

1988

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Recommended Citation

Simpson, Michael (1988) "Admiral William S. Sims, U.S. Navy and Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, Royal Navy: An Unlikely Friendship and Anglo-American Cooperation, 1917-1919," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 41 : No. 2 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol41/iss2/8>

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Admiral William S. Sims, U.S. Navy and Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, Royal Navy: An Unlikely Friendship and Anglo-American Cooperation, 1917-1919

Michael Simpson

Queenstown, (now Cobh) in southern Ireland, was the first and most important base for U.S. naval forces in European waters during the Great War. From there, American destroyers and other vessels sailed to play a critical role in the first battle of the Atlantic. They served in an unprecedented Anglo-American command structure, at the head of which were two formidable flag officers. The nature of the relationship between these two men, Admirals Bayly and Sims, became a vital one for the American-Allied cause.

At the beginning of 1917, the United States feared that Germany was about to resume unrestricted submarine warfare, which would lead almost inevitably to American belligerence on the Allied side. However, President Wilson and his Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, were pacifically inclined and determined not to compromise American neutrality and provoke hostilities.¹ Thus, only random, tentative, unauthorized, and clandestine overtures were made to the Allies until Wilson concluded late in March that war could not be avoided. On 24 March he instructed Daniels "to get into immediate communication with the Admiralty . . . and work out a scheme of cooperation. . . [to] save all the time possible."² Since the United States declared war on 6 April, no effective cooperation could be arranged before hostilities commenced. The bonds of cooperation at sea would have to be forged by the men on the spot in the hour of crisis.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had initiated covert naval conversations with the British in January, on his own responsibility, had suggested that London should ask for an American flag officer to liaise between the Admiralty and the Navy Department.³ By March, the British, though determined that they "should not appear anxious

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that America should enter the war," were in desperate straits and followed Roosevelt's advice.⁴ The officer sent was Rear Admiral William Sowden Sims, U.S. Navy, born in Canada of American parents in 1858, an "Imperial" connection frequently cited against him. After graduating from Annapolis in 1880, his first notable appointments were as Naval Attaché in Paris and St. Petersburg (1897-1900). The great leap forward in his career came in 1902 when he criticized severely fleet gunnery standards in an audacious letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, proposing instead a system based upon that of Admiral Sir Percy Scott, Royal Navy, whom Sims had met on the China station in 1894. T.R., who loved a man after his own heart, backed Sims and jumped him over the heads of more senior officers to the rank of commander. In 1910 Sims indiscreetly forecast an Anglo-American alliance, earning a severe reprimand from President Taft, but in 1911, with promotion to captain, he took the War College course and served a further year on the faculty. Between 1913 and 1915 he commanded the Atlantic Fleet's Destroyer Force, markedly improving operational efficiency. After commanding the new dreadnought *Nevada*, he was promoted to rear admiral in 1916. In February 1917, he returned to Newport as president of the Naval War College, but had scarcely unpacked his sea chest before he was ordered to London incognito, late in March, arriving shortly after the outbreak of hostilities.

A man of certitude, élan, and sharp intellect, Sims was a shrewd judge of men and situations and could manifest great charm and tact. British opinion would place him in the Nelson tradition, both for his boldness and for gathering around himself a devoted coterie of junior officers akin to Nelson's "band of brothers." An enthusiast for a War College-trained naval general staff, he advocated the all-big-gun ship before the *Dreadnought* and was an early supporter of naval aviation. Regarded as "the ablest officer" in the service and enjoying considerable political and naval support for the London appointment, he was, nevertheless, Daniels' second choice—possibly because of his undue Anglophilism or because he had only just taken up the War College post. On friendly terms with British flag officers, notably the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Sims's acceptability to the Royal Navy was likely to open doors barred to others.⁵

Required simply to obtain accurate information about the naval situation and to transmit Allied requirements to Washington, Sims quickly gained access not only to Prime Minister David Lloyd George and other ministers but also to the Admiralty and all of its secret information.⁶ Cabling Daniels on 14 April that "control of the sea is actually imperilled" by the U-boats' successes, he urged the "Maximum number of destroyers to be sent, accompanied by small anti-submarine craft, [with] the utmost despatch." Pointing out that "the real crisis of the war" was at hand, he

recognized that "the issue is and must inevitably be decided at the focus of all lines of communication in the Eastern Atlantic."⁷ This was the Western Approaches, the busy sea-lanes passing to the north and particularly to the south of Ireland. The U-boats congregated there, picking off easy targets. By April 1917, one in four merchantmen leaving the British Isles failed to return. In that month the Germans sank almost 900,000 tons of shipping, only one-tenth of which was being replaced. Germany was rapidly fulfilling her aim of starving Britain into surrender by August 1917, long before the United States could realize its vast potential.⁸

Allied survival turned, therefore, on the successful defense of the Western Approaches and on the ability of the flag officer commanding those waters, Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, Royal Navy. The archetype of the crusty old seadog, the "brusque, intolerant" Bayly, a capable organizer, an aggressive commander and a martinet, was known throughout the service as "Luigi." Born into a military family in 1857, he passed out as a midshipman in 1872. His career curiously paralleled that of Sims. Posted, "rather against my will," to Washington as Naval Attaché (1900-1902), "he was practically fired out" at American request. He commanded the Home Fleet destroyers (1907-1908), preparing them for war with seamanship and tactical skill fully equal to that of Sims. President of the Royal Navy's War College (1908-1911), in the rank of rear admiral, he then commanded battle cruiser and battleship squadrons. Promoted to vice admiral and given command of the Channel Fleet in December 1914, he was relieved within a few days following the loss of the pre-dreadnought H.M.S. *Formidable*, sunk by a U-boat against which he was alleged to have taken inadequate precautions. Shunted to the presidency of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich (then used for technical and staff training), "his active career appeared to have ended."⁹

However, his finest hour was yet to come. Luckily, he had one good and powerful friend, Jellicoe, and in July 1915, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Arthur Balfour, sought his advice on controlling the U-boats, possibly on Jellicoe's recommendation. Bayly replied, "If I am given a light cruiser I will go and do it with my base at Queenstown."¹⁰ Left to decay in the Fisher era (1904-1915), when Britain's naval might was concentrated in the North Sea, Queenstown became the vital center of Allied antisubmarine warfare when Germany outflanked the British blockade with one of her own.¹¹ Little could be spared to Bayly; he had to make do with a dozen sloops, a handful of Q-ships, an assortment of light craft and a flotilla of submarines employed in a hunter-killer role. "His one object being to get on with the war," Bayly reorganized the command on "businesslike lines," mounting vigorous patrols of the sea-lanes, then the only antidote to the U-boats, save for the convoying of especially valuable vessels.¹²

On 14 April 1917, responding to requests from Sims and the Admiralty, Daniels ordered the Eighth Division of the Atlantic Fleet's Destroyer Force, under Commander J.K. Taussig, U.S. Navy, to proceed to Queenstown and "cooperate fully with the British Navy."¹³ To arrange the details of cooperation, Jellicoe summoned Bayly to meet Sims at the Admiralty. Sims recalled that, "he was as rude to me as one man could well be to another. He was apparently deeply incensed at having been sent for. . . . When he had gone Admiral Jellicoe apologised to me and said that he would remove the Admiral if I thought it was necessary."¹⁴ Jellicoe, realizing the crucial importance of not alienating the source of new destroyers, reprimanded Bayly in the presence of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Edward Carson, and he was "very distinctly informed that there should be no friction of any kind."¹⁵

This dressing down, however, was likely to produce only the most grudging cooperation. Sims recognized that a more intimate relationship would be required to overcome the crisis at sea. Moreover, what happened at Queenstown was likely to set a standard for subsequent bases and Sims was determined to create a record for naval cooperation second to none. Declining politely Jellicoe's offer to replace Bayly, Sims told him "that I did not know what the cause of the friction was but I believed I could find it out and indicate how it could be corrected."¹⁶ For this delicate operation Sims had to visit Queenstown but was unable to do so before the arrival of the Eighth Division on 4 May. He accordingly primed Taussig that Bayly was "a peculiarly difficult man to deal with" but "very able and valuable in other respects." Retailing the story of their first meeting, he added that if Taussig reported any friction "the cause will at once be removed." Pointing out "you have the reputation of the service in your hands as far as the British go," he exhorted, "Let us set a record among the Allies for cooperation and show what can be done in a common cause."¹⁷ Prudently submitting his draft operational order to Bayly for comment, Sims wrote, "You will, I am sure, find our officers more than willing to carry out your orders and instructions and to cooperate with your forces as completely as their present inexperience in this peculiar warfare will permit." The destroyer captains were "enthusiastically grateful over the reception you have given them and anxious to be of maximum service to our common cause."¹⁸ The Eighth Division had endeared itself to the prickly Bayly on its arrival by affirming its readiness for action "as soon as the ships were refueled."¹⁹ The outcome of this diplomatic approach was a relatively friendly letter from Bayly, indicating his approval of the speed with which the Americans were grasping antisubmarine warfare, outlining his policy of being available to discuss problems with them and concluding with an indirect invitation to Sims to visit the station. "Should you come here," wrote the gruff Bayly, "please come to Admiralty House and bring your aide. I do not entertain, but can

make you comfortable.'"²⁰ The welcome mat was scarcely on the doorstep but the door itself was ajar.

Writing of the critical encounter, which took place later in May, Sims described the dramatic transformation in his relations with the suspicious Bayly: "the Admiral received me very nicely but without enthusiasm. After about three days it became apparent that he quite approved of me. The niece told me subsequently that he had 'walked around me' for three days and finally told her 'that man is on the square.' Directly after, it is not too much to say that we became really sincere friends and this friendship has been increased as time goes on."²¹ Thus occurred one of the minor miracles of the war, a battle that had to be won before victory in the first battle of the Atlantic was possible. Bayly was "at bottom, a generous, kindly and even a warm-hearted character." The credit for unfreezing "Old Frozen Face" was due quite as much to Miss Violet Voysey, "the only niece" who kept house for the irascible widower, as to the adroit and cunning Sims.²²

Sims achieved far more than changing Bayly from a reluctant associate, scarcely less hostile than the Kaiser, into a confirmed friend. He told Jellicoe of "all the causes of friction" and suggested how they might be removed. He insisted that Rear Admiral Duff, head of the Admiralty's Anti-Submarine Division, who, like most flag officers, was no longer on speaking terms with Bayly, should draw upon the latter's incomparable experience in that field. The flag captain at Queenstown "had always been a thorn in Admiral Bayly's side and he should be exchanged." Other officers were replaced by Bayly's own nominees, for whom he had not deigned to ask in the past. Jellicoe was only too willing to follow Sims's recommendations but informed him that the Board of Admiralty had unanimously refused to grant Bayly the normal courtesy title of commander in chief. Sims, in one of his celebrated strokes of boldness, went straight to the First Lord, and Carson gazetted the appointment the same day.²³ Sims had not only launched Anglo-American naval cooperation on a sound basis, he had also solved the Royal Navy's most intractable and persistent problem of personal relations.

Sims's greatest triumph was his subtle suggestion to Jellicoe that Bayly should go on leave and be replaced temporarily by Sims himself. It was another example of Nelsonian enterprise, for no foreign officer had ever commanded British naval forces. Moreover, the idea was planted in Bayly's mind in such a way that he presented it to Sims as if it were his own. In a warm letter to Sims, Bayly wrote: "I have a suggestion. If I go on leave from June 18th. to 23rd., would you like to run the show from here in my absence. I should like it (and you are the only man of whom I could truly say that), your fellows would like it, and it would have a good effect all round. If you agree go and see the First Sea Lord and we will arrange it between us without any frills. And if the Admiralty during my absence 'regret that you should have,' etc., I will take the blame. If they give you a DSO keep it."²⁴ Sims replied,

somewhat disingenuously, that "Your letter. . . was the surprise of my life," thanked Bayly fulsomely for "the honour you have done me" and agreed to take up the suggestion with the Admiralty.²⁵ He also had in mind defusing the criticism emerging in America that American forces were totally submerged in the British naval structure.²⁶ Sims's temporary command at Queenstown marked the end of the beginning.

The arrival of the American destroyers raised command problems hitherto not considered and for which *ad hoc* solutions had to be found. Wherein lay the responsibility for their strategic and tactical direction? Should they constitute an independent force or be integrated fully with the Allied forces? What was the appropriate command structure?

As American units began to arrive and as bases were established, Sims graduated, somewhat casually, from senior liaison officer to Force Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in European Waters, with the rank of vice admiral. In effect, a theater commander, all American forces came under his strategic direction.²⁷ Since the strategic situation did not lend itself to independent American fleet operations but rather called for the desperate reinforcement of strained Allied sea defenses at several points, Sims believed that it was "absolutely necessary not to view our forces as an entity in themselves but rather as an integral part of the combined Allied naval forces." He recognized that "active command will. . . be exercised by the senior officer on the spot, under the orders of the Vice Admiral of the Port" but he retained the right to transfer vessels elsewhere and advocated that they should be self-sufficient and that each force or unit should retain its American naval organization.²⁸

Bayly, though stating "We are all one here" and freely mixing British and American vessels in operations, strongly endorsed American internal administration of their own forces.²⁹ The basic agreement, firm friendship, and constant visits and correspondence of Sims and Bayly helped to make these arrangements practicable, but the crucial link between the strategic and tactical commands was the senior U.S. naval officer at Queenstown, Captain Joel Pringle, U.S. Navy, commanding officer of the destroyer tender U.S.S. *Melville*. A man of "tact, energy and ability," Pringle, one of Sims's protégés, became Sims's chief of staff, a formal rather than a functional title. Much more significantly, in yet another unprecedented move, Bayly, who regarded Pringle as "my *beau idéal* of what a naval officer should be," made him his chief of staff to facilitate effective operational integration of the Anglo-American forces.³⁰ So smoothly did this unprecedented command structure function that a year later Pringle told Sims, "it would be wholly impossible to conduct affairs at this Base on any other general system than the system upon which

they are at present conducted, that is to say, the Commander-in-Chief must control the movement of ships, and the senior officer of our own ships must look out for the internal administration, discipline, supply, etc.”³¹ That this pathbreaking arrangement worked so well is a tribute to the goodwill, friendship, ability, and professionalism of officers and men in both services, from Bayly, Sims, and Pringle downwards, aided and abetted by “the only niece.”

The relationship between Bayly and the American forces at Queenstown was quite remarkable. As Sims noted, “He always referred to his command as ‘my destroyers’ and ‘my Americans,’ and woe to anyone who attempted to interfere with them or do them the slightest injury! Admiral Bayly would fight for them, against the combined forces of the whole British navy, like a tigress for her cubs.”³² For their part, “Our young commanding officers characterize him as ‘hot stuff,’ ‘the real thing,’ ‘the finest whatever.’”³³ Bayly became their confidant, Admiralty House was open house to them, and they spent many a mealtime and evening there; “Uncle Lewis” relished his role. “Complete harmony and cooperation was effected” all the way down the line.³⁴ British and American officers held numerous conferences, freely exchanged shipboard visits, technical data, and operational experiences, and happily served under each other’s command; there “never was a question, or doubt, or a sign of anything but perfect cooperation.”³⁵ The Queenstown relationship was “of inestimable value as an example of how that sort of thing should be done between people who are fighting for a common cause.”³⁶ As early as 24 May 1917, Sims told Daniels that “Military operations are proceeding very satisfactorily, and the relations and cooperation between our forces and the British are excellent in all respects,” adding two days later, “You need have no fear that there will arise any of the differences and difficulties that are so common between allies.”³⁷ He told President Wilson, “I could not possibly imagine anything more harmonious and personally agreeable than the relations between the British and our forces at Queenstown.”³⁸

The warmth and strength of this accord was amply confirmed by the stream of distinguished visitors to Queenstown. Admiral Mayo, Commander of the Atlantic Fleet, commented in September 1917 upon “the harmony and spirit of cooperation maintained by the British and American personnel.”³⁹ Jellicoe was equally impressed on his visit early in 1918 and his successor as First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, told Sims that his visit in March “brought home to me more than ever the magnificent way in which the officers and men of your service have entered into a partnership with ours.”⁴⁰ Reporting the reactions of the House of Representatives Naval Affairs Committee, which visited Queenstown in the summer of 1918, Sims informed Bayly that “they are filled with admiration over the conditions they found in Queenstown.”⁴¹ Young FDR, who accompanied the First Lord, Sir Eric

Geddes, there in July 1918, confirming "the splendid spirit that pervades the entire station," summed up the universal opinion, British and American: "Personally, I think things at Queenstown are running well in every particular. . . . There is no question that he [Bayly] is the right man in the right place."⁴²

Nevertheless, the structure was constantly under threat. Sims was in danger of supersession by a civil overlord (Roosevelt) or of subordination to his nominal chief (Mayo), but insisted successfully that his command was now a separate entity.⁴³ On several occasions he fended off proposals to standardize the Queenstown situation by interposing an American rear admiral between Bayly and Pringle, arguing that "The situation is a peculiar one and it is so entirely satisfactory and so efficient that it would not be well to interfere with it."⁴⁴ Bayly "entirely agreed as to the inadvisability of making any change."⁴⁵ Bayly's own tour of duty, due to expire in July 1918, was extended by Geddes after "looking over the situation" on his personal visit.⁴⁶ The Navy Department and the Admiralty wisely left well enough alone.

After his ice-breaking visit to Queenstown in May 1917, Sims quickly concluded that Bayly "is one of the wisest and ablest men of my acquaintance, as well as one of the most admirable characters, and it is a pleasure to serve under him. I am aware that I have his confidence."⁴⁷ This respect and affection was mutual, Bayly constantly reminding Sims, "Don't forget that this is your real home from home."⁴⁸ During the war their meetings were few, but they maintained a regular correspondence which was a barometer of the war's changing pressures, both local and general, and an accurate reflection of current Anglo-American naval debate.

The immediate issue in the spring of 1917 was the defense of shipping. The patrol of the sea-lanes and specific areas having proved totally ineffective, the British were moving towards the general adoption of Atlantic convoys by April. Sims was "devoted to this system since the first week I got here" and thought it "entirely practicable." He described the safe arrival of the trial Atlantic convoy on 10 May as "a 100% success" and rightly dubbed it "one of the great turning points of the war."⁴⁹ Bayly, however, was a reluctant convert. Holding that a badly escorted convoy was worse than independent sailings, presumably because it offered a larger target, he told Sims that if he had enough destroyers and if merchantmen were armed, equipped with radio, and could make twelve knots, he would prefer constant patrolling along routes subject to frequent alteration. Nevertheless, conceding that the strength of the U-boats, the shortage of destroyers and the slowness of most merchant vessels compelled the adoption of convoy, he proved a capable organizer of the system.⁵⁰ By August, the skeptic was acknowledging that "things are on the right track now; there was bound to be a jolt or two on

starting, but Jellicoe and you both have hold so I feel that the machine will go on all right.”⁵¹ Sims replied that “the convoy method, notwithstanding the delays in assembling vessels and so forth, is working successfully.”⁵² It was, in fact, “an unqualified success. . . to which the enemy discovered no counter” and in which the timely arrival of U.S. destroyers played a vital part. Less than one percent of convoyed ships were sunk and the system was well-nigh universal by the war’s end.⁵³

The lean four-pipers, fine seakeepers with long endurance, were admirably suited to escort work and performed with distinction. The peak of their achievement was the destruction of *U-58* in November 1917 by the U.S.S. *Fanning*, assisted by the U.S.S. *Nicholson*. The Admiralty, recording its “high appreciation,” remarked that the *Fanning* had been “worked with great ability” and referred to “the excellent discipline and organisation” aboard the destroyer.⁵⁴ Bayly never had enough of these splendid craft. Of the 34 U.S. destroyers at Queenstown in July 1917, Sims was compelled by Washington to detach 10 to Brest to escort the troopships of the American Expeditionary Forces which began arriving there regularly from the autumn.⁵⁵ Other destroyers suffered collision damage, attributed by Bayly to inexperienced handling; some were seconded for hydrophone trials, and for the last six months of the war, Bayly’s force never exceeded 24.⁵⁶ Sims apologized continually for the diversion of new destroyers to troop convoys and the Mediterranean and for the American destroyer program falling far behind schedule.⁵⁷ Moreover, it was not until Admiral William S. Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations, visited Europe in the fall of 1917 that the United States committed itself fully to the naval war.

At first Daniels and Benson were skeptical about the repeated and urgent pleas of Ambassador Page and Sims for more antisubmarine craft. In any case, Page and Sims were discounted as incorrigible Anglophiles. Daniels believed that Sims “accepted the plans of the British Admiralty as sacrosanct” and the Navy Department, feeling that he “had been completely led astray by British guile,” decided that “his judgement is warped and the weight of what he advocates lessened.”⁵⁸ Washington also feared an Allied defeat and a consequent German-Japanese alliance against the United States. Occasional forays by U-boats off the eastern seaboard also had “the effect of holding destroyers on the other side.”⁵⁹ However, following Benson’s visit, as a result of which the Chief of Naval Operations endorsed Sims’ requests and policies, Sims reported to Bayly, “I believe Admiral Benson thoroughly understands that every available destroyer should be sent to this side at the earliest possible moment”; unfortunately, Sims was compelled by his government and events elsewhere to give Queenstown a low priority.⁶⁰

However, other vessels were added to the Western Approaches force, among them 36 submarine chasers, FDR’s brainchild. Their short range in heavy seas confined them to inshore work, though Bayly conceded “they

have lots of pluck” and was pleased to have them.⁶¹ Nor was there any shortage of American volunteers for the Q-ship U.S.S. *Santee*. Bayly wrote with characteristic gusto, “The sooner your young bloods get their teeth into the submarine swine, the better.”⁶²

Both admirals favored “hunter-killer” submarines and a flotilla of American boats was stationed at Berehaven, a defended anchorage 75 miles west of Queenstown, patrolling southwest of the Irish coast, though recording no “kills.”⁶³ Anglo-American naval chiefs also feared the new U-cruisers, which combined a high surface speed and great endurance with a heavy gun armament outranging those of merchantmen and escorts. Bayly was eager to get his hands on three of the British K-class steam-driven fleet submarines to counter them. “I want the K submarines as an offensive weapon,” he declared, “and the Atlantic is well suited for them.” The Admiralty refused his request, much to his disgust, but fortunately the U-cruisers, few in number and clumsy, posed little threat.⁶⁴ Bayly also forecast the adoption by the Germans of wolf-pack tactics, but Sims believed correctly that the U-boats would find coordinated tactics difficult and would be a danger to themselves.⁶⁵ Like most British and American officers, Bayly and Sims regarded convoy as essentially defensive and were eager to develop more aggressive tactics. They agreed that “we should leave no stone unturned to take offensive action on the slightest evidence.”⁶⁶ Early in 1918, therefore, hunting groups of destroyers and chasers were organized, using the newly developed hydrophone to seek out U-boats and depth charges to kill them. Unfortunately, acoustic devices were not sufficiently advanced for the purpose, and hunting proved fruitless besides diverting destroyers from convoy duties, thus delaying the full implementation of the system and leading to higher losses.⁶⁷ Submarine and antisubmarine warfare were still very much in their infancy, though World War I offered pointers on U-boat and escort tactics and techniques in World War II. Bayly and Sims were enthusiasts for naval aviation in support of antisubmarine warfare but, despite the American assumption of responsibility for southern Ireland and energetic preparatory work at Queenstown and Wexford, little was achieved in the air before the war’s end.⁶⁸ In the summer of 1918, rumors of a possible breakout into the Atlantic by German battle cruisers led to three American dreadnoughts being stationed at Berehaven as a deterrent, but fortunately they were never tested.

The rapid collapse of Germany in the fall of 1918 surprised both men, but they favored a Carthaginian peace. “We must make an end of barbarism for all time,” declared Sims, while Bayly, with the naval officer’s inherent distrust of politicians, wrote, “I sincerely trust that you men of action in London will not allow the kid-gloved politicians to let us down.” Sims assured him, “You may be sure that we military men will do all we can to keep the politicians from letting us down.”⁶⁹ Following the Armistice, Bayly

hoped to remain at his post until all of "his" Americans had departed. "I was here when your people came," he wrote, "and would like to stay to see them off."⁷⁰ In the warmest tribute an officer of one nation could pay to the forces of another, he remarked: "They were faced by an unprecedented kind of warfare. They at once set to with all their energies to learn the new methods; there was no foreign feeling about them, not a sign of jealousy, no impatience at receiving their orders from a foreign Admiral, they were single minded in their endeavours to do their utmost for a common cause, and in consequence they proved to be a most valuable asset to the Allies, and assisted magnificently to save a dangerous situation."⁷¹ Sims shared Bayly's hope that he would stay "as we have always regarded you as the father of the whole show."⁷² By March 1919, Sims himself was homeward bound, telling Bayly "one of my pleasantest souvenirs will be my association with you and your niece."⁷³ Bayly replied that he was "very sorry indeed to lose you. . . . And I shall look forward to the day when I can tell Mrs. Sims face to face what a splendid friend you have been to me."⁷⁴ As he went into retirement, he declared that he was "very proud that my last bit of active service has been one in which our two countries worked as one."⁷⁵ On behalf of the U.S. Navy, Roosevelt paid tribute to "his ability, his efficiency and his consideration," while from his retirement cottage deep in the Devonshire countryside (but within striking distance of Plymouth Hoe), Bayly thanked his American friends for their continuing comradeship, leading to the formation in the United States of the Queenstown Association.⁷⁶ Bayly was its guest in 1921 and Sims and his wife visited Bayly and "the only niece" at Ermington. In 1934, Bayly visited President Roosevelt, reviewed the U.S. Fleet and presented a plaque to Annapolis commemorating Vice Admiral Joel Pringle (1873-1932).⁷⁷ Admiral William Sowden Sims, U.S. Navy, died in Boston in 1936, aged 77, and Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, Royal Navy, died in London in 1938, aged 81. Theirs was an unlikely friendship but a real and enduring one. It is no exaggeration to say that it was a vital one for the American-Allied cause. Bayly himself provided the perfect epitaph: "We met as strangers; we worked as allies; we part as friends."⁷⁸

Anglo-American naval cooperation at Queenstown was a distinct success, both in helping to defeat the U-boats and in personal terms, from top to bottom of the chain of command. It afforded a showcase from which future Anglo-American operations in this and subsequent conflicts could profit. It achieved success despite persistent shortfalls in resources and inevitable shortcomings in technique. It succeeded with a totally unprecedented, highly irregular and most unbureaucratic command structure. Its success was also attained in a situation in which strategic command of the principal forces was exercised by one nation and operational control by the other. The success of Bayly, Sims, and their subordinates was also in contrast

to the political differences, mutual suspicions and criticisms, and divergent postwar ambitions which bedeviled Anglo-American relations at the highest levels. It succeeded despite the lack of any formal Anglo-American agreement, the failure to make concrete arrangements for cooperation prior to America's entry into the war, and the absence of a tradition of cooperation between the two countries.

The all-round success of the Queenstown command was testimony to the Anglo-American rapprochement developing since 1895, the desperate situation imposing a "united we stand, divided we fall" atmosphere upon the participants, and the pragmatic brotherhood of seafarers. In the final analysis it offers the lesson that however strong the general accord between nations, whatever the details of treaties, however mountainous the pile of joint staff memoranda, and even given the presence of a common language, smooth cooperation in wartime depends ultimately on the personal compatibility, open-mindedness, good sense, experience, tact, and will to succeed of the respective flag officers and their ability to communicate their spirit of goodwill to all hands. In explaining how this personal bond was forged at Queenstown, Sims referred to: "the general astonishment of the British Navy . . . [at] the taming of Admiral Bayly. There was a common saying in the British navy that what they ought to do with Bayly was to put him in an iron cage and feed him raw meat, until war broke out, and then turn him loose on the enemy. They can't quite understand not only the respect in which he is held by our people, but the positive affection they all have for him and he has for them."⁷⁹

For unmasking this other side of "Old Frozen Face," Sims deserves the chief credit. Had he not perceived the need to establish more than formal relations and had he not possessed the qualities of judgment, tact, charm, and uprightness to achieve his aim, the outcome for Anglo-American naval relations, operationally, personally, and historically might have been little short of disastrous.

Notes

1. Diary of Edward M. House, 1 February 1917; Josephus Daniels to Woodrow Wilson, 2 February 1917; Memorandum on Cabinet Meeting by Robert Lansing, 20 March 1917, all in A.S. Link et al., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, v. 41 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 88, 94, 370-372, 442-443 (hereafter *Wilson Papers*); Diary of Josephus Daniels, 7 and 20 March 1917, in E.D. Cronon, ed., *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 109, 118 (hereafter *Daniels Diaries*).

2. Wilson to Daniels, 24 March 1917, Josephus Daniels Papers, Manuscripts Division; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

3. British Embassy to Foreign Office, 25 March 1917, ADM 137/1436, Admiralty Papers, Public Record Off., London, England; D.F. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-18* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1972), p. 54.

4. Comment by Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, 21 March 1917, on Embassy to Foreign Office, 20 March 1917, ADM 137/1436, Admiralty Papers; E.E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942), p. 324.

5. Rear Admiral H.B. Wilson was the administration's first choice but declined. *Daniels Diaries*, 25 March 1917, p. 121; for his welcome in Britain see Admiral Sir John Jellicoe to Sims, 7 April 1917, in 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), pp. 155-156 (hereafter *Jellicoe Papers*).

6. Jellicoe to Admiral Sir David Beatty (C.-in-C., Grand Fleet), 12 April 1917, *Jellicoe Papers*, p. 156; Sir W. Graham Greene (Secretary of the Admiralty), Office Memorandum, 20 April 1917, ADM 137/1436, Admiralty Papers.

7. Sims to Daniels, 14 April 1917, Admiral W.S. Sims Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Page to Daniels, spring 1917, Daniels Papers.

8. Page to Lansing, 27 April 1917, in B.J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (London: Heinemann, 1924), v. 2, pp. 278-279; *Daniels Diaries*, 20, 21, and 28 April, 2 May 1917, pp. 138-139, 143, 145; T.G. Frothingham, *The Naval History of the World War: Vol. III, The United States in the World War, 1917-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1926), p. 316; A.J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904-1919: Vol. IV, 1917: Year of Crisis* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 101-106.

9. Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, *Pull Together! The Memoirs of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly* (London: Harrap, 1939), pp. 91-95, 129-132, 152, 173-176; entry on Bayly in *Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 54-55; Sims to Captain W.V. Pratt (Asst. CNO), 30 August 1917, W.V. Pratt Papers, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Pratt Papers).

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-217; Jellicoe was then C.-in-C., Grand Fleet. Commodore R. Tyrwhitt, Royal Navy, to Keyes, in P.G. Halpern, ed., *The Keyes Papers: Vol. I, 1914-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin for Navy Records Society, 1979), p. 134.

11. Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), 11 May 1917, TD file, U.S.N. Subject File, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter USNSF).

12. Admiral Sir Roger Backhouse (then First Sea Lord), "Foreword" to Bayly's autobiography, pp. 7-8; W.S. Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (London: Murray, 1920), p. 55.

13. Daniels to Commander J.K. Taussig, U.S. Navy, 14 April 1917, TD file, USNSF.

14. Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers.

15. Sims to Taussig, 29 April 1917, TD file, USNSF.

16. Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers; D.C. Allard, "Admiral William S. Sims and United States Naval Policy in World War I," *American Neptune*, April 1975, p. 99.

17. Sims to Taussig, 29 April 1917, TD file, USNSF.

18. Sims to Bayly, 8 May 1917, Sims Papers.

19. Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), 11 May 1917, TD file, USNSF.

20. Bayly to Sims, 11 May 1917, Sims Papers.

21. Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers.

22. "Old Frozen Face" was one of Bayly's less flattering nicknames. Miss Voysey, daughter of a distinguished British architect, was the niece of Bayly's late wife. Marder, Vol. V, pp. 121-123.

23. Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers.

24. Bayly to Sims, 30 May 1917, Sims Papers; Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers; Marder, Vol. V, pp. 122-123.

25. Sims to Bayly, 1 June 1917, Sims Papers.

26. Captain J. Pringle, U.S. Navy, to Sims, 24 April 1918, Sims Papers; Sims, pp. 61-62; Morison, p. 382.

27. Sims' headquarters gradually took shape in the summer of 1917. A few months with just one aide, he built up a considerable staff. Sims to Benson, 9 and 29 October 1917; Sims to Pratt, 28 July and 15 October 1917; Pratt, unpublished autobiography (1939), pp. 201, 221, all in Pratt Papers; Sims' good work was recognized by promotion to vice admiral. Jellicoe to Sims, 26 May 1917, *Jellicoe Papers*, p. 165; On the nature of Sims' mission, see F.L. Paxson, *American Democracy and the World War: Vol. I, The Pre War Years, 1913-1917* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936), p. 407; Sims protested at his lack of complete control over his forces. Sims to Pratt, 11 August, 7 September 1917, 15 February, 4 and 16 April, 18 May 1918, Pratt Papers.

28. Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), 11 May 1917, TD file, USNSF; Sims to Taussig, 29 April 1917, TD file, USNSF; Jellicoe, Memorandum on the Naval Position, 27 April 1917, *Jellicoe Papers*, pp. 160-162.

29. Bayly to Sims, 11 May 1917; Bayly to FDR, 15 July 1919, Sims Papers; Bayly, pp. 221-222; Sims, p. 62; Marder, Vol. V, pp. 121-123.

30. Bayly to Sims, 10 and 16 July 1917; Sims to Bayly, 18 July 1917; Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 28 January 1918, Sims Papers; Bayly, p. 223; Sims to Benson, 28 February 1918, Admiral W.S. Benson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Sims to Rear Admiral L.C. Palmer, U.S. Navy, 8 October 1917, Pratt Papers; Marder, Vol. V, p. 123.

31. Pringle to Sims, 24 April 1918, Sims Papers.

32. Sims, p. 53; Morison, p. 386.

33. Sims to Daniels, 26 May 1917, Daniels Papers; Sims to Daniels, 1 June 1917, TT file, USNSF.
34. Sims, pp. 52-59; Guntery Dept., U.S. Destroyer Flotillas based on Queenstown, Ireland, Memorandum, 24 December 1918, Sims Papers.
35. Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 31 December 1918, Sims Papers; Guntery Dept., Memorandum, 24 December 1918, Sims Papers; Sims, pp. 48-49.
36. Sims to Bayly, 6 March 1919, Sims Papers; Marder, Vol. V, pp. 121-123.
37. Sims to Daniels, 24 May 1917, Benson Papers; Sims to Daniels, 26 May 1917, Daniels Papers.
38. Sims to Wilson, 5 September 1917, TT file, USNSF.
39. Sims to Bayly, 3 and 21 September 1917, Sims Papers; Sims to Pratt, 30 August 1917, Pratt Papers.
40. Bayly to Sims, 10 March 1918; Sims to Wemyss, 29 December 1917; Wemyss to Sims, 26 March 1918, Sims Papers.
41. Sims to Bayly, 8 August 1918, Sims Papers; J. Daniels, *Our Navy at War* (New York: Doran, 1922), p. 365.
42. FDR to Daniels, 27 July 1918, Box 93, Asst. Secretary of the Navy Papers (hereafter Roosevelt Papers), FDR Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.; FDR, "Foreword" to Bayly's autobiography, pp. 5-6; FDR visited American naval and military establishments in Europe between July and September 1918; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1919), p. 12; the details of the trip are in the "Asst. Secretary of the Navy" and "Family, Business and Personal" collections at the FDR Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.; Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 374-441.
43. Sims to Benson, 15 February 1918 and Sims to Pratt, 4 April 1918, Pratt Papers.
44. Sims to Pratt, 30 August, 1 September 1917, 16 April 1918 and Sims to Benson, 15 February and 28 July 1918, Pratt Papers. The flag officer proposed was Rear Admiral Edward W. Eberle (CNO, 1923-1927); Pringle to Sims, 24 April 1918, Sims Papers.
45. Pringle to Sims, 24 April 1918, Sims Papers.
46. Roosevelt to Daniels, 27 July 1918, Roosevelt Papers; Pringle to Sims, 24 April 1918, Sims Papers; Sims to Benson, 28 July 1918, Pratt Papers.
47. Sims to Daniels, 26 May 1917, Benson Papers.
48. Bayly to Sims, 6 July 1917, Sims Papers.
49. Jellicoe to Admiral Sir F. Hamilton, 25 April 1917; Rear Admiral A.L. Duff (Director, Admiralty Anti-Submarine Division) to Jellicoe, 26 April 1917, *Jellicoe Papers*, p. 157; Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), summer 1917, Benson Papers; Sims to Daniels, 30 April 1917, TT file, USNSF; Wilson was an early and vigorous advocate of convoy; see Wilson to Sims, 3 July 1917; Daniels to Wilson, 6 and 14 July 1917; Sims to Wilson, 11 July 1917, all in *Wilson Papers*, v.43, pp. 79-80, 112, 178-179, 179-180; for general U.S. attitudes towards convoy, see E.J. Grove, "Reluctant Partner: The United States and the Introduction and Extension of Convoy, 1917-1918" in *Chartered and Uncharted Waters: Proceedings of a Conference on the Study of British Maritime History* (London: National Maritime Museum and Queen Mary College, 1981), pp. 218-240.
50. Bayly to Sims, 6 July 1917, Sims Papers. Bayly was wiser after the event; Bayly, pp. 215, 239-246.
51. Bayly to Sims, 10 August 1917, Sims Papers.
52. Sims to Bayly, 14 August 1917, Sims Papers.
53. H. Newbolt, *History of the Great War: Naval Operations* (London: Longmans, 1931), v. 5, pp. 32-36, 76, 133, 135, 337; on the effectiveness of convoy, see Sims, pp. 249, 251, 331-334; Frothingham, Vol. III, p. 72; for a forthright discussion of the adoption and success of convoy, see Vice Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, "The U-Boat Campaign in Two World Wars," in G. Jordan, ed., *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century: 1900-1945: Essays in Honour of Arthur Marder* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 128-134.
54. Charles Walker (Asst. Secretary of Admiralty) to Foreign Office, 3 December 1917, Sims Papers; Sims, pp. 129-134.
55. Sims to Bayly, 17 May 1918, Sims Papers; Sims, pp. 63, 300-301; Bayly, pp. 218-238; F.B. Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Vol. I, The Apprenticeship* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952), p. 351.
56. Bayly to Sims, 30 September and 20 October 1918; Sims to Bayly, 23 October 1918, Sims Papers.
57. Sims to Bayly, 11 July 1917, 31 January, 17 May, 24 September, 23 October 1918, Sims Papers.
58. Sims to Daniels, 14 April 1917; Page to Daniels, spring 1917, Daniels Papers; Lieutenant R.R.M. Emmet, U.S. Navy to Sims, 22 June 1917, Sims Papers; J. Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Vol. II, The Years of War and After, 1917-1923* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 86.
59. Sims to Bayly, 17 May 1918, Sims Papers; Trask, pp. 58, 112-114.
60. Sims to Bayly, 20 November 1917, 17 May 1918, Sims Papers; C. Seymour, ed., *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House: Vol. III, Into the World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), pp. 269, 298-303.
61. Bayly to Sims, 18 July 1917, 30 September 1918, Sims Papers; Sims to Secretary of Admiralty, *Characteristics Common to all United States Submarine Chasers*, 29 June 1918, ADM 137/1622, Admiralty Papers; Freidel, Vol. I, pp. 311-312; Frothingham, Vol. III, p. 120; Pratt Autobiography; Pratt Papers.
62. Sims, p. 166.

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63. Bayly to Sims, 6 July 1917, 30 September 1918; Sims to Bayly, 2 October 1918; Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 31 December 1918, Sims Papers; Sims, pp. 224-243.
64. Bayly to Sims, 10 January and 30 September 1918, Sims Papers.
65. Bayly to Sims, 6 July 1917, Sims Papers; Sims to Secretary of the Navy (Operations), summer 1917, Benson Papers.
66. Sims to Bayly, 10 April 1918, Sims Papers.
67. Bayly, p. 247; see memoranda by British and American Planning Divisions on antisubmarine policy, P.D. 060, 28 March, P.D. 062, 15 April 1918, ADM 137/HSB 186; P.D. 0105, 28 August, P.D. 0119, 12 October, P.D. 0128, 1 November 1918, ADM 137/HSB 187, Admiralty Papers.
68. Sims to Bayly, 21 September 1917 (quoting Mayo); Bayly to Sims, 30 September 1918; Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 31 December 1918, Sims Papers; "British and American Naval Air Policy for 1919," 27 September 1918, in S.W. Roskill, ed., *Documents Relating to the Royal Naval Air Service: Vol. 1, 1908-1918* (London: Navy Records Society, 1969), pp. 734-738; Rear Admiral W.F. Fullam, U.S. Navy, to Sims, 7 February 1920, Sims Papers.
69. Sims to Bayly, 15 October 1918; Bayly to Sims, 20 October 1918; Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 31 December 1918, Sims Papers.
70. Bayly to Sims, 29 November 1918, Sims Papers.
71. Bayly to Secretary of Admiralty, 31 December 1918, Sims Papers.
72. Sims to Bayly, 2 December 1918, Sims Papers.
73. Sims to Bayly, 6 March 1919, Sims Papers.
74. Bayly to Sims, 8 March 1919, Sims Papers.
75. Bayly to Sims, 21 March 1919, Sims Papers.
76. Rear Admiral H.S. Knapp, U.S. Navy (Sims' successor as Force Commander) to Secretary of Admiralty, 7 May 1919, quoting Roosevelt (Acting Secretary of the Navy); Bayly to Roosevelt, 15 July 1919, Sims Papers.
77. Bayly, pp. 258-263, 267, 271-272.
78. Bayly to Sims, 8 March 1919, Sims Papers.
79. Sims to Benson, 2 April 1918, Pratt Papers.

The author thanks the University College of Swansea, the British Academy, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Foundation for research funding and Dean Allard, William Emerson, Eric Grove, and David Trask for invaluable advice. The assistance of the Naval War College Library, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, the Operational Archives of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., and the Public Record Office, London is appreciated.

