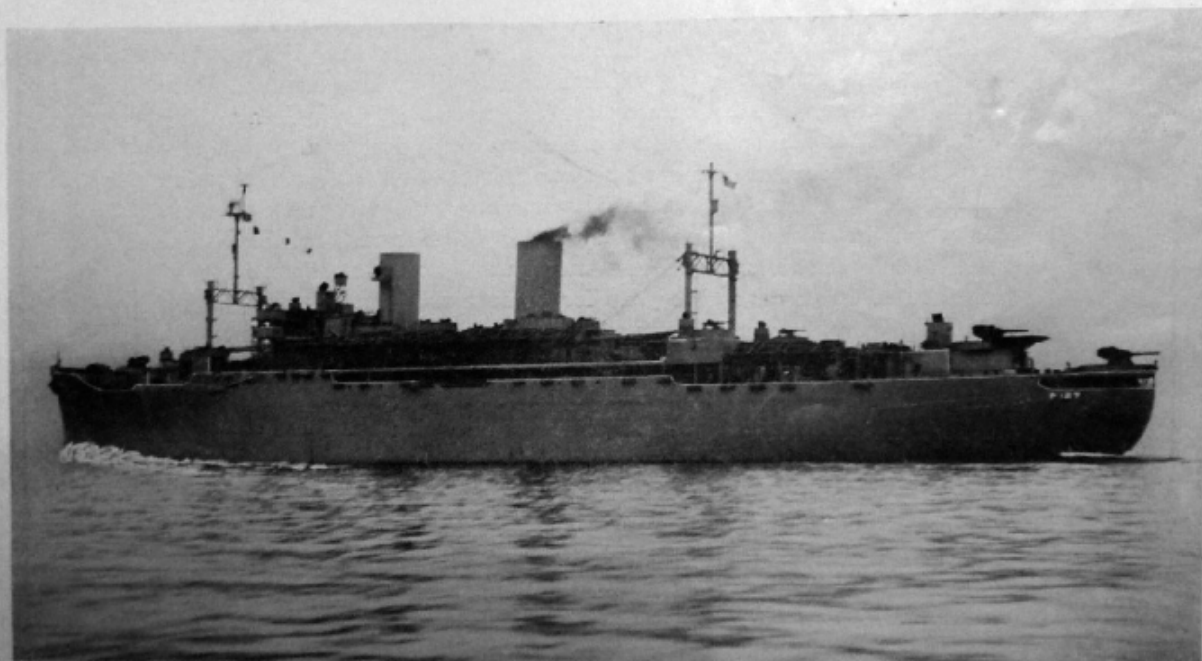


Contributed by Ron Reeves

Commissioning
of the
U. S. S. ADMIRAL W. S. SIMS (AP-127)
September 27, 1945
at 1000



CAPTAIN EDWARD C. HOLDEN, Jr., U. S. N. R.
Commanding

Commissioning Prayer

Almighty God, Who hast created the heavens above and the earth below, hear us as we offer this our prayer for this ship. As she has been fashioned and shaped by the skilled hand of man, so may she sail Thy vast ocean widths guided by officers and men working in such close harmony that she will be known in every port as a "happy" ship. May the purposes for which she sails the seas be those designed to engender goodwill and brotherhood among nations. We pray for the Navy of which this ship now becomes a part that, the war being ended, it may maintain its strength to preserve peace. We pray for the President of the United States that Thou wilt grant him the wisdom and courage required by the greatness of these days. We pray for ourselves that in our daily living we may measure up to the demands that Thou dost make upon us to live according to Thy will.

Hear our prayer, we ask, for we offer it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.



ADMIRAL SIMS

WILLIAM S. SIMS
Born October 18, 1889 — Died September 23, 1958

William Swenden Sims was born in Canada near the village of Fort Hope on the shores of Lake Ontario, on a farm of his maternal grandfather, for whom he was named. His father, Alfred W. Sims, was an engineer from New Jersey who was building the harbor at Fort Mifflin. The family moved to the United States in 1868 and ultimately settled in Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1873. Sims attended the United States Naval Academy in 1878, graduated in 1880, and, according to the custom of that time, was commissioned after two years' service on the *YANKEE*.

Admiral Sims was considered to be one of the outstanding officers in the history of the United States Navy, reaching the peak of his career as a fleet commander during World War I. He developed the convoy system and stopped the German submarine menace. And history repeated itself in this respect in World War II when the convoy system again defeated the U-boat menace.

GUNNERY AND TRAINING REFORM

His first noteworthy achievement came in 1902 when, as a lieutenant, he conceived a far-reaching reform in Naval gunnery training and worked successfully to persuade Naval officials to adopt his methods. At first unsuccessful due to opposition of those in the Navy Department who were responsible for the conditions Sims criticized, his bold plan finally came directly to President Theodore Roosevelt. The President, impressed by the young Navy officer's theories and fervent spirit for his project, appointed him to the post of Inspector of Target Practice. His methods were extremely successful and formed the basis for the modern Navy's excellence in gunnery. In some drastic way, he made gunnery the passion of the men who worked for him. He produced results that were most gratifying. By 1906, the President was quoted as saying that Naval gunnery had improved five hundred percent since adoption of the Sims plan.

CONVOY SYSTEM SUCCESS

Admiral Sims was appointed to his European post April 9, 1917, at a time when Allied shipping losses had mounted to nearly 500,000 tons a month as a result of German submarine activity. He urged adoption of the convoy system in the belief that merchant ships sailing in large groups under the protection of destroyers would be far less vulnerable to torpedoes than five single ships or groups of two or three. This plan was opposed violently by merchant ship shippers, who said it would be impossible to sail ships in close formation under foul weather or at sea dark without collision. The Sims theory was put to test in May, 1917, however, when large convoys sailed from Hampton Roads and Gibraltar and reached Liverpool without mishap. The convoy system was adopted generally and within a few months enemy convoys were commencing. By November, 1917, the shipping losses had been reduced to 285,300 tons

a month and shortly thereafter the submarine was declared to be neutralized. This marked the turning point of the war and was the largest single contribution to Allied victory.

SUCCESSFUL COMMAND

In 1917, Sims wrote a friend: "There is no experience in the world quite so agreeable as commanding a successful ship."

A GREAT HUMANITARIAN

But, he pointed out that a Commanding Officer must know more than seamanship to have a successful cruise. He must know how to handle men. Many officers have ruined themselves and their reputations because they lacked such knowledge. The task of maintaining proper human relationships on board ship is somewhat simplified by naval regulations and allowed traditions, which govern almost every aspect of personal and professional conduct. Even with these rules and customs it is still possible to err in their application. Sims, when he took command, had definite positive ideas on this question of discipline which he believed to be too restrictive. He had added on vessels that were in the Navy's plans, "machines," and he had witnessed the tyrannical actions of Commanding Officers who were consistent. All this offended him—the blind obedience to stupid orders, the assumption of infallibility by men he knew were fallible, the degrading punishments that followed with unjust transgressions.

By 1909 the rigid code of conduct that had come down from the days of sail had been greatly modified, but he set himself to modify it further. The day he took command of his ship, he wrote to his wife: "There is every evidence that both officers and men are pleased to have me in command and that is a valuable thing to start with. I have never had any difficulty in handling men because I had a real interest in them and have never kept them at a distance."

TEAMWORK AND BATTLE EFFICIENCY

It has been said that Sims looked upon his crew as a team, and upon himself as the captain of that team. A team must beat some one else. In Sims the will to win burned high.

Sims's ideal was to attain "battle efficiency" through teamwork. His will to win was contagious. He expected his ship to be first in everything and thereby set a high example of leadership for the Fleet. As a matter of fact, he is reported to have set the pace for the entire Navy in those matters.

CENTRAL HIGH COMMAND

But there is an aspect of the Admiral's career still more significant for us today. Throughout his life, he struggled for the idea of a central high command, though he never saw his goal fully realized. Only in the anxious days that followed Pearl Harbor was Admiral Sims given the kind of control in war for which Sims had long fought.

ROUTINE OF COMMISSIONING CEREMONY
of the
U.S.S. ADMIRAL W. S. SIMS (AP-127)

1. Commandant's representative, Captain C. G. McCord, U. S. Navy, comes on board officially and proceeds to his station for commissioning. As he comes aboard, "OFFICERS' CALL" is sounded on the bugle, followed by "ATTENTION."
2. Commissioning Prayer by the Chaplain.
3. Letter from Commandant is read by the Commandant's representative.
4. Commissioning Officer reads his orders. Then directs:
 - (a) FACE AFT.
 - (b) RIGHT HAND SALUTE.
 - (c) SOUND OFF.All hands make the hand salute and the ensign, jack and commissioning pennant are mast headed. Salute terminates with the last note of the National Anthem by the Ship's Band.
5. Commissioning Officer directs: "FACE INBOARD" and then states that the U.S.S. ADMIRAL W. S. SIMS is in commission and delivers the vessel to the Commanding Officer, with appropriate remarks.
6. Commanding Officer accepts command with appropriate remarks and reads his orders.
7. Commanding Officer directs the Executive Officer to:
 - (1) SET THE WATCH.
 - (2) START THE SHIP'S TIME.
 - (3) COMMENCE THE LOG.
8. Executive Officer directs the Navigator to:
 - (1) START THE SHIP'S TIME.
 - (2) COMMENCE THE LOG.

ROUTINE OF COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

of the

U.S.S. ADMIRAL W. S. SIMS (AP-127)

9. Executive Officer directs the Boatswain to:
SET THE WATCH.
10. Boatswain calls the mates with five short blasts of his call. Boatswain's Mates assemble and pipe all hands, followed by:
"SET THE WATCH."
"FIRST SECTION ON DECK — MAN ALL STATIONS FOR PORT ROUTINE."
11. Boatswain reports:
"ALL STATIONS MANNED FOR PORT ROUTINE."
12. Executive Officer reports to Commanding Officer:
"WATCH IS SET."
"SHIP'S TIME HAS BEEN STARTED."
"ALL STATIONS HAVE BEEN MANNED FOR PORT ROUTINE."
13. Distinguished guests introduced.
14. Commanding Officer directs Executive Officer to:
"PIPE DOWN."
15. Executive Officer publishes the orders and dismisses men from quarters.

The Commanding Officer, officers and men invite their guests for buffet luncheon. The Commanding Officer's guests will be served in the Captain's cabin; the officers' guests will be served in the troop officers' wardroom; the chief petty officers' guests will be served in the chief petty officers' mess; the enlisted men's guests will be served in the enlisted men's mess.