department's representative with the allied admiralties was not supported, during the most critical months of the war, either by adequate personnel or by the adequate forces that could have been supplied.

(7) The Department's commander in the critical area of hostilities was never allowed to select his principal subordinates, and was not even consulted as to their assignment. A fundamental principle of the art of command is here involved.

(8) The Navy Department made, and acted upon, decisions, concerning operations that were being made 3000 miles away, when the conditions were such that full information could not have been in its possession. This violating an essential precept of warfare that sound decisions necessarily depend upon complete information.

(9) Instead of relying on the judgment of those who had actual war experience in this peculiar warfare, the Navy Department, though lacking not only this experience, but also lacking adequate information concerning it, insisted upon a number of plans that could not be carried out.

(10) Many of the Department's actions so strongly implied a conviction that it was the most competent to make decisions concerning operations in the war zone, that the result was an impression that it lacked confidence in the judgment of its representative on the Council of the Allies and its responsible commander in the "field".

It is a fundamental principle that every action on the part of superior authorities should indicate confidence in subordinates. If such confidence is lacking, it should immediately be restored by ruthlessly changing the subordinate.

(11) “To interfere with the commander in the field or afloat is one of the most common temptations to the government—and it is generally disastrous.” The influence of Sea Power upon History. Mahan. The Navy Department did not resist this temptation, and its frequent violation of this principle was the most dangerous error committed during the naval war.

Wm S. Sims

APPENDIX E
LETTER FROM PRESIDENT WILSON TO ADMIRAL SIMS JULY 4, 1917
AND
ADMIRAL SIMS RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT WILSON JULY 7, 1917

FOR ADMIRAL SIMS, CONFIDENTIAL FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the beginning of the war I have been greatly surprised at the failure of the British Admiralty to use Great Britain's great naval superiority in an effective way. In the presence of the present submarine emergency they are helpless to the point of panic. Every plan we suggest they reject for some reason of prudence. In my view this is not a time for prudence but for boldness even at the cost of great losses. In most of your despatches you have quite properly advised us of the sort of aide and cooperation desired from us by the Admiralty. The trouble is that their plans and methods do not seem to us effective. I would be very much obliged to you if you would report to me, confidentially of course, exactly what the admiralty has been doing and what they have accomplished and add to the report your own comments and suggestions based upon independent study of the whole situation without regards to the judgments already arrived at on that side of the water. The Admiralty was very slow to adopt the practice of convoy and is not now, I judge, supplying convoys on an adequate scale within the danger zone, seeming to prefer to keep its small craft with the fleet.

The absence of craft for convoy is even more apparent on the French coast than on the English coast and in the Channel. I do not see how the necessary military supplies and supplies of food and fuel oil are to be delivered at British ports in any other way within the next few months than under adequate convoy. There will presently not be ships or tankers enough and our shipbuilding plans may not begin to yield important results in less than eighteen months. I beg that you will keep these instructions absolutely to yourself and that you will give me such advice as you would give if you were handling an independent navy of your own.⁶²⁵

Woodrow Wilson

ADMIRAL SIMS RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT WILSON JULY 7, 2017

I have sent by the last mail to the Secretary of the Navy an official paper dated July and giving the present British Naval policy, the disposition of the vessels of the fleet, and the manner and method of their employment.

⁶²⁵ The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2017. Originally published in The Papers of Woodrow Wilson 1966-1994, Princeton University Press. Accessed at <https://rotunda.ipress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS-01-43-02-0101-0002> on April 5, 2020.

This will show to what extent the various units of the fleet, particularly destroyers, are being used to oppose the submarines, protect shipping and escort convoys.

It is hoped and believed that the convoy system will be successful. It is being applied as extensively as the number of available escorting cruisers and destroyers will permit. The paper shows also that there remains with the main fleet barely sufficient destroyers and auxiliary forces to meet on equal terms a possible sortie of the German Fleet. The opposition to submarines and the application of the convoy system are rendered possible solely by the British Main Fleet and its continuous readiness for action in case the German Fleet comes out or attempts any operations outside the shelter of its fortifications and their mine fields.

I am also forwarding by next mail copy of a letter dated 27 June from the Minister of Shipping to the Prime Minister, showing the present shipping situation and forecasting the result of a continuation of the present rate of destruction. Briefly this shows that this rate is more than three times as great as the rate of building. A certain minimum amount of tonnage is required to supply the allied countries and their armies. This letter shows that at the present rate of destruction this minimum will be reached about next January. This is not an opinion, it is a matter of arithmetic. It simply means that if this continues the Allies will be forced to an unsatisfactory peace.

The North Sea is mined by British and German mines for more than one hundred miles north and west of Heligoland up to the three mile limits of Denmark and Holland; over thirty thousand mines and additional mines are being laid.

It is through these neutral waters that almost all submarines have been passing.

A sea attack alone upon German ports or any heavily fortified ports could not succeed against the concealed guns of modern defenses.

I have just been informed that preparations are now being made for a combined sea and land attack to force back the German right flank and deny them the use of Zeebrugge as a destroyer base, though not yet definitely decided by the war council; this would have been done long ago but for disagreements between the Allies.

The German Fleet has not left the neighbourhood of Heligoland for about a year.

I am aware of but two plans suggested by our government for preventing the egress of German submarines. These were contained in the Department's despatches of 17 April and 11 May and were answered in my despatches of 18 April and 14 May respectively. These same suggestions and many similar ones have been and continue to be made by people of all classes since the beginning of the war. I have been shown the studies of the proposed plans and consider them impracticable.

It is my opinion that the war will be decided by the success or failure of the submarine campaign.

Unless the Allies' lines of communication can be adequately protected all operations on shore must eventually fail. For this reason, and as further described in my various despatches, the sea war must remain here in the waters surrounding the United Kingdom. The latest information is available here and can be met only by prompt action here.

It is wholly impossible to attempt to direct or to properly co-ordinate operations

through the medium of communications by letter or cable.

Therefore as requested by you, if I had complete control of our Sea Forces, with the success of the Allied cause solely in view, I would immediately take the following steps:

1st. Make immediate preparations to throw into the war area our maximum force. Prepare the Fleet immediate for distant service. As the Fleet, in case it does move, would require a large force of protective light craft, and as such craft would delay the Fleet's movements we should advance to European waters all possible craft of such description, either in service or which can be immediately commandeered and put into service. That is, destroyers, armed tugs, yachts, Light Cruisers, Revenue Cutters, Mine Layers, Mine Sweepers, Trawlers, Gun Boats and similar craft.

2nd. Such a force while waiting for the Fleet to move should be employed to the maximum degree in putting down the enemy submarine campaign and in escorting convoys of merchant ships and troops, and would be in position at all times to fall back on our Main Fleet if it approached these waters.

3rd. Prepare the maximum number of supply and fuel ships and be prepared to support our heavy forces in case they are needed.

4th. Concentrate all naval construction on destroyers and light craft. Postpone construction of heavy craft and depend upon the fact which I believe to be true that regardless of any future developments we can also count upon the support of the British Navy. I have been assured of this by important Government officials.

5th. As far as consistent with the above building program of light craft, particularly destroyers, concentrate all other shipbuilding on merchant tonnage. Divert all possible shipping to supplying the Allies.

6th. As the convoy system for merchant shipping at present affords better promise than any other means for ensuring the safety of lines of communications to all military and naval forces on all Fronts, we should lend every support possible to ensure success. To this end we should co-operate with British authorities in the United States, and here, who are attempting to carry out the convoy system.

I believe the above advice to be in accordance with the fundamental principles of Military Warfare. The first step is to establish here in London a branch of our War Council upon whose advice you can thoroughly depend. Until this is done, it will be impossible to ensure that the part which the United States takes in this war, whether it is won or lost, will be that which the future will prove to have been the maximum possible. It is quite impracticable for me, nearly single handed, to accumulate all the necessary information and it is not only impracticable but unsafe to depend upon decisions which must necessarily be based upon incomplete information since such information cannot be efficiently communicated by letter or cable...

I wish to make it perfectly clear that my reports and despatches have been in all cases an independent opinion based upon specific and official facts and data which I have collected in the various Admiralty and other Government Departments. They

constitute my own conviction and hence comply with your request for an independent opinion.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁶ *Letter from Sims to President Woodrow Wilson, July 7, 1917.* Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 91.

APPENDIX F SOURCES OF RIVALRY AFTER THE GREAT WAR

As the Great War drew to a close in 1918, there was a natural shift in focus to more diplomatic matters such as the implementation of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and how to manage the winds of a diplomatic revolution that was in the offing. Naval issues were a part of the new focus since the two principal navies of the world had emerged from the war with a new, more equal relationship. Two main naval issues were at the forefront. First was the resolution of the issue of the "freedom of the seas" --- essentially the rights of neutral shipping in times of war --- that was a critical element of Wilson's diplomatic agenda reflected in his Fourteen Points.⁶²⁷ The other was an effort to establish shipbuilding limits in order to moderate maritime superiority as well as to avoid a naval arms race.⁶²⁸

These two issues were also reflected in fears of a trade war that briefly led to consideration of a possible conflict between the United States and Great Britain as seen in the American Naval Planning Section's Memorandum 67 and then later in the famous "colour plans" including a War Plan Red that examined the possibility of a war between the two nations.⁶²⁹ The memorandum envisioned a war created by the trade needs of Great Britain, and the war planning reflected in the American War Plan Red reflected the typical defensive and backward-looking posture of American

⁶²⁷ Admiral Wemyss Memorandum to the War Cabinet, "An Inquiry into the Meaning and Effect of the Demand for 'Freedom of the Seas, October 17, 1918" National Archives at Kew, ADM 137/1796, Records of the British Admiralty,

⁶²⁸ Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, Volume II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939* (London: Collins Press, 1976), 21-35.

⁶²⁹ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923: Publication Number 7*. Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923) details the planning memorandums of the Planning Section but Number 67 was omitted from publication due to the fact that it was contemplating a post-war conflict with Great Britain. Memorandum 67 can be found in Record Group 45, National Archives, Memorandum Number 67 *Building Program*, American Naval Planning Section, November 21, 1918, 2-11. For War Plan Red, see Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport, Rhode Island, Naval War College Press, 1980).

thinking as noted by Michael Vlahos:

...the [U.S.] Navy described a defensive operating theater. The “cockpit” lay in the sugar islands of the West Indies, as in the days of Rodney, Hood, and De Grasse. The key to the continent, Halifax, was but a day’s sail from the legendary fortress, Louisbourg. This strategic seascape stunted the development of transoceanic seapower...⁶³⁰

One could suggest that such planning appropriately scanned the horizon for potential threats, but War Plan Red ultimately reflected a continuing amity that was reflected in the unlikely motives for the plan --- that is, fear of a trade war in violation of the Monroe Doctrine and then a shipbuilding rivalry. Vlahos traces this evolution in his “callimorphosis of RED” in which he suggests that the U.S. recognition of growing parity between the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy fleets enabled the transoceanic capabilities of the United States Navy. Vlahos notes:

This was the second stage of the callimorphosis of RED. The first, from 1895-1917, transformed the Royal Navy from an enemy to a useful and instructive rival, a model to strive against in game, not in combat. From 1919 to the mid-1930s, American naval perceptions of RED, the Atlantic rival, endured deeper metamorphosis. Britain accepted the principle of parity with America at Washington. During the 1920s, tactical games and studies developed at Newport diagnosed from the principle of parity, the promise of reality.⁶³¹

Accordingly, in the interwar years, a Joint U.S. Army and Navy Board was tasked to develop war fighting strategies for various “hypothetical” war scenarios.⁶³² In total, some 22 “colour plans” were created including plans for emerging threats such as Germany (Black), Japan (Orange), Russia (Purple); hemispheric interests such

⁶³⁰ Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport, Rhode Island, Naval War College Press, 1980) 102.

⁶³¹ Ibid, 107.

⁶³² Edward. S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 13-14.

as Brazil, (Citron), Cuba (Tan), Canada (Crimson), Mexico (Green); domestic contingencies (White); as well as other plans for more unlikely conflict scenarios.⁶³³ Of all the “colour-coded” war plans, the most famous is War Plan Orange in part because it was the foundation for the war fighting operations against Japan in the Second World War.

Although there was a great amount of diplomatic tension between Great Britain and the United States in the interwar years, the War Plan Red planning efforts proved to be desultory and lacked genuine interest by U.S. Navy planners. Edward S. Miller describes how War Plan Red was essentially an effort by U.S. Army planners to garner Congressional support noting:

The vigor of naval planning provoked an identity crisis in the [U.S.] army. Envious of the sea service’s glamorous role, it pined for a mission of great commitment, one that might attract scarce funds from Congress... Only a few hundred thousand soldiers would be needed in the Pacific; the others were to stand guard against intervention by Great Britain (Red), the one other nation that could harm the United States. A Blue [U.S.]-Red war, the Army warned, could erupt over trade rivalry brought to a head by unavoidable atrocities against neutral ships during a blockade of Japan... Army planners drew up a blueprint for combat between the mightiest sea powers that was in no way a maritime plan. It canceled the Pacific Offensive, ceded control of the Atlantic to the enemy, relegated the navy to coast defense, and barred marines from seizing British outposts. In the centerpiece of War Plan Red the army, engaged to 4,600,000 men, would throttle Canada by land and air.⁶³⁴

Although War Plan Red was an intellectual exercise for Army planners, it was

⁶³³ Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1980) Appendix 1, 168. The other colours were Red (Great Britain), Scarlet (Australia), Garnet (New Zealand), Ruby (Indian Empire), Gold (France), Italy (Silver) Olive (Spain), Lemon (Portugal), Brown (Netherlands East Indies), Yellow (China), Indigo (Iceland), Emerald (Eire), Gray (Azores), and Violet (China intervention). The United States was always country “blue.”

⁶³⁴ Edward. S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 134. The fact that the War Plan Red took until 1930 to be approved also suggests that the concerns of a conflict with Great Britain identified in 1918 in Planning Memorandum Number 67 were not considered to be significant.

“written “in consultation” rather than jointly because of naval scepticism, [and] were approved in 1930 by the Joint Board (which chose to ignore the navy’s prediction that Canada would foil the strategy by declaring itself neutral).”⁶³⁵ It is nonetheless interesting that war gaming at the U.S. Naval War College included some 80 games out of 313 that included country Red with many of those games being played between 1919 and 1920.⁶³⁶ By the 1930s, and up to the U.S. declaration of war upon Japan in 1941, the shift in gaming towards a conflict with Japan was obvious with 106 of 135 games (almost 79 percent) involving Japan.⁶³⁷

The U.S. Navy’s planning against Great Britain reflected the shipbuilding rivalry rather than a likelihood of conflict over a specific set of grievances or perceived threats. One possible threat was that posed by Great Britain’s alliance with Japan that was dissolved in the early 1920s because of concerns within the Commonwealth and American fears “that a renewed Alliance would allow the Japanese to gain economic domination over the Pacific and close China to American commerce...”⁶³⁸ As a result, there was a peaceful transition of the maritime mantle from the Royal Navy to the United States Navy.

FREEDOM OF THE SEAS: THE STRATEGIC SOURCE OF TENSION

Different definitions of the freedom of seas created tension between the United States and Great Britain up to the U.S. entry in the Great War and after the war as well.

⁶³⁵ Edward. S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 134.

⁶³⁶ Derived from analysis of Appendix III in Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919- 1941* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1980). The number of games in 1919-1920 that include country Red was 34 out of 74 with the majority of the other games against country Orange.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Charles N. Spinks, “The Termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.” *Pacific Historical Review*, Volume 6, Number 4 (1937), 324-326.

The United States also remained frustrated that Great Britain waived the rules in wartime and maintained different understandings of the rights of a belligerent nation.⁶³⁹ Great Britain's perspective was that a belligerent nation had the freedom to impose a blockade and control neutral transits whereas the American perspective was that neutrality guaranteed a "free sea" that included safe and unimpeded transit of the seas even during times of war.

In October 1918, the American Naval Planning Section shifted its focus to post-war planning starting with Memorandum Number 59 examining Armistice Terms. Memorandum Number 70, produced by the Planning Section whilst in Paris to support the Inter-Allied Naval Conference and released November 7, 1918, was titled *Freedom of the Seas* and explored various conceptions of freedom of the seas including American, British, and League of Nations definitions as well as a fourth conception noting "the right of all merchant vessels, belligerent and neutral, freely to navigate the high seas outside territorial waters without molestation by the naval vessels of the belligerents."⁶⁴⁰

It was after the war that the United States attempted to clarify the meaning of free seas for the new international order that was being developed through the League of Nations. Point II of Wilson's Fourteen Points reads:

Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁹ David F. Trask, *Captains & Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 329.

⁶⁴⁰ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923: Publication Number 7*. Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 483.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid*, 481.

Meanwhile, the British definition of freedom of the seas was clarified as follows:

The British idea of the freedom of the seas is free and unfettered access in time of *peace*, to all the seas by all who wish to cross them “upon their lawful occasions”; in time of war this privilege must be fought for by belligerent navies, causing as little inconvenience as possible to neutrals, but maintaining the rights of capture of belligerent merchant ships and of searching neutral merchant ships in order to verify their nationality and prevent their aiding a belligerent.⁶⁴²

The American Naval Planning Section remained critical of the British definition and offered other significant theoretical legal underpinnings noting:

*The British conception of freedom of the seas is not freedom of the seas at all, but freedom of the belligerent to adjust his maritime action to the necessities of the military and naval situations. As sea power is necessarily the basis of all British activities on land, the British contend for the greatest possible freedom of action of belligerents on the high seas. Their contention in this respect is emphasized and enlarged by the fact of their great naval supremacy and the consequent military advantage that will accrue to them from increased freedom of action at sea, even though the rights of neutrals may thereby be infringed upon.*⁶⁴³

As the discussion over Point II continued, President Wilson’s advisor and representative at the Paris Peace Conference, Colonel Edward Mandell House, expanded the definition in consultation with Wilson to create a definition that incorporated the role of a new League of Nations in alignment with Point XIV.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴² Wemyss Memorandum to the War Cabinet, “An Inquiry into the Meaning and Effect of the Demand for ‘Freedom of the Seas.’” National Archives at Kew, Records of the British Admiralty, ADM 137/1796. The American Naval Planning Section memorandum’s definition is remarkably similar citing, “Free and unfettered access in time of peace to all oceans by all who wish to cross them upon their lawful occasions. In war we mean that this privilege must be fought for by all belligerent navies, causing as little inconvenience as possible to neutrals, but the right of searching neutral merchant ships must be maintained, in order to verify their nationality, and to prevent their aiding an enemy.”

⁶⁴³ *The American Naval Planning Section London 1923: Publication Number 7.* Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, Historical Section (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 483.

⁶⁴⁴ For the historical background of the expansion of the definition of Free Seas see James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 91-92.

Wilson's Point XIV reads, "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."⁶⁴⁵ Specifically, Colonel House expanded the context of Point II to modify the definition of free seas. In times of peace, "there would be "implied freedom to come and go" outside the territorial sea, whilst a "war entered into by the League of Nations to enforce "international covenants"... [would require the League] "to cut off all trade with the outlaw nation," or, in a conflict not involving the League, "neutral ships and neutral property were to be protected by the belligerents."⁶⁴⁶ In theory, therefore, the creation of a League of Nations should have made the free seas debate moot.

Although the U.S. Senate failed to ratify the League of Nations, the definition of free seas evolved significantly between the First and Second World Wars.

Professors James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo assert:

The concept of "freedom of the seas" continued to mean freedom of neutral states to use the seas during time of war. The term became synonymous with the British naval effort against the German campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare, and it would be adopted once again by the Americans to vindicate their cause. The idea of "freedom of the seas" was to undergo, over the period of two world wars and the peace agreements that followed them, a shift from a wartime right of neutral states to a peacetime right of all states. President Woodrow Wilson was the first American champion of this change. He began the war with talk of the American right to navigate freely as a justification of neutral rights. By the end of the war he was speaking about freedom of navigation more broadly, to include peacetime access to the oceans for all states.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 91-92.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid, 92.

⁶⁴⁷ James Kraska and Raul Pedrozo, *The Free Sea: The American Fight for Freedom of Navigation* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 78.

To resolve the conflict over the free seas issue, Great Britain diplomatically chose not to adopt President Wilson's Point II, but it also did not openly oppose it.⁶⁴⁸ The United States meanwhile deferred to the idea that the issue would be naturally resolved through creation of the League of Nations. To achieve this diplomatic compromise, the United States also threatened to build a larger navy if Great Britain did not acquiesce to Point II with President Wilson even telling Colonel House that we "cannot consent to take part in the negotiation of a peace which does not include freedom of the seas because we are pledged to fight not only to do away with Prussian militarism but with militarism everywhere."⁶⁴⁹ In this context, Wilson was referring to the British position on neutral shipping rights which was viewed as unlawful in the United States, but, in the end, these threats by the United States proved to be empty because Wilson required British support of the other thirteen points.⁶⁵⁰ This compromise also reflects cooperation at a diplomatic level despite other sources of antagonism.

NAVAL SHIP LIMITATIONS DURING THE WAR

During the Great War, the enormous costs of the war led to efforts by Sir Eric Geddes to ensure Great Britain maintained a larger merchant marine than other nations.⁶⁵¹

The British Merchant Marine carried the great majority of allied materiel needs and, before the war, was more than four times larger than the U.S. Merchant Marine.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ Louis Marc Halewood, *The Maritime Compromise: British and American Naval Co-operation, 1917-1919*. (Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Calgary, Alberta, 2015), 132-33.

⁶⁴⁹ Arthur S. Link et al, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985-88) Volumes 51, *Letter from President Woodrow Wilson to Colonel Edward Mandell House, October 30, 1918*, 513.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*, *November 3, 1918*, 513.

⁶⁵¹ *Letter from Sir Eric Geddes to Prime Minister Lloyd George, August 26, 1918*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 116/1809, Papers of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

⁶⁵² *Memorandum by Sir Eric Geddes for the War Cabinet, August 2, 1918*. National Archives at Kew,

American shipyards were supposed to make up the Allied shipping losses during the Great War but consistently under-performed.⁶⁵³ This lack of performance by the American shipyards created suspicions that the U.S. was deliberately building up its own shipping ability to the detriment of the Allied cause.⁶⁵⁴ These concerns over shipping losses and the inability of American shipyards to replace Allied losses led to a British mission to the United States under Sir Eric Geddes to drive the U.S. to resolve these critical issues.⁶⁵⁵ Shipbuilding rates were obviously limited by yard capacity, and Great Britain naturally wanted the United States to build new shipping to replace British losses in order to allow Great Britain to maintain its traditional lead in merchant shipping tonnage.⁶⁵⁶

Post-war predictions also dominated U.S. plans with a new three-year shipbuilding plan proposed by the Navy General Board in September 1918. Coupled with the existing 1916 shipbuilding plan, this new effort would give the U.S. Navy an advantage in capital ships that was needed in theory to counter any potential enemy coalitions that included Japan.⁶⁵⁷ Nonetheless, wartime exigencies placed most large warship construction in the United States on hold until after the war in order to support anti-submarine construction needs.⁶⁵⁸ Clark G. Reynolds in his *Command of the Sea* notes, “[Wilson] adhered to the recommendations of Admiral William S.

ADM 116/1809, Papers of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

⁶⁵³ *Minutes of the Board of the Admiralty, August 1, 1918*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 167/53 Papers of the Board of the Admiralty.

⁶⁵⁴ *Memorandum by Sir Eric Geddes for the War Cabinet, August 2, 1918*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 116/1809. Papers of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

⁶⁵⁵ *Letter from Sir Eric Geddes to Prime Minister Lloyd George, 26 August 1918*. National Archives at Kew, ADM 116/1809.

⁶⁵⁶ David F. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 294-300.

⁶⁵⁷ *Secretary Josephus Daniels Press Release, January 4, 1919*. Papers of Admiral William Benson, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 10.

⁶⁵⁸ Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 467.

Sims, ranking American naval officer in Europe, and Captain William V. Pratt in the Navy Department to accept the new British emphasis on antisubmarine construction. And since American shipyards could not build both battleships and destroyers, Wilson opted for the latter and postponed capital ship construction for the duration.”⁶⁵⁹ This action was in alignment with recommendations made by Sims but was actually driven by the Balfour Mission, and Pratt, inspired by Sims’ inputs, led a committee recommending concurrence with shifting construction emphasis to destroyers.⁶⁶⁰

The Geddes mission in October 1918 to review and coordinate the shipbuilding plans was partially successful in that it achieved American promises of greater anti-submarine shipbuilding support although these efforts were complicated by President Wilson’s plan to manage peace negotiations, at least at first, without British involvement.⁶⁶¹ Later, Wilson was essentially forced to include Great Britain and France in the negotiations in order to ensure success, but the President’s compromise evolved into the goal of a “new world order” embodied in the League of Nations based upon his Fourteen Points.⁶⁶²

COOPERATION IN ARMS CONTROL AND NAVAL BALANCE

Determining an appropriate naval balance of capital ships was another key issue after the Paris Peace Conference. On the face of it, the first attempt at a broad level of arms reductions occurred at the Washington Conference (1921-22) and was historically

⁶⁵⁹ Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 467.

⁶⁶⁰ *Letter from W.V. Pratt to Admiral Sims, June 22, 1917*. Papers of Admiral William S. Sims, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC, Box 90.

⁶⁶¹ *Memorandum of Meeting between Admiral William Benson and Admiral Duff, October 11, 1918*. Naval Records Collection, Office of Naval Records and Library, File TT, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁶² David Stevenson, “War Aims and Peace Negotiations” in Hew Strachan, editor, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom 2014), 214-215.

unprecedented. Paul Kennedy documents the extent of the Washington Treaty in his *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945* noting:

...there were restrictions on the overall size of the world's five largest battlefleets (Britain, USA, France, Italy, Japan) according to fixed ratios: restrictions upon the tonnage and gun-calibres of individual battleships; a virtual 'naval holiday' in capital ship construction for ten years; and a ban upon the construction of fortified bases in the Pacific and Far East (this being part of the political cum-territorial package of measures for preserving the status quo in China and the Pacific and for quietly dissolving the Anglo-Japanese alliance).⁶⁶³

The five main powers committed "to limit the size and numbers of their capital ships within a tonnage ratio of, respectively, 5:5:3:1.75:1.75" and further served to "limit cruisers to a 10,000 ton maximum, with guns not exceeding eight inches."⁶⁶⁴ More importantly, in the Washington Treaty, Britain in effect agreed to a naval parity with the United States for the first time.

The reason for Great Britain's agreement was a recognition of national interest given the economic realities after the war. Great Britain looked at its Global Empire and the need for a period of consolidation given domestic concerns stemming from the war including debt and the return of millions of its soldiers into the labour market. With these limitations, Britain feared the ambitions of France despite a sidelined Germany. As Professor Erik Goldstein notes:

...the conference is seen as having been concerned about East Asia and the Pacific, but in the minds of the participants the geographical remit was global. Britain's acquiescence in the American plan, while potentially weakening it in the Pacific, had evolved out of a global appraisal which fixed the primary threat as lying in Europe. The best method of insuring against this threat was

⁶⁶³ Paul Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 169.

⁶⁶⁴ B.J.C. McKercher, "The Politics of Naval Arms Limitation in Britain in the 1920s" in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer, 1994. *The Washington Conference, 1921-22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Essex, Great Britain: Frank Cass & Co., 1994), 43.

to establish a close connection with the United States.⁶⁶⁵

Britain therefore approached the Washington Conference with the goal of creating a *partnership* with the United States that would also allow them to not renew the treaty alliance that they had had with Japan since 1902.⁶⁶⁶ Goldstein notes:

The Washington Conference was more than a meeting on naval arms control and the Pacific balance of power. It was the first instalment of an insurance policy, a policy on which Britain would from time to time pay premiums in the ensuing years, and which was to prove itself to be a sound investment when a Second World War erupted.⁶⁶⁷

Despite the accomplishments of the Washington Treaty, the long-term failure can be found in what was *not* prohibited. Great Britain and the United States were interested in limited naval armaments because of the maritime rivalry in existence at the end of the First World War while France was motivated to avoid discussion of land and air armaments because of her superiority in those arms at the end of the war.⁶⁶⁸ In addition, Britain sought to limit the evolution of the submarine, but her efforts were opposed by France who saw the submarine as useful in coastal defence and as a valuable bargaining point in the ongoing French search for security vis-à-vis Germany.⁶⁶⁹ As a result, the two technologies that had greatly transformed the conduct of naval warfare --- the submarine and aircraft --- were left uncontrolled.⁶⁷⁰ Even so, the degree to which the various navies attempted to exploit the new technologies

⁶⁶⁵ Erik Goldstein, "The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference" in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer, eds., 1994. *The Washington Conference, 1921-22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Essex, Great Britain: Frank Cass & Co., 1994), 30.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 29.

⁶⁶⁷ Erik Goldstein, "The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference" in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer, eds., 1994. *The Washington Conference, 1921-22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Essex, Great Britain: Frank Cass & Co., 1994), 30.

⁶⁶⁸ Paul Auphan and Jaques Mordal, *The French Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1959), 8.

⁶⁶⁹ Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 480.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 479.

varied and, for the most part, the “great power” navies --- Britain, the United States, and to a lesser extent France --- continued to measure the status of their navies by the number of battleships in their fleets.

The partnership between Great Britain and the United States with the goal of a viable League of Nations was another diplomatic compromise. With the war over, the civilian leadership of both nations became increasingly dominant with both nations seeking to avoid arms races and to avert the traditional funding requests by the leaders of the respective Navies.

CONFERENCES TO SECURE SHIPBUILDING PAUSES

The next major naval conference after the Washington Conference convened in Geneva in 1927 under the auspices of the League of Nations. At the Geneva Conference, the United States proposed extending the capital ship ratios of the Washington Treaty to all remaining categories of ships including cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. The French and Italians, however, declined to participate because of their disdain with being assigned to the “lower end” ratios of the proposed ratios.⁶⁷¹ Although Great Britain, Japan, and the United States met in Geneva, they were unable to reach an agreement because of conflicting interests in cruiser needs and limitations. The following year, the French prepared a compromise plan that gained some support in Britain, but it was rejected by the United States Congress which emphasized their disapproval of the plan by approving a new shipbuilding programme calling for fifteen 10,000-ton cruisers.⁶⁷²

In 1930, the five major naval powers assembled in London with the

⁶⁷¹ Ernest H. Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy* (London: Macdonald and Janes, 1973), 316.

⁶⁷² Paul Auphan and Jacques Mordal, *The French Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1959), 12.

Americans again proposing to limit all types of ships.⁶⁷³ In spite of the repeated failure to agree on submarine limitations, the capital ship construction pause was extended for five additional years and a new ratio of 10:10:7 for cruisers was established respectively for Britain, the United States, and Japan.⁶⁷⁴ The rivalry between France and Italy once again precluded their participation. France, ever security-conscious, committed to a new naval building programme whilst Italy renewed her ambitions for Corsica.⁶⁷⁵

Although the impact of the Great Depression continued worldwide, the 1930s saw the relative quiet of the 1920s dissolve with the expansionist designs of Benito Mussolini, the rise of Adolf Hitler, and the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931.⁶⁷⁶ The British government, hamstrung by a lack of preparedness in the face of an increasingly aggressive Germany and Japan, was persuaded to conclude a separate agreement with Germany in early 1935 which would permit the growth of a German Navy to 35 per cent of the British surface fleet while allowing parity in submarines.⁶⁷⁷ France, cognizant of her role in balancing the Italian threat in the Mediterranean, meanwhile felt betrayed by the British renunciation of the Versailles agreement although there was arguably little that either nation could have done to preclude German naval rearmament.

The pervasive influence of the “expansionist” powers was now nearly certain to preclude arms agreements in the mid-1930s. In 1936, Britain, the United States, and France met in London and agreed to establish qualitative limits for various types

⁶⁷³ Paul Auphan and Jacques Mordal, *The French Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1959), 12.

⁶⁷⁴ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Ashfield Press, 1989), 278.

⁶⁷⁵ Ernest H. Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy* (London: Macdonald and Janes, 1973), 316.

⁶⁷⁶ S.C.M. Paine, *The Wars for Asia, 1911-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

⁶⁷⁷ Anthony Martiensen, *Hitler and His Admirals* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1949), 19.

of ships and to announce their building programmes to one another. Unfortunately, this agreement was essentially meaningless without Germany who was not represented, Japan who had renounced participation in the conference, and Italy, stinging from sanctions invoked due to the Ethiopian crisis, who refused to participate.⁶⁷⁸

A last attempt at naval arms control in the interwar period was the London Submarine Agreement of November 1936 in which the signatories --- Britain, the United States, Japan, Italy, France, Germany, and later the Soviet Union --- agreed to prohibit unrestricted submarine warfare.⁶⁷⁹ Unfortunately, this agreement proved to be unenforceable and came too late to have any impact on precluding submarine warfare. The scramble to rearm had already begun, and the political hope of the agreement would lapse once the Second World War started.

IMPACT OF THE CONFERENCES ON THE ROYAL NAVY

The impact of the Washington Naval Conference upon the Royal Navy was twofold. First, it limited further capital ship construction for the next ten years and reduced the British Fleet to 20 capital ships under the treaty compared to the 58 capital ships it possessed in 1919.⁶⁸⁰ In accepting this limit on her naval forces, Britain had accepted parity with the United States instead of its traditional maritime dominance associated with the Two Power Standard.⁶⁸¹

The second impact was that the treaty limited the effective focus of the Royal Navy to the Mediterranean and Atlantic theatres in spite of continued commitments in

⁶⁷⁸ Paul Auphan and Jacques Mordal, *The French Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1959), 14.

⁶⁷⁹ John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Viking-Penguin, 1990), 221.

⁶⁸⁰ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Ashfield Press, 1989), 276.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*

the Far East.⁶⁸² A limited plan to develop the Singapore base was approved in 1926, and the Far East was reemphasized in 1929 when Admiral William Wordsworth Fisher, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, issued a “Summary of Admiralty Policy.”⁶⁸³ This summary is noteworthy because it reemphasized a One Power Standard and sought to “obtain approval for steady and continuous replacements” for the Fleet in an effort to maintain the productive capabilities of the shipbuilding industry in Britain.⁶⁸⁴ In reality, little progress was made. Although the Royal Navy gained approval for one cruiser, five destroyers, four sloops, and three submarines that year, the decline in naval spending continued until shipbuilding by 1933 fell to only seven percent of its pre-World War I figure, and the Navy received only six per cent of the total government expenditure compared to the pre-war level of 25 percent.⁶⁸⁵

As a result, the various disarmament conferences including the London Conference of 1930 found the Royal Navy below even the One Power Standard with “unmodernized battleships, but also with 600,000 tons of destroyers unreplaced, with 40,000 tons of submarines unbuilt, with little reserve ammunition and stores, and with almost no defended bases.”⁶⁸⁶ Despite the financial stringency that was made worse by the Great Depression, deteriorating international conditions prompted a dramatic reassessment of naval policy in 1932. The Admiralty therefore sought to reintroduce a revised Two Power Standard which *excluded* the United States which is arguably a sign of continuing cooperation, but these efforts were hindered by the decline in

⁶⁸² Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 479.

⁶⁸³ Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, Volume II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939* (London: Collins Press, 1976), 21.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, Volume II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939* (London: Collins Press, 1976), 31, and Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Ashfield Press, 1989), 268 and 272.

⁶⁸⁶ Robin Higham, *Armed Forces in Peacetime: Britain 1918-1940* (London: G.T. Foulis & Co., 1962), 218.

British shipbuilding capacity --- as predicted by Admiral Jacky Fisher --- and the diversion of monies to the Royal Air Force.⁶⁸⁷ Unfortunately, these shortcomings were recognized too late, and there was insufficient time to modify building programmes to compensate. Even as late as mid-1938, the British Cabinet continued to reject the Admiralty plan for a revised Two Power Standard, and in any event this was too near the outbreak of hostilities for the Second World War to permit effective naval growth.⁶⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

The interwar years were clearly marked by a rivalry that characterizes the rise of a new global power. The two main sources of conflict were the longstanding issue of neutral rights and maritime parity. Despite the diplomatic tensions, there was requirement for an uneasy compromise that transferred the mantle of maritime leadership to the United States.

⁶⁸⁷ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Ashfield Press, 1989), 285-287.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 293-295. In spite of this, the declining strength of the Royal Navy still moulded the wartime strategies of the Axis powers in the Second World War. The British capital ships were designed for major Fleet action and were still powerful enough to force Germany to avoid them. The American Lend-Lease program also helped to fill gaps in the escort vessels in preparation for another Atlantic contest. Finally, although Britain was far behind other powers in submarine development, it pursued growth in aviation power though it remained numerically inferior to the German Luftwaffe.

APPENDIX G

UNPUBLISHED POEM “LET’S GET ON WITH THE WAR”⁶⁸⁹ BY ADMIRAL WILLIAM S. SIMS

In a previously unpublished poem recently donated to the U.S. Naval War College archives and written by Admiral Sims titled “Let’s Get On With The War,” Sims offered his feelings on the need to focus on the objective of winning the war at hand while also acknowledging his own critical role in ensuring the proper outcome:⁶⁹⁰

They asked a few well chosen words
upon the situation:
They urged him: “Make the talk yourself,
you represent the Nation.”
He smiled behind his beard, replied:
“You’d have me rave and roar
That all is well, but I say – Hell!
Let’s get on with the war!”

They said; “Pray pose, that we may take
Your photograph in action
We must impress, by movie-film,
The Little-Navy Faction
The Army has a well-paid staff,
Photographers a score
Its fame to tell” – but he said – “Hell!
Let’s get on with the war!”

They bade him beard the
Admiralty; “Its methods
are unfair!
Go! Make them say, in public print,
Our Navy, too, was there.

⁶⁸⁹ This phrase is attributable to Admiral Bayly and this title reflects the impact that Bayly had upon Sims. See Admiral Sir Roger Blackhouse’s introduction in Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1939) 8.

⁶⁹⁰ The poem is a currently uncatalogued item from recent donations by the Sims’ family to the U.S. Naval War College in 2018. It is part of the “Sims Family Papers” from the collection of Anne H. Sims.

They're stealing all our kudos now,
As they have done before,
Their own to swell" – but he said – "Hell!
Let's get on with the war!"

They said: "Now make the eagle scream
And ruffle every plume
Across the British Lion's face,
However Sea Lords fume.
You show them we are on the job –
No matter if they're sore –
The tale retell" – He still said – "Hell!
Let's get on with the war!"

When all is finished, and the show,
Is over with and done,
When flags are furled, and engines stopped
And silenced every gun.
Then when they ask who did his job,
And who most clearly saw;
Just tell them: "Well, 'twas SIMS, with "Hell!
Let's get on with the war!"

