

Junior Leader Innovation: William Sims & Continuous Aim Fire

LCDR Benjamin “BJ” Armstrong

HSC-28

Who the hell is this guy?

- Maintenance Officer, HSC-28
- MA in Military History from Norwich
- Over 30 articles and reviews published in journals, magazines, and online.
- Regular Contributor at USNI Blog and with *Proceedings & Naval History*



Vice Admiral
William S. Sims,
USN

BATTLESHIP KENTUCKY, LENGTH 375 FT. $4\frac{1}{8}$ IN., BREADTH 72 FT. $2\frac{1}{8}$ IN., DRAFT 23 FT. $10\frac{1}{8}$ IN. PLACE LAUNCHED NEWPORT NEWS, VA.

6376

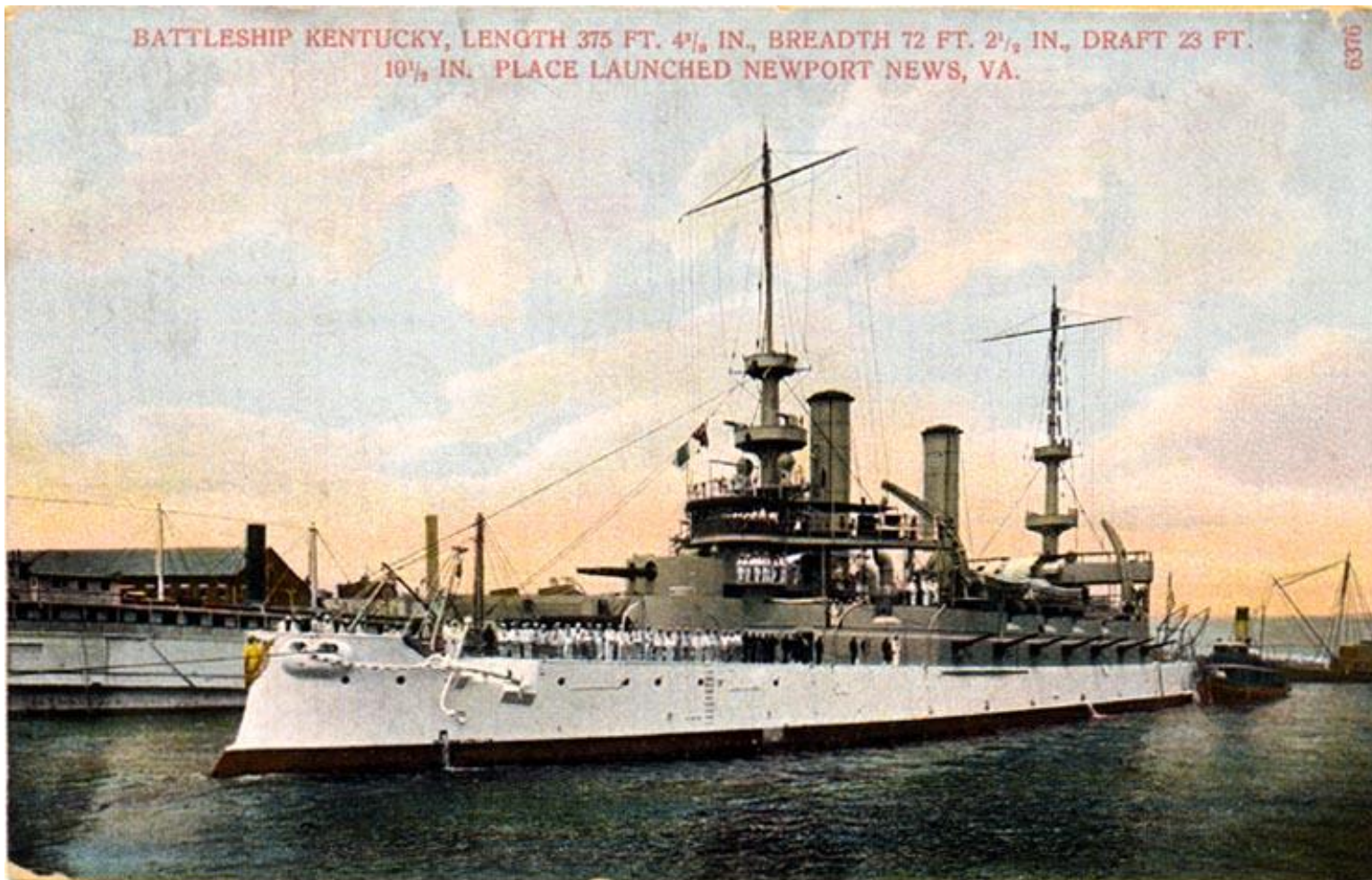
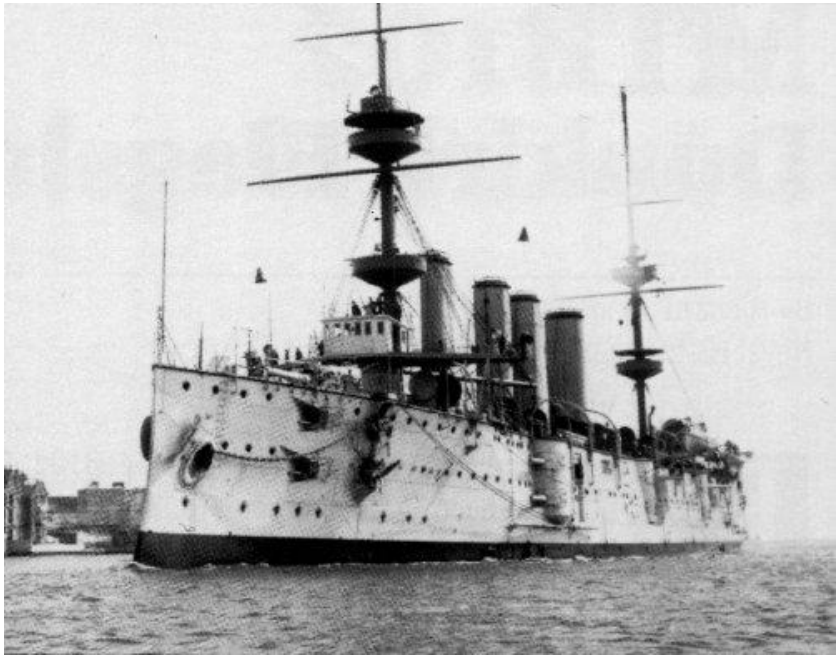


Photo # NH 52047-KN USS Kentucky, ca. early 1900s. Postcard photo

“The Kentucky is not a battleship at all. She is the worst crime in naval construction ever perpetrated by the white race.”

– LT William S. Sims

Admiral Sir Percy Scott, Royal Navy



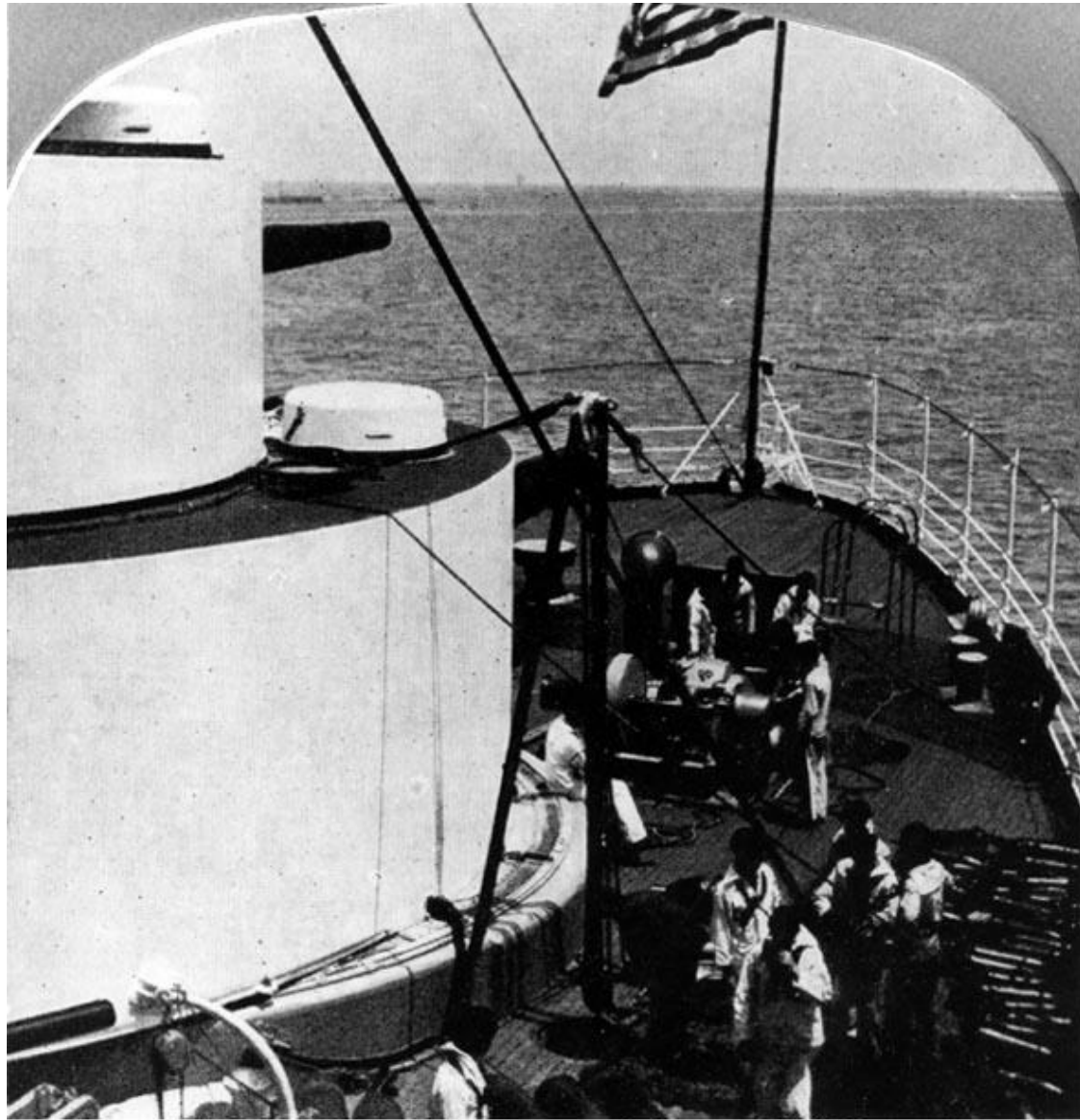


Photo # NH 82668 Loading ammunition on USS Kentucky

The Washington Navy Yard





Researchers have “discovered that the ability to stick with it – the technical name for this trait is ***grit*** – is one of the most important predictors of success.”

- Jonah Lehrer



Photo # NH 46714 Officers of USS Kentucky at Algiers, ca. January 1901

“With every fibre of my being I loathe indirection and shiftiness, and where it occurs in high place, and is used to save face at the expense of the vital interests of our great service (in which silly people place such a child-like trust), I want that man's blood and I will have it no matter what it costs me personally.”

- LT William Sims



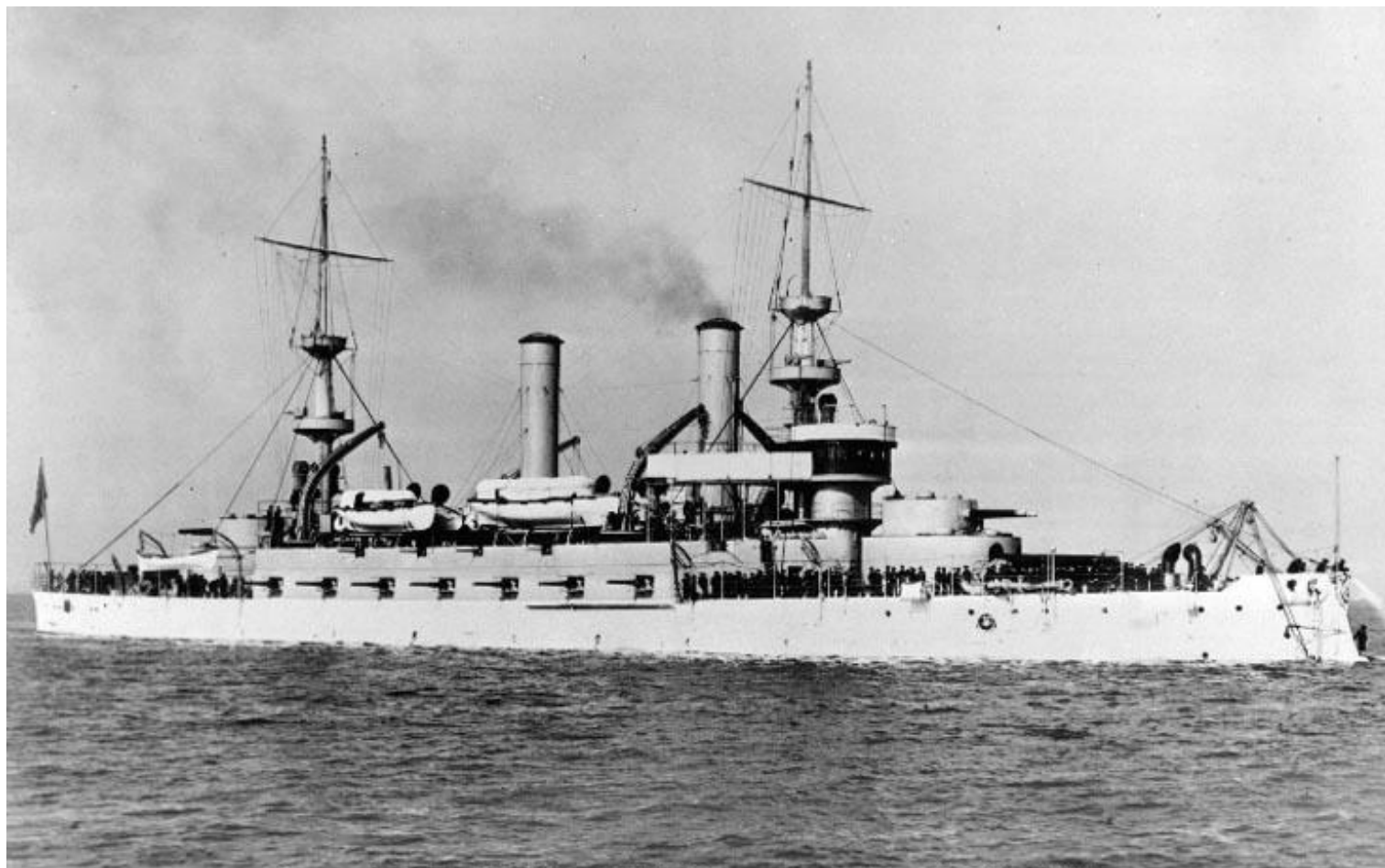


Photo # NH 61959 USS Kentucky, circa 1900-1904

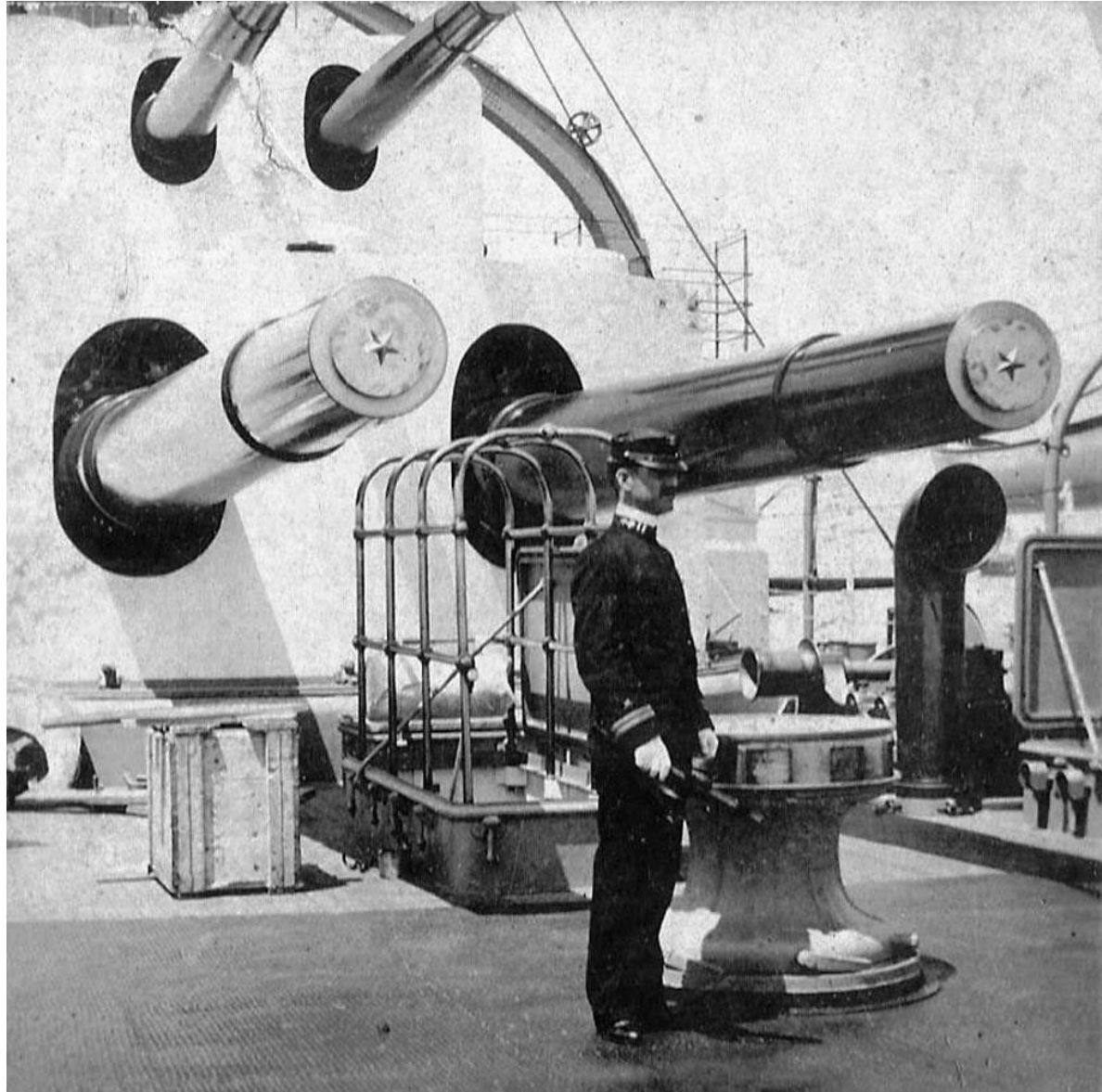
“The rankest kind of
insubordination.”

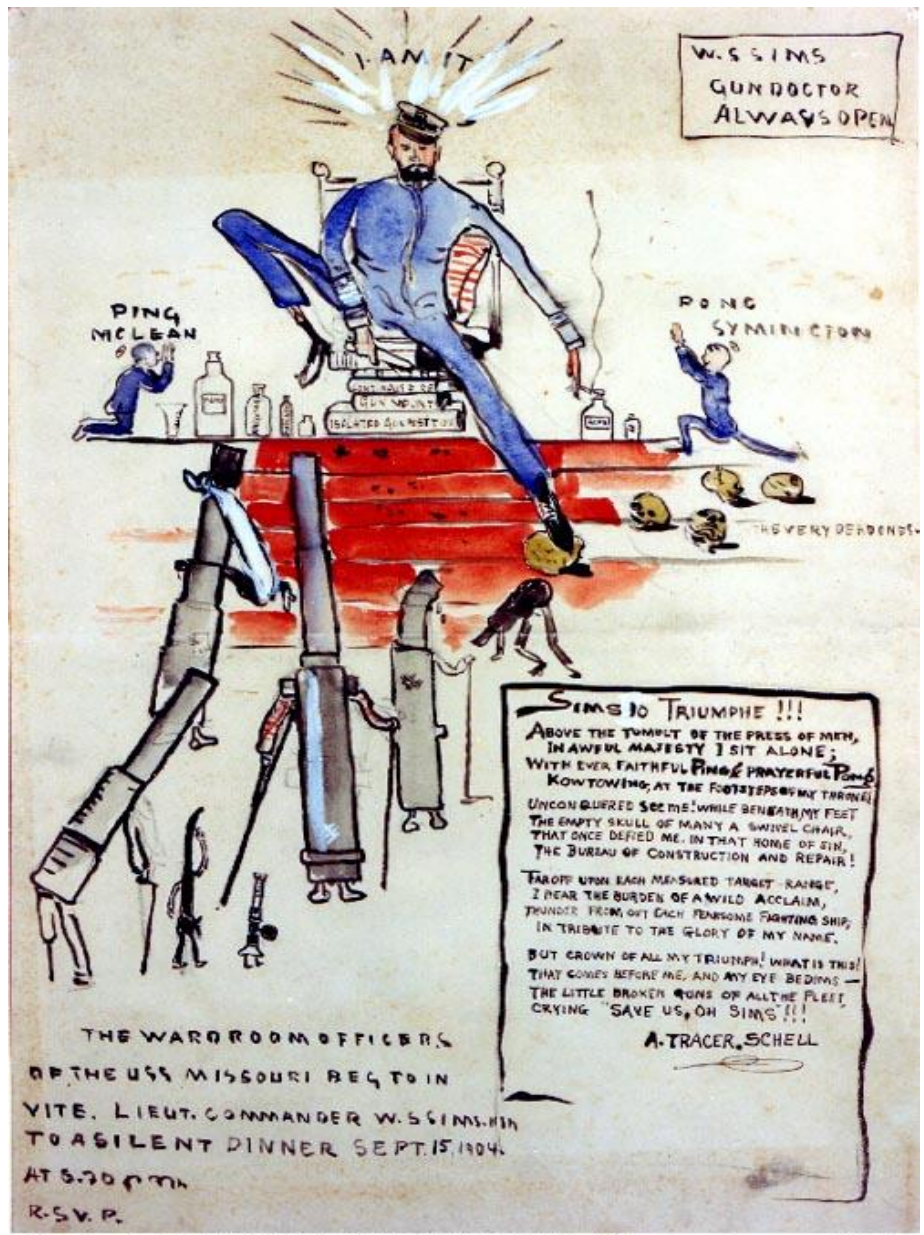
- Rear Admiral William Sims



“Give him entire charge of target practice for eighteen months; do exactly as he says. If he does not accomplish anything in that time, cut off his head and try someone else.”

- President Theodore Roosevelt





THE WARDROOM OFFICERS
 OF THE USS MISSOURI REQ TO IN
 VITE. LIEUT. COMMANDER W.S. SIMS. HQ
 TO A SILENT DINNER SEPT. 15. 1904.
 AT 5.30 P.M.
 R.S.V.P.

SIMS TO TRIUMPH!!!
 ABOVE THE TUMULT OF THE PRESS OF MEN,
 IN AWEFUL MAJESTY I SIT ALONE;
 WITH EVER FAITHFUL PING & PRAYERFUL PONG
 KOWTOWING, AT THE FOOTSTEPS OF MY THRONE!
 UNCONQUERED SEE ME! WHILE BENEATH MY FEET
 THE EMPTY SKULL OF MANY A SWIVEL CHAIR,
 THAT ONCE DEFIED ME, IN THAT HOME OF SIN,
 THE BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR!
 FAR OFF UPON EACH MEASURED TARGET-RANGE,
 I BEAR THE BURDEN OF A WILD ACCLAIM,
 THUNDER FROM OUT EACH PERSONS FIGHTING SHIP,
 IN TRIBUTE TO THE GLORY OF MY NAME.
 BUT CROWN OF ALL MY TRIUMPH! WHAT IS THIS!
 THAT COMES BEFORE ME, AND MY EYE BEHINDS—
 THE LITTLE BROKEN GUNS OF ALL THE FLEET,
 CRYING: "SAVE US, OH SIMS!!!"
A. TRACER, SCHELL

Photo # NH 89489-KN LCdr. W.S. Sims cartoon, 1904

“The renaissance in gunnery which came about chiefly through the instrumentality of Commander Sims, has ... led to great improvements in ordnance.”

-- Admiral Mason,
Chief, Bureau of Ordnance

Photo # NH 50114 VAdm. Wm. S. Sims with members of his staff, London, 1918



“He continued to be a thorn in the fat flesh of the naval hierarchy during his entire career.”

- The Milwaukee Journal, 1949

Lessons Observed

- Know where your expertise lies.
- Find a way to talk about your idea. But...don't be insubordinate. It's about the idea, not about the people.
- Find something you believe in, and demonstrate your own **Grit**.
- Remember that the more senior you become the more innovation is about listening.

Questions?

Photo # NH 44922 William Sims, Jr., salutes as his father, Adm. W.S. Sims, returns from Europe, April 1919

