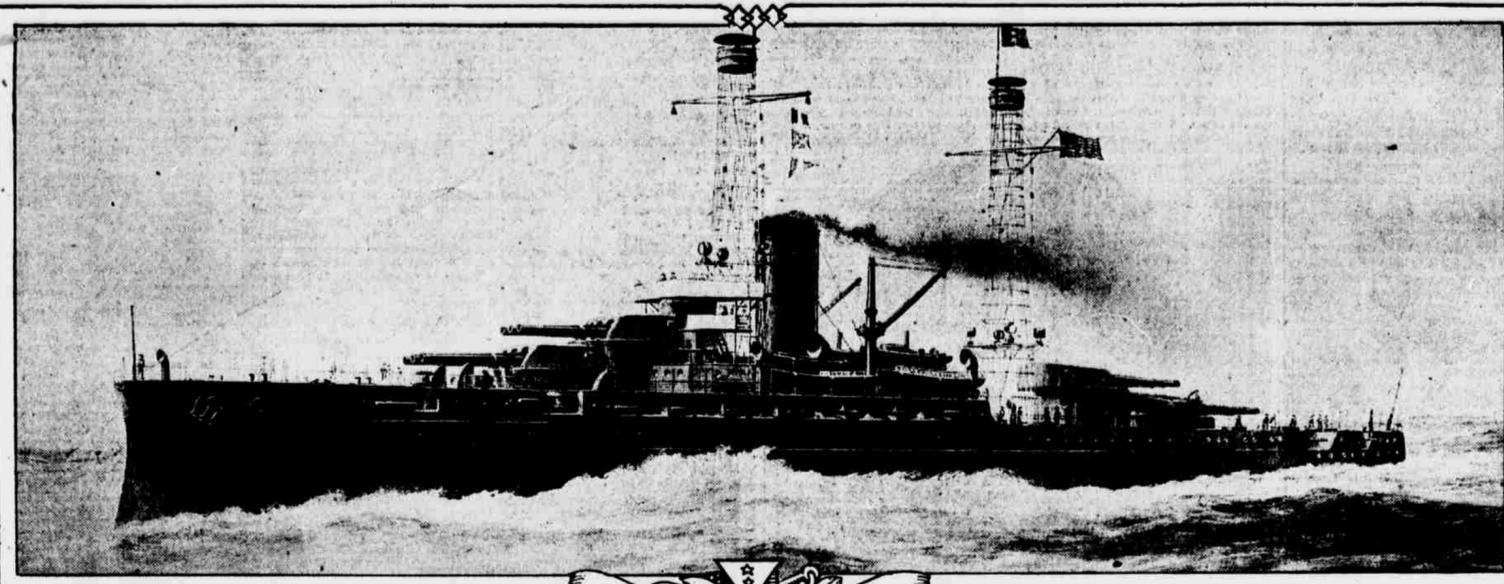


NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 1917.
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MAN OF ACTION HEADS OUR FIGHTING FLEET

Admiral Mayo, in command of the American battle squadrons on the Atlantic, recognized in the navy as a keen thinker and strategist, but little known outside the service until his work at Tampico made him an international figure.



SUPERDREADNOUGHT PENNSYLVANIA, FLAGSHIP OF THE FLEET.

In the hands of a man whose record in the navy has been unusually colorless from the lay point of view, with the single striking exception at Tampico, the destinies of the great Atlantic fleet of the United States lie to-day.

But if the American battle squadron ever is able to get in contact with the vaunted ships of the Imperial German navy, there is not a man in the entire personnel of Uncle Sam's fleet who will not back Henry Thomas Mayo, the reserved but self-sufficient commander in chief of the Atlantic squadron, to defeat the enemy in decisive fashion.

Admiral Mayo's somewhat uneventful and inconspicuous career in the navy of the United States has given the general public, but not the men of the navy, an erroneous impression of his personality and ability. He has been described as a plodder, but he is far from that. The truth is that he is one of the most capable and efficient officers in the American navy and is so recognized by all his associates. His advancement has been too rapid for a plodder. He is original and a keen thinker and strategist. Those who know him know that when the opportunity offers he will act with decision and with effectiveness, as he acted at Tampico.

Two circumstances have operated to cloud the public's opinion of Admiral Mayo. One is his aversion to publicity. He always has kept aloof from controversy and never has gone about, as some naval officials have, with the beating of drums and the sounding of trumpets. He has appeared to prefer to keep out of the public eye. Having heard of him so infrequently, until lately, the public has come to think that he could not at the most be above the average of naval commanders.

Then, too, fate has been rather miserly in giving him opportunities to demonstrate his fitness for command. When the chance came at Tampico in April, 1914, he promptly embraced it and the people next day were asking, "Who is this man Mayo, who dared, without consulting the Navy Department or any of his superiors, to demand a salute from the Huerta Government because some of the American sailors were subjected to the indignity of arrest?"

It has been said that gasoline made Mayo an international figure. On April 8, 1914, a paymaster of the U. S. S. Dolphin landed at the Turbide bridge landing at Tampico with a whaleboat and boat's crew to get some gasoline badly needed. While engaged in loading the boat the paymaster and two of his men were arrested, notwithstanding the fact that they were unarmed and that the whaleboat carried the American flag at bow and stern.

The men were afterward released, but Mayo, who has all the sensitiveness of America's old-time sea heroes where an affront is offered to the Stars and Stripes, demanded that the flag be saluted with respect by the military commander of the port. Then followed the occupation of Vera Cruz and the other events of the brief war against Mexico, which are still fresh in the public mind.

Associates of Mayo say that he was an efficient member of the navy from the time he was graduated from Annapolis in 1872. The Admiral began his naval career at the age of 16, when he appeared as a candidate for Annapolis on the appointment of the late Curtis Smith, a Representative from Vermont. Four years later he took the post of passed midshipman on one of the old combination steam and sail vessels, the Tennessee, and within two years had received his ensign's stripes. His inclination for scientific work, which has since been responsible for his very thorough knowledge of the man-of-war as a fighting machine, led him into such departments as the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the United States Naval Observatory and the naval branch of the Hydrographic Office at Port Townsend, Washington.

Promotions are not rapid in the American navy, but the Spanish war found Mayo a lieutenant, a navy rank corresponding with the rank of Captain in the army. But he was given no special opportunity to distinguish himself in this war and he remained unknown to fame. He was taken from the U. S. S. Bennington after the war had been in progress a few months and given a position in the Bureau of Equipment, where he served with great advantage to the Government, but without attracting public notice.

After the war was over he was assigned to the battleship Wisconsin with the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. When he reached his Captaincy he was made commander of the armored cruiser California, then flagship of the Pacific fleet.

It was while Mayo was commandant at the Mare Island Navy Yard, near San Francisco, that Secretary Daniels called him to Washington for the purpose of discussing yard construction. Daniels was so impressed by Mayo's evident knowledge of his business that he decided to keep him in Washington and made him aid for personnel.

He was promoted in 1913 to Rear Admiral. He did not like duty ashore particularly. In preparation for a flag command he went to the Naval War College in Newport, R. I., and after six weeks received his commission. Only a few days later he was designated by Secretary Daniels to take command of the fourth division of the Atlantic fleet, then in Mexican waters.

An incident not generally known went toward confirming the confidence that Secretary Daniels held in the Rear Admiral. In the course of the Mexican trouble Admiral Mayo served notice on the battling Federal and Constitutionalists at Tampico that he had created a neutral zone ashore and that he would be very much pleased indeed if they would go elsewhere to shoot each other up. Within the zone was much valuable property belonging to American and British citizens, and through the action of Admiral Mayo—his directions were heeded by the fighting factions—the property was saved from destruction.

There has been a great deal of controversy concerning the circumstances in which Mayo withdrew from before Tampico, leaving American citizens to be rescued by warships of other nationalities. A civilian observer wrote Senator Lodge a letter shortly after the incident in which he said:

"On April 28, 1914, the Secretary of the Navy issued an official statement (which we understand was made in response to an inquiry from the United States) regarding the withdrawal of Admiral Mayo and with the knowledge and approval of Admiral Badger, the Commander-in-Chief, because to maintain them longer would have endangered the lives and property of the American citizens there."

"Nothing is further from the truth, and I cannot picture to you the consternation which the reading of Mr. Daniels' statement made in the United States. Circumstances dictating the withdrawal of Admiral Mayo and Admiral Badger."

"The truth of the matter is that the entire responsibility for the withdrawal of Admiral Mayo's division rests not with him but with the Navy Department solely."

"Admiral Mayo never recommended such a move and Admiral Badger never was informed it was to be made until after the vessels had been withdrawn and it was impossible to return the river without provoking the hostilities of the Mexicans there."

"The Navy Department ordered Admiral Mayo to leave the Panuco River on or about the morning of April 21 and Admiral Mayo was astonished at receiving such an order. To make sure there was no mistake he obeyed it unless it was confirmed."

"The Navy Department then retracted the order and the ships were withdrawn with consequences we all know."

"Mayo's forceful qualities have won him respect throughout the navy; also his qualities of fairness and justice. I don't believe Admiral Mayo ever did an unfair thing in his life," said one navy officer who served with Mayo on the Arkansas. "He had a sense of absolute justice and all his men knew they could get that from him."

"He is not idolized as some commanders have been. His personality probably is too reserved for that. His attitude toward others might be regarded as actually cold unless one was acquainted with the genuine cordiality that is hidden beneath an almost taciturn exterior."

"There is no fund of anecdotes about Admiral Mayo. His naval career has been almost too inconspicuous for that up until a few years ago. He is not spectacular in deed or expression. He accomplishes things in a quiet way. But he has served his country as well



ADMIRAL HENRY T. MAYO, COMMANDER OF THE ATLANTIC FLEET.

as others and have been given public acclaim and adulation. It is a remark in navy circles that Mayo never gets "rattled." The coolness of the atmosphere with which he surrounds himself he takes away with him. Circumstances distracting to others find him with the same imperturbable mental poise that marks him at all other times. In spite of his apparent coolness, those who have served with him say that he has more than the ordinary consideration for his inferiors in rank. It is an almost irresistible impulse when a ship meets a difficult situation in navigation for an officer of Admiral Mayo's rank to take the charge of the ship out of the hands of his subordinate temporarily, but it is said that Mayo spurs the feelings of those under him and keeps his hands off the running of the ship entirely, although of course he has the authority. The Admiral is a strict disciplinarian, but he enforces his law with such a just hand that it bears lightly on those who must obey. He is neither big nor little physically. His once sandy hair is thinning in the upper stretches. He has eyes of deep blue and his mouth is firm, the jaw firm and determined. His nose is prominent, and his manner of speaking is always deliberate and positive to a degree that sometimes creates an impression that he is more or less hard and unyielding. He is a man of business and action. He is not at all of the superficial type. He does what he thinks is right and he does not lose a great deal of time in deciding what to do or in doing it. He never sidesteps nor hesitates once he has made up his mind the right course to pursue. The man who will be detailed to the task of demolishing the German fleet if he can get at them is a few months past 59. He was born in Burlington, Vt., December 8, 1856. His advance after he was graduated from the Naval Academy in 1876 was rather more than ordinarily rapid.

which disposes of the idea that he has been merely a "plodder." No one has studied the problems of naval warfare with more serious thought than he. He has not, however, had many opportunities of putting his study into theories to practice use. His time may come shortly. If he does meet the Germans they will find in him the type of fighter of which the American navy has been proud for years. From Eastport, Me., down to the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Rio Grande our coast line covers a distance of 3,175 miles. Compared with the seaboard of the British Isles, for the protection of which the

greatest fighting fleet in the world is required. The coast line of England is 1,500 miles, that of Ireland, 1,200, and Scotland, with its rugged contour, has 1,200 nautical miles, the total being 3,900. But this does not explain the true strategic situation. The very disposition of Ireland in relation to England and Scotland makes the Irish Sea, which is so very hazardous, that the actual exposed coast to hostile attack is not 2,700 nautical miles.

The comparison of coast lines does not tell the whole story, because the shores of the British Isles are concentrated, as it were, and point to be defended may properly be termed remote from centers of supply vital to the permanent defenses instituted by the British navy authorities. Therefore Great Britain's fleet has its support land batteries, etc., that give it wide freedom of action in patrolling the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel and the immediate approaches to the Irish Sea. On the other hand just look at the map of our Atlantic and Gulf seaboard. From the easternmost point of Maine

to Key West there is a straightaway stretch of 2,435 nautical miles, and within these limits we know from the peace time manœuvres of our fleet that there are many points at which an aggressive and a determined foe might seek shelter and establish an advance base from which to operate either inland or for ravaging the contiguous coast for hundreds of miles north and south or east and west, as the case might be.

Again, on the Gulf coast from Key West to Mexico the littoral runs a length of 740 nautical miles, and within this limit there is absolutely not a single naval station capable of effecting any substantial repairs to the ships of our fighting fleet should they be in trouble. Indeed, this is generally the situation from Charleston south.

Plainly, then, when we realize how differently circumstanced are our Atlantic and Gulf seaboard in the matter of rail connections, when compared with the interlarded network of lines that cover England, Scotland and Wales, the strategic problem of the permanent defence is an infinitely harder one here than in the case of the British Isles. Therefore, our battleships and cruisers are more vital to our protection because upon them must rest the major responsibility either of holding an oversea foe at bay or intercepting his swiftly moving craft anywhere within the 3,175 sea miles mentioned.

In their home waters the British fighting ships have many naval bases to which they can quickly turn in case of need and know that their overboard will be promptly met. This is not so here, and Admiral Mayo's war-time problem is made all the harder by the location of our shipyards and our naval stations, and especially the weakness and the widely scattered disposition of the latter.

Under these circumstances his task of defence is going to call for the utmost skill on his part. He will be the double responsibility of guarding our seaboard and at the same time doing everything to conserve the battleships and cruisers.

To make this counter to the hostile force more of geography will be helpful. If we take the water route between our navy yards and our ports, the following figures prove our strategic situation:

From Boston to New York, 200 miles.
From New York to Philadelphia, 100 miles.
From Philadelphia to Norfolk, 200 miles.
From Norfolk to Key West, 2,435 miles.
From Key West to San Juan, 1,000 miles.
From San Juan to Havana, 100 miles.
From Havana to Santiago de Cuba, 100 miles.
From Santiago de Cuba to Matanzas, 100 miles.
From Matanzas to Cienfuegos, 100 miles.
From Cienfuegos to Pinar del Rio, 100 miles.
From Pinar del Rio to Havana, 100 miles.

And now for the kindred vital stations under which the great British fleet in its home waters has its support.

From the easternmost point of Maine to Key West there is a straightaway stretch of 2,435 nautical miles, and within these limits we know from the peace time manœuvres of our fleet that there are many points at which an aggressive and a determined foe might seek shelter and establish an advance base from which to operate either inland or for ravaging the contiguous coast for hundreds of miles north and south or east and west, as the case might be.

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The task of holding the nation's first line of defence the most difficult ever entrusted to a naval commander owing to the length of coast line he has to guard. The ships he leads range from super-dreadnoughts to little submarine chasers.

The recent conference between the commanders of the British and French naval forces in the western Atlantic and our naval authorities in Washington will probably lead to the United States navy taking over the entire task of patrolling the western Atlantic. This means that Admiral Mayo's ships will have to cover an area reaching southward from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland down to the West Indies and the Caribbean to the eastern entrance of the Panama Canal. To do this with any reasonable chance of success will demand ceaseless vigilance on the part of every one of the ships in the Atlantic fleet, not only of those heretofore numbered in the active squadrons but of the fighting craft of the reserve force on our eastern coast.

The second line of inner defence of the Atlantic seaboard will be relegated mainly to the reserve force, the principal ships of which are the Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Keokuk, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin, all battleships, and the armored cruiser North Carolina, the protected cruiser Chicago and the two scout cruisers Birmingham and Chester.

There are, besides, sixteen coast torpedo vessels, destroyers of displacement that would not permit them to serve with the battle fleet far at sea and out of sufficient military value to do patrol duty close to the coast. In addition to these there are probably fifteen torpedo boats that might be inserted into active service and answer admirably for the needs of the outposts to certain of our bays, harbors and rivers.

It is often to give Admiral Mayo the best reserve force for his second line of defence it is necessary that the enlisted personnel of the navy should be supplemented by thirty-thousand trained recruits, for it may be remembered that the active fleet has been running short handed for a year or two and the losses in reserves have had a most serious effect upon the manning of the fleet. The additional destroyers and torpedo boats mentioned have been, as a rule, out of commission and need whole crews to bring them into service.

Again, in this Admiral Mayo's task is made that of his headquarters, the commander in chief of the Grand Fleet, Sir David Beatty, who has all the tact he needs for offensive purposes.

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