

Rear Admiral William S. Sims

Long before becoming the fifteenth president of the Naval War College, in 1917, Sims was one of the best-known officers in the Navy. As an advocate of improved naval gunnery, Inspector of Naval Ordnance, and naval aide to President Theodore Roosevelt, Sims had been an outspoken naval critic. He attended the College's two-year Long Course in 1911 - 1912. Shortly after becoming the College's president, Sims was ordered in late March 1917 to sail secretly for England under an assumed name to begin discussions with the Royal Navy on wartime cooperation. After the United States declared war, he stayed on and rose to four-star rank as Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. In 1919, Sims returned to the College as its sixteenth president, reverting to two-star rank. While president of the College, he published his Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir, *The Victory at Sea* (1920), and became a major public figure through his criticism of Washington's conduct of the naval war.

Nathan M. Miller (c. 1875 - c. 1975) was active as an artist in Washington, D.C., during the years between 1907 and 1916. There are a number of his works in the Naval Academy Museum at Annapolis, including a portrait of Admiral George Dewey. He probably painted this portrait when Sims was on the Naval War College staff, shortly before becoming Commander, Atlantic Destroyer Flotilla in July 1913.

Following Sims's death in 1936, the Naval Academy Association of New York commissioned Commander Ralph S. Barnaby at the New York Navy Yard to make a bronze bust of Sims. Upon its completion in 1940, Commander W. H. McGrann commissioned the artist to make two plaster versions, one for the Naval War College and one for the Sims family that is now at the Newport Art Museum.

PRESIDENT, 16 FEBRUARY 1917 - 28 APRIL 1917
and 11 APRIL 1919 - 14 OCTOBER 1922

Oil on Canvas

Nathan M. Miller, 1913

Gift of Mrs. William S. Sims

Ac. 1976.23.01



Plaster Bust

Commander Ralph S. Barnaby, 1940

Gift of Commander W. H. McGrann
1976.53.01

Ac.