

Administrative Reference Service  
Report No. 3

VA  
52  
.A24  
no. 3

U. S. NAVAL PORT OFFICERS IN THE BORDEAUX REGION,  
1917-1919

Prepared by  
Dr. Henry P. Beers

Under the Supervision of  
Dr. R. G. Albion, Recorder of Naval Administration  
Secretary's Office, Navy Department  
Lt. Cmdr. E. J. Leahy, Director, Office of Records  
Administration, Administrative Office,  
Navy Department

Office of Records Administration  
Administrative Office  
Navy Department  
September 1943

Navy Department Library  
Division of Naval Records & History, OP-29  
Washington 25, D.C.

V

U. S. Naval Port Officers in the Bordeaux Region  
1917-1919

For the use of the American Expeditionary Force of the United States Army and American naval forces, it was necessary to acquire and develop extensive port facilities in France in 1917. Ports suitable for troop transports, cargo vessels, and naval patrol and escort vessels had to be found, so that the United States could get its men and material to the front and make its might felt in the struggle against Germany. During the preceding years of the war, the British had preempted the French Channel ports and the railroads leading from them to the front—lines also utilized for military operations—so that it was necessary for the United States to use the Bay of Biscay ports on the west coast of France. Besides being more remote from the front, a fact which increased transportation difficulties, most of these ports were not of sufficient depth to admit the largest ships and were poorly supplied with berths and facilities.

Since Bordeaux was the largest commercial port on the Bay of Biscay and third largest in the country, ranking after Le Havre and Marseilles, it was natural for it to become an American base. It was also natural for local interests to seek to attain this desirable end, and they did by instigating a report by a French military commission which recommended the establishment of a station for patrol vessels at Le Verdon, the use of Pauillac for discharging cargoes, troops, and animals, and the construction of new facilities at Bassens. An inspection of the ports on the west coast of France was made upon orders issued shortly after the declaration of war by a joint Franco-American commission. It reported that the early debarkation of American troops should take place at St. Nazaire, but it indicated that La Rochelle and Bordeaux would have to be used. Extensive improvements in the way of docks and railroad facilities were recommended for the last harbor, which should be kept unencumbered pending their completion. There appears to have been an examination of these ports by a joint board of U. S. Army and U. S. Navy officers during this period. In June 1917 a Military Railroad Commission composed of American Army officers made a tour of the French front; they inspected the railroad lines connecting it with the

Bay of Biscay, and the ports of the bay, including those in the Bordeaux region; and they collected data which was used in planning the Army's transportation system in France.

The ancient city of Bordeaux, famous in the United States for the wines named after it that are produced in the neighboring country, is located on a semi-circle of the Garonne River sixty miles from the sea. Although not capable of accommodating the largest ocean liners of that day, the port of Bordeaux possessed considerable ship-building, repair, and supply organizations, in addition to being well protected from the weather, secure from naval attack, and remote from the usual zones of submarine activities. Twenty miles below Bordeaux at Bec d'Ames the Garonne unites with the Dordogne River to form the Gironde River, a wide estuary which one naval officer who served on it likened to the upper half of Delaware Bay. Other ports on the Garonne-Gironde system employed by United States forces included Bassens, four miles below Bordeaux on the east bank of the Garonne, and Pauillac on the west bank of the Gironde twenty-five miles from its mouth, with wharfage for vessels too large to ascend to Bordeaux. At Le Verdon on the southern side near the mouth of the Gironde a great arm of the land provides a sheltered roadstead where vessels could be anchored pending the receipt of movement orders. From Le Verdon a railroad provided a further means of travelling to Bordeaux. Across the embochure from Le Verdon, lay Royan, one of the chief sea bathing resorts of France, which was useful chiefly because of its location as it lacked wharfage with discharge facilities.

Before the entrance of the Americans into Bordeaux, it had been developed as a revictualling base by the French. To increase its capacity for this purpose, new quays and facilities were constructed at Bordeaux, Bassens, Pauillac, and at Blaye on the east bank of the Gironde not far from Pauillac. So crowded were the docks on the river in 1915 that colliers were considerably delayed before getting berths. The total quantity of imports was greatly expanded while the exports were even more greatly reduced. But the advent of the Americans was to effect an even greater change in the economic life of the region.

U.S. NAVY  
ROCHEFORT DISTRICT



E

V

Z

A

R

H

BISCAY

O F

B A Y

Fronerié

St. Jean de Luz  
Bayonne

Tonnay - Charente

Rochefort

La Rochelle

La

Pallise

Charente

Sables d'Olonne

Pointe de Gourde

Le Verdon

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

Pointe de Gourde

Le Verdon

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

Talmont

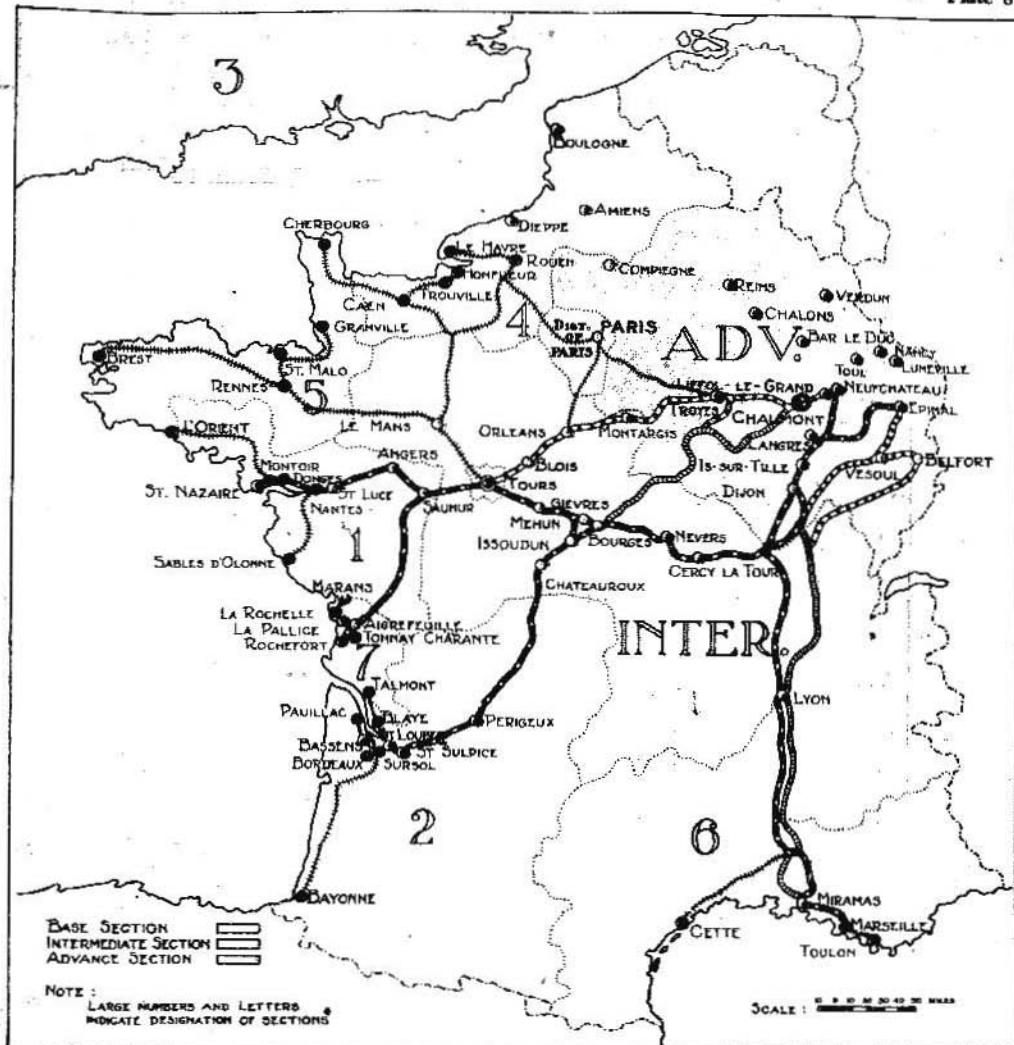
Pointe de Gourde

Le

Gouper

Geysen

T



## PRINCIPAL FRENCH PORTS AND RAILROADS USED BY AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

(●) GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (●) HQ SERVICES OF SUPPLY (●) PRINCIPAL PORTS (●) SECONDARY PORTS (●) IMPORTANT TOWNS  
 (—) MAIN LINES (----) SECOND LINES (---) THIRD LINES (····) OTHER LINES

The importance of the port facilities in France in the American military effort was realized by Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves, commander of the Cruiser and Transport Force of the U. S. Navy, who said that "the number of troops that may be landed in France at present depends not upon the success of the anti-submarine campaign, and consequent tonnage available and building, but upon the port facilities provided in France and England for the disembarkation of the troops and supplies that must come from America."

The U. S. Navy Department at the outbreak of the war had no plans for the organization of a port system and little idea of what would be needed in connection therewith. Following the decision of the government to arm merchant vessels, Rear Admiral William S. Sims was ordered towards the end of March 1917 to England to represent the Navy and keep it informed of developments. On June 14, 1917, he was placed in command of our naval vessels abroad as Force Commander, U. S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters. Secretary of the Navy Daniels informed Sims on May 8 that the French government had requested and the Navy Department was contemplating the establishment of temporary bases at Bordeaux and Brest. Sims approved—provided the destroyer bases did not suffer. Orders were issued by the Secretary on June 1 to Capt. William B. Fletcher to organize the vessels being fitted out for distant service as the U. S. Patrol Squadrons Operating in European Waters, to proceed to Brest, establish a base there, and begin operations in the waters adjacent to the French coast under the general command of Vice Admiral W. S. Sims. Slightly more than a month later Captain Fletcher reached Brest with his converted yachts, and, after locating his headquarters on shore at Brest, began operating with the French Navy against German submarines. His original complement of eight vessels was augmented by two additional squadrons of converted yachts in August and September, and by a destroyer squadron in October.

At the beginning of June, Comdr. John B. Patton, an officer of considerable experience in naval construction who had recently been recalled from retirement, received orders from the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation to proceed to Bordeaux, France and take command of the naval base to be established there. He could get no definite

orders in the department as to what his exact duties were to be, but, knowing that he would have to establish the base, he asked for and was assigned an engineer officer, a paymaster, and several yoemen. He was told by the French naval attache in Washington that the Navy Department had agreed to establish two naval bases in France. Arriving in Bordeaux in the Espagne on July 18, he reported by letter to Admiral Sims and to Captain Richard H. Jackson, the Navy Representative in Paris. After seeing them and Captain Fletcher subsequently in Paris, he was still without specific instructions from the American Naval authorities so he proceeded along the lines already worked out by the French, who had planned the development of a coaling and supply station at Pauillac for the use of the naval patrol and escort vessels operating along the coast.

The naval station at Pauillac was located in the neighboring hamlet of Trompeloup, thirty miles from Bordeaux, where a steel and concrete wharf was available for use. Here with the approval and assistance of the French authorities Commander Patton began the development of a base for the use of the American naval vessels which were just then arriving on the coast of France. He acquired land, rented buildings, contracted for coal, and began the construction of another wharf from piling and planks. The transformation of vineyards, industrial plants, and pastures into a naval base comprising storage buildings, housing for personnel, and repair facilities went ahead under the direct supervision of Lieut. Louis L. Bernier, a native of France long a resident of the United States and an experienced ship repair man who had enrolled in the Naval Reserve Force and accompanied Patton to Bordeaux. Admiral Sims, to whose headquarters in London Commander Patton had been reporting his troubles, sought in August to obtain authorization from the Navy Department for the expenditure of \$150,000 on the proposed base, but Admiral William S. Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations, responded that it was not the department's policy to commit itself to the establishment of shore bases except for aviation purposes to a greater extent than the military situation absolutely demanded and that it was the intention to supply two repair ships for the use of the small craft operating on the French coast. Sim's rejoinder was that the situation demanded a shore establishment at Pauillac and that furnishing mother ships

would be diverting valuable trans-Atlantic tonnage. In reply Admiral Sims was informed that the U. S. S. Panther and the U. S. S. Bridgeport would be sent to France. This decision forced the discontinuance of the work on the repair shop at Pauillac much to the disappointment of the French, but the preparations for its use as a coaling station went ahead. A former laundry building furnished accommodations for the men to be attached to the station, and ample storerooms.

At Bordeaux in the meantime Commander Patton had been organizing the staff of the American Naval Base. Its organization, as prescribed in a general order of July 31, 1917, comprised several departments. The office of the Commanding Officer or Port Officer, consisting of Commander Patton, a chief yeoman and 3 yeomen, was concerned with the movements of vessels, log books, personnel records, the Bureau of Navigation, and communication. Paymaster F. B. Colby acted as disbursing officer, supply officer, and accounting officer and was concerned with general administration, contracts, requisitions, pay roll, storehouses and supplies, ordnance stores, and commissary department. He was assisted by a chief yeoman and a yeoman. The industrial department was under Lieutenant Bernier and comprised a civil engineer, an electrician, a chief petty officer, and ten men. Surgeon H. Shaw, Assistant Surgeon L. Hays, and four hospital corpsmen composed the medical department, which took care of the sick bay, hospital arrangements, and sanitary inspection. At the end of September, nineteen enlisted men were included in the personnel at Bordeaux; these increased to only twenty-four at the end of 1917.

To look after the interests of American ships which were beginning to arrive in considerable numbers at French ports, Admiral Sims ordered Comdr. Frank P. Baldwin to duty as naval port officer at St. Nazaire and Commander Patton to additional duty in the same capacity at Bordeaux. The latter's orders were issued to him on September 24, 1917 and designated him as naval port officer at Bordeaux, Pauillac, and Bassens. Admiral Sims notified Rear Admiral Fletcher, Commander, U. S. Patrol Squadrons Operating on the French Coast, that these officers were to be under his orders and described their duties as follows:

## 5.

SHIPPING

He should control all U.S. Shipping, permitting no vessel to sail except under his orders, and in regular organized convoys. The term "U.S. Shipping" is to be construed as embracing troop transports, chartered supply vessels carrying army supplies, Naval supply vessels, all vessels under charter to the U.S. Government, and such other U.S. Merchant vessels as may visit the port in question. Some difficulty may be experienced in controlling U.S. vessels which are not under charter by the Government, but by working with the French authorities, it may be possible to withhold the clearance of such vessels until they express willingness to carry out orders. All Allied shipping in British waters is now required to travel in convoy, regardless of nationality, and the U.S. Government is shortly to require all vessels to leave home ports in convoy. In order to reduce shipping losses on this side it is necessary to take a firm hand and dispatch our vessels in such a way as to provide the greatest security.

6. TROOP TRANSPORTS AND STORE SHIPS

The Naval Port Officer should be informed by you of the prospective arrival of Troop Transports and Store Ships, and all arrangements made for their escort into port. In the case of vessels of the same classes outward bound they are to be detained in port, or at a safe anchorage in the vicinity of the port, until a convoy can be formed and a suitable escort provided. The Naval Port Officer must keep you informed as to the dates of readiness for sailing of such vessels, and permit none of them to sail except in convoys. This will, probably, result in the delay of some ships, but it will ensure safety, and it seems probable that a regular outward bound convoy from a suitable port may be arranged to sail about once every eight days. In such convoy can be placed any Allied westbound merchant vessels. Your duty with respect to these convoys will be to see that they are provided with suitable escort

and to give instructions as to time of sailing. Ordinarily they should leave the French coast just before dark, so as to pass through the most dangerous areas by night, and be escorted for about forty-eight hours. You would also prescribe the route to be pursued through the danger zone upon information furnished from London or Paris or derived from the local French authorities.

7. The internal organization of the convoy will be the responsibility of the Senior Officer of the convoy, who should provide the necessary instructions for zigzagging, behavior under attack, dispersal, rendezvous, etc. As it is probable that the Naval Port Officer will frequently be consulted on these matters, he should be kept supplied with all the latest information as to tested and approved methods, so that he may give proper advice on request.

8.

AIRCRAFT

The Naval Port Officer should, whenever possible, arrange for the co-operation of the French Coastal Air Stations to assist our inward and outward bound convoys. This may be accomplished by your office, but the Port Officer should have full authority to communicate direct with the local French authorities as well.

9.

MINESWEEPING

The Naval Port Officer should, by constant communication with you and with the local French authorities keep himself fully informed as to the state of the approach channels, the progress of mine-sweeping operations and the results of such operations, and should keep you similarly informed.

10.

COAL AND OTHER SUPPLIES

The Naval Port Officer should keep you informed as to the amount of coal and other supplies on hand and the amounts desired from time to time.

## 11.

INFORMATION

The Naval Port Officer should interview the Captain or Master of every U. S. Man-of-War, Transport, Supply Ship, and other vessels entering his port, for the purpose of bringing out any criticisms they may have to make as to difficulties of entering the ports, lack of pilots, patrols, etc., and any suggestions they may have for improvements. These matters are of urgent importance, particularly in connection with our Troop Transports and Supply Ships. Conditions that may be handled by the local French authorities should be taken up direct with them.

## 12.

CO-ORDINATION

It will be the duty of the Naval Port Officer to keep in constant and close touch with the U.S. Army representatives and the French authorities at the ports to work in close harmony with them and to use every endeavor to avoid friction and clashes of authority.

## 13.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Naval Port Officer will have complete charge of the communication office at his port. He will be given the services of a Communication Officer, whenever such detail is found possible, and will, also, be furnished with a Communication Staff of the necessary size.

14. At St-Nazaire Assistant Paymaster Cunningham is, at present, detailed as Communication Officer, and he will continue at that capacity until such time as another officer can be sent for that duty. Paymaster Cunningham has certain additional duties in connection with disbursements which he will continue to perform. A separate letter will be written going into the duties of the Communication Officer in more detail.

15. The Communication Officer at each port will, under the instructions of the Port Officer, and with his advice, assistance and co-operation, handle all matters in regard to communications,

make suggestions for improvement and make provision for keeping a secret file of all important messages; also, he will take steps to guard against secret communications falling into the hands of any but Commissioned Officers, or such member of the Communication Force as it may be found necessary, owing to shortage of personnel, to entrust them to.

16. It is particularly necessary that the prospective dates of arrival of Troop convoys and Supply convoys be kept secret, and be communicated to the French authorities and the U.S. Army authorities only in sufficient time to permit them to make the proper preparations for their reception.

17. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All reports made by the Naval Port Officer should be made to you direct, the most secret and rapid means of communication being utilized. The Naval Port Officer should, however be authorized to communicate direct with my Staff Representative in Paris and with other Naval Port Officers in cases of urgent necessity. He should, in all cases, immediately furnish you with copies of his communications.

18. ARMED GUARDS

Whenever a vessel carrying a Naval Armed Guard enters a Port Officer's port he is to inspect the Guard, or have it inspected by a competent representative, and should make to you, for further transmission to me, a report covering the following points and any others that may suggest themselves in individual cases:

- (a) Vessel - from - to
- (b) Master
- (c) Officer or P.O. in charge of guard
- (d) Number, calibre, and condition of guns
- (e) Arrangement and condition of magazines
- (f) Personnel
- (g) Organization

- (h) Co-operation between guard and ship personnel
- (i) Food

Especial attention will be paid to the question of uniforms and personal neatness of guards, as the appearance of these men will have a considerable effect on the opinion of a very large number of people as to the general efficiency of our Navy.

19. As the appointment of Naval Port Officers is a new departure, the duties of such Officers cannot be prescribed completely and with exactness. Much must be left to the individual, and, in the discharge of his duties, it will be necessary that he exercise good judgment, tact and discretion, in order to avoid friction with the local authorities, both French and U.S. Army. He must, on the one hand, avoid unwarranted assumptions of authority, and he must, on the other hand, use every endeavor to advance the common cause, which is that of the safe and prompt entry and dispatch of Troop Ships, Supply Ships and other vessels. It is particularly important that between you and the Port Officer there shall be a feeling of mutual confidence, and a constant exchange of information. It is also very important, as has already been stated, that the prospective movements, both outward and inward, of U.S. vessels, be protected by secrecy, by the greatest possible use of the convoy plan, and by the provision of suitable escorts. If these objects are successfully accomplished minor difficulties and failings will have no bearing on the final general result.

On October 19, 1917 Rear Admiral Fletcher communicated to Commander Patton secret instructions as follows:

1. You will be the Port representative at Pauillac, Bordeaux and Bassens, France, of the Commander U.S. Patrol Squadrons Operating on French Coast.

2. You will, as far as is possible, be informed in advance of the arrival of U.S. Shipping Government chartered or private, bound for ports on the Gironde River.

3. You will similarly inform the Squadron Commander as to the dates when such vessels are ready to leave your ports, and as far in advance of departure as possible.

4. If such vessels are bound north or south along the French Coast, they will take advantage of the regularly constituted convoys.

5. You will report the names, speed and size of vessels bound off shore in order that instructions may be issued for them to proceed to such points as may be designated for assembly and escort in convoys.

6. You will arrange as may be necessary for the departure of vessels in Coastal convoys. Information concerning submarines and mines should be obtained by the Masters of vessels at the latest possible moment before leaving your port, from the offices of the French Port Authorities on the Gironde. Port authorities must also be kept informed of the sailings so that such preparations as are desirable and necessary may be assured by mine draggers and local escort, by air as well as by water.

7. Should convoys proceed from sea direct into the Gironde, escorted by American vessels, this office should be informed as far in advance as is possible, of the channels which are safe and can be used, through the Naval Port Officer and the C.D.P.B.

8. Lines of communication from and to you are entirely French. It will be necessary to work with them and through them in order that both French officials and ourselves may be informed of the existing situation. Every endeavor is being made by the Commandant Superieur to perfect the Communication system. All delays in the receipt

or transmission of messages will be reported, so that the cause may be followed up.

9. Report weekly the amount of coal belonging to the Navy received and expended, and the amount remaining on hand. At the end of the month, report the amount received and expended during the month, and the amount remaining on hand.

10. Your attention is invited to paragraph 11 of Enclosure "A", reference (a), and to enclosure "B". These matters will be made the subject of report to the Squadron Commander as soon as possible after receipt of the information. Attention is also invited to paragraphs 12, 13, 17, 18 and 19 of reference (a), Enclosure "A".

11. In connection with the movements of vessels, attention is particularly called to the necessity of absolute secrecy of your codes and coding apparatus, and the secrecy of all despatches concerning the movements of all vessels. All messages received or sent will be entered when decoded, or upon coding, in ink in a record book. Access to this book will be had only by yourself and such persons as are thoroughly reliable. Copies will be limited to these absolutely necessary, marked secret, made only by a reliable person and delivered by such a person, marked "To be opened by addressee only."

12. Every endeavor will be made to work to the common cause of producing efficient service and cheerful and loyal cooperation within our own force, and with the representatives of our sister service, and with those of our Ally, the French.

American ship arrivals were not very numerous at Bordeaux in 1917, for the movement of troops and supplies across the Atlantic did not get well under way until the following year. Moreover the docks then under construction at Pauillac and Bassens were not ready for use until the latter year. In December 1917 there was discharged at Bordeaux 9,800 tons of general cargo, 28,300 tons of coal, and 6,600 tons of lumber.

These quantities were to be multiplied many times in the next year.

The development of the aviation program of the Navy in France resulted in the establishment of several air stations in the Bordeaux region as a part of the system which eventually was completed along the coast for patrol, escort, and reconnaissance purposes. In view of the plan to erect at Pauillac an aviation assembly and repair plant, general storehouses, and barracks for the distribution of enlisted aviation personnel throughout France, Capt. Hutch I. Cone, Commander, U. S. Naval Aviation Forces, Foreign Service, recommended to Admiral Sims on November 22, 1917 that the naval base at that place be changed to an aviation center and placed under his command. A naval air station was commissioned at Pauillac on December 1, and on the twenty-second Admiral Sims removed it from the command of the U. S. Naval Base Bordeaux. The assembly and repair plant eventually spread over a considerable acreage of vineyards and occupied the village of Trompeloup near which the air station was located. Here knocked-down aeroplanes received from the United States were assembled, tested, and flown to the operating fields. Other aviation activities in the region included a flying school at Moutchic (Lacanau), and an operating field at Arcachon. A lighter than air station was begun at Gujan-Mestras, but it was not completed before the end of hostilities.

To effect coordination over American naval activities in France, the Navy Department directed Admiral Sims on January 4, 1918 to designate Rear Admiral Henry B. Wilson, who had succeeded Captain Fletcher in command of the U.S. Patrol Squadrons Operating on the French Coast on November 1, 1917, as "Senior U. S. Naval Officer in France," and to direct him to organize his forces according to a general plan comprising six principal fields of activity: (1) naval forces afloat; (2) port organization and administration; (3) aviation; (4) intelligence; (5) communication; and (6) supply and pay. In addition to these matters he was also to take up with French authorities and the U. S. Army any questions that arose, provided they were not of such character that they should be handled by Sims or the department. He was directed in connection with the port organization

and administration to divide the west coast of France into three districts with headquarters at Brest, St. Nazaire, and Bordeaux under officers of command rank. Upon receipt of this order Admiral Sims called Wilson, Jackson, and Cone to London for a conference in which an agreement was reached relative to the reorganization of the forces in France. Admiral Sims then drew up some detailed instructions covering the organization of the forces in France, which were sent to Wilson who, as Commander, U. S. Naval Forces in France, was to have charge of all floating naval forces permanently assigned to duty on the channel and Atlantic coasts of France. For the administration of the port organization he was instructed to establish district headquarters at Brest, Lorient, and Rochefort; these places were chosen by Sims instead of those indicated by the Navy Department because they were the French Prefectures Maritimes and the sites of French navy yards. The proximity of the American and French headquarters would facilitate liaison between the naval forces of the two countries. The district organization was considered desirable because it was believed that the direct routing of ships from the United States to ports of destination would be necessary.

The district organization was set up by Admiral Wilson in an order of January 18 addressed to the district commanders. Their mission was to safeguard the passage of American troop and store ships and to co-operate with the French naval forces for the protection of shipping and for the conduct of submarine warfare. The limits of the districts were described; those for the Rochefort District extending from Fromentine on the north to the Spanish border on the south—a 280 mile stretch of coast. The district commanders were charged with the following duties: operations of vessels that might be placed under their command; command, administration, repairing, and supply of vessels assigned to their districts; development and maintenance of adequate naval port facilities; establishment and maintenance of prompt and certain communication; supervision of American shipping and of United States naval personnel on merchant ships. The naval port officers were subject to their orders. Movements of ships were to be reported directly to the Commander, U. S. Naval Forces in France. Captain Henry H. Hough was placed in command

of the Brest District, Capt. Thomas P. Magruder the Lorient District, and Capt. Newton A. McCully the Rochefort District.

Captain McCully left Brest in the U. S. S. May on January 20 to assume his command at Rochefort. He did not proceed directly to that place, however, for, pursuant to orders from Admiral Wilson, he visited Lorient, St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, Pauillac, and Le Verdon and conferred with officials at those places before arriving at Rochefort at the end of the month. He went ashore there on February 5 to organize and establish the district headquarters. His duties as district commander were in addition to his command of the Squadron 5, Patrol Forces, Atlantic Fleet, which he had been exercising since the previous October. Upon completing his tour, McCully reported that the district comprised the ports of La Pallice, Rochefort, Bordeaux, Arcachon, Bayonne, and St. Jean de Luz, the most important section being that of the Gironde. He recommended that central direction of the work of the district would be best located in the entrance to that river at Royan, but the move was never approved. Other suggestions included the location of a station ship for communications and escort duty and repair ship at Le Verdon, port officers at La Pallice and Bordeaux, and naval base commander and staff at Pauillac.

The district organization remained in use throughout the war. To the original three districts was added in April 1918 a fourth at Cherbourg of which Comdr. David F. Boyd was given command. After his experience with the district organization during the war, Admiral Wilson reported towards its close a strong approbation of the system, which provided the necessary decentralization of administration, particularly of details, required to successfully perform the operations of the Navy connected with the protection of American ships. It was not merely enough, in his opinion, to decentralize matters, for they also had to be placed in charge of officers of considerable rank who could command the respect and attention of French officials and U. S. Army officers. Placing the districts under officers of rank also made it more difficult for the French to obtain control of them. He believed that the character of the work performed by the district commanders

justified the rank of rear admiral and recommended that rank for McCully and Hough.

On the same day that he issued instructions to the district commanders Admiral Wilson issued other directions to naval port officers, which described their mission and duties as follows:

1. Your mission and duties are summarized as follows:

MISSION: To facilitate the berthing, discharging, and prompt sailing of U.S. troop and store ships.

DUTIES: (a) To cooperate fully with the U.S. Army and French authorities with a view to expediting despatching of vessels.

(b) To immediately inform the Commander in France and your District Commander of the arrival of all U.S. vessels at your port. The Force Commander and the Army headquarters will be informed by the Commander in France.

(c) To interview Commanding Officers or Masters of all U.S. ships on arrival as to incidents of voyage and their needs.

(d) Inspect the U.S. Navy armed guard crews and radio men on U.S. vessels other than regular commissioned U.S. Naval vessels.

(e) To assist in the supplying of vessels with fuel and supplies insofar as this can be properly handled by the Navy.

(f) To pay naval members of armed guards on presentation of memorandum rolls or other necessary vouchers, and to furnish them with clothing and small stores.

- (g) Investigate offenses committed by U.S. Navy personnel on vessels other than regular commissioned U.S. Navy vessels.
- (h) Investigate and take necessary action on Admiralty cases involving U.S. Navy.
- (i) Keep Commander in France informed of the readiness of vessels and of the speed of which they are capable through the danger zone.
- (j) Transmit sailing orders received from the Commander in France or District Commander.
- (k) Indoctrinate Masters as to precautions to be observed within the danger zone and familiarize them with the prescribed convoy doctrine.
- (l) As near as possible prior to sailing, furnish convoy and escort commander with the latest information in regard to submarine and mine activities.
- (m) Keep Commander in France informed weekly as to the amount of coal belonging to the Navy on hand, the amount expended and received.

The foregoing instructions were taken almost verbatim from Sim's orders to Wilson, being modified slightly to suit the local situation.

Some special instructions were sent by Wilson to Commander Patton at Bordeaux. These stated that the district commander at Rochefort was responsible for reporting U. S. ship movements in La Pallice, La Rochelle, and Rochefort and the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux for those in the ports of Pauillac, Bassens, Bordeaux, and Le Verdon. Until direct telegraph and telephone communication was provided between Bordeaux and Le Verdon he was to depend upon the French

commandant at the latter place for reports on ship movements there.

Admiral Wilson was dissatisfied with the retention at Bordeaux of an officer, who had been assigned there for the purpose of establishing a repair base, as a Naval Port Officer and requested his replacement by a younger man with executive ability and lots of steam. London naval headquarters finally arranged with Wilson and Cone for the transfer of Commander Patton to the post of commandant of the Aviation assembly and repair plant at Pauillac. When the change occurred on February 10, 1918, he was succeeded temporarily as Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux by Lieutenant Bernier. On May 28 the position was taken over by Commander Ralph P. Craft, who was detached for the purpose from the U. S. S.

Aphrodite on which he had been serving recently as escort commander on the Verdon convoy. In June the port office at Bordeaux embraced the following departments: naval port officer, marine superintendent, assistant naval port officer, patrols and inspections, repair officer, medical officer, coding officer, radio repair station, pay and disbursing office. Shortly afterwards patrols and inspections seem to have been assigned to separate officers. An organization outline for September 21, 1918 lists the members of the staff as follows:

Naval Port Officer	Comdr., U.S.N.
Assistant Naval Port Officer	Lieut., U.S.N.R.F.
Engineer Officer	Lieut.,(j.g.),U.S.N.
Inspections and Docks	" U.S.N.R.F.
Correspondence Officer	Ensign "
Patrol Officer	" "
Communication	" "
Radio Repair, Bassens	" "
District Medical Inspection	Comdr. (Medical)
Medical Officer (2)	Lieut "
Pay and Disbursing Officer	" (Pay), U.S.N.

The enlisted personnel attached to the naval port office included a number of yoemen and seamen of different classes employed as correspondence, communication, mail and pay clerks, messengers, automobile, motor cycle, and truck drivers, repair gang, and in the dispensary run by the medical officer. Until October 1918 these

men were put upon subsistence; they were then barracks in a remodeled chateau about a mile from the port office. As this building did not provide sufficient accommodations, portable barracks were erected in a public park nearby. Suitable equipment was installed in these barracks to keep them in proper sanitary condition. Better discipline was possible through having the men in barracks.

The location at Pauillac of the aviation assembly and repair station and its use as a port of discharge for material destined for the trans-Atlantic radio station being constructed by the U. S. Navy at Croix d'Hins greatly increased the shipping at that place. The escort vessels which convoyed the ships that arrived in the Gironde obtained at Pauillac coal imported from Cardiff, Wales. Water was available there, and fresh provisions could also be procured by ordering from Bordeaux, where liberty parties could visit for amusement in its theatres and cafes. After his transfer to Pauillac, Commander Patton acted as Naval Port Officer there until the arrival of Lieut. Herbert R. A. Borchardt, U. S. N. on March 10, 1918 to perform the duties of that position. He was succeeded in June by Lieut. George F. Keene U.S.N.R.F., who continued to serve until late in the year. When Comdr. Frank T. Evans relieved Patton, who was invalidated home because of an attack of neuritis, as commandant of the aviation establishment at Pauillac in July, he removed his office to a more convenient location at Trompeloup, and at the request of the port officer, the communication officer, and the Army Transport Service officer who was stationed there provided them with space in the same building. When Ensign Andrew Robeson, U. S. N. R. F. was ordered to duty as Naval Port Officer at Pauillac towards the end of October, he was placed under the military supervision and control of the commandant of the naval air station, but he was directed to make reports concerning ship movements and the like to the District Commander, Rochefort.

The expansion of shipping on the Gironde River and the system of operations which was developed to handle it resulted in the establishment of other port officers, in part according to Captain McCully's original recommendations. At Bassens, which was operated as part

of the Bordeaux office, a U. S. Naval Dock Officer was stationed to act as liaison between the captains and masters of American ships and the French captain of the port in matters connected with mooring and navigation. A Communication or Liaison Officer was maintained on board the French station ship Marthe Solange at Le Verdon. A Naval Port Officer at Royan was used principally as a signal station to report ships entering and leaving the Gironde. This place was under the command of Lieut. William V. Astor from February to November 1918. An officer in the Naval Reserve Force, Lieutenant Astor had served during most of 1917 on his own yacht the Noma, which he had presented to the Navy, and on the staff of the Naval Port Office at Bordeaux during the early part of the winter.

In addition to the naval port offices on the Gironde, others were established in Rochefort District during the first part of 1918 at Rochefort, La Pallice, St. Jean de Luz, and Sables d'Olonne. These ports were used by cargo vessels; La Pallice and neighboring La Rochelle and Marans being used particularly for discharging coal brought across from Great Britain.

Since the bulk of the American shipping to French ports during World War I was used to man and supply the American Expeditionary Forces, the U. S. Army organized a transportation system in France. The first convoy of troop transports reached St. Nazaire late in June 1917, and that was the scene of the earliest activities of the Army Transport Service. That convoy and all subsequent convoys sailing directly from ports of embarkation in the United States to French ports escorted by cruisers attached to the U. S. Cruiser and Transport Force, which was commanded by Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves, U. S. N. To supply and equip the 2,000,000 troops that eventually made up the A. E. F., it was necessary to build up a vast fleet of cargo carriers; most of these became attached to the Naval Overseas Transportation Service, which was established in the Navy Department in January 1918, following an agreement with the War Department and the U. S. Shipping Board by which the Navy was to man vessels entering the war zones. After studying the British and French organizations, General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-chief, American Expeditionary Forces, decided that the

responsibility for the movement of troops and supplies from the hold of the vessel at the port to the end of the railroad journey in the rear of the front lines should be vested in a transportation department, and on July 5, 1917 he established this system. William W. Atterbury, a former vice-president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, appeared in France at the end of August with orders from the Secretary of War appointing him Director General of Transportation, A. E. F. In the following month General Atterbury and a party of American and French officers inspected the ports on the Bay of Biscay and the railroads connecting them with the interior to secure information upon which to determine ways to improve the systems for the use of the U. S. Army. The list of projects drawn up included the extension of facilities at Bassens and Pauillac.

The selection by the Army of ports to be used as ports of disembarkation for troops and discharge of supplies resulted in the establishment at those ports of supply organizations known as Base Sections, superintendents of the Army Transport Service, and naval port offices. Base Sections came to be organized at St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, Le Havre, Brest, Marseille, and La Pallice. That at Bordeaux, the second one established, was called Base Section No. 2; it was commanded by Brig. Gen. William S. Scott and later by Brig. Gen. William D. Connor. Here towards the end of October 1917, an Army Transport Service Superintendent's office was opened by a major, who was succeeded by other majors and lieutenant colonels. The Base Section headquarters at Bordeaux was a much larger organization than the Naval Port Office, whose task was a subordinate one of considerable importance as it concerned the maintenance of the life line across the Atlantic.

The activities of the Army in the Gironde region were widespread. At American Bassens the Corps of Engineers constructed between August 1917 and April 1918 a pile dock containing ten berths, which was the largest construction of this type undertaken by the Army in France and which made Bassens its most efficient port. To distinguish it from French (old) Bassens the new port was called American (or New) Bassens.

The assignment of six berths for the Army at French

Bassens aided in the building of the new berths and provided a greater quantity of wharfage at this favorable point on the right bank of the river, affording access to railroads running to the front. A refrigerating plant was put up here by the Quartermaster Corps. Other dock installations were undertaken at nearby Lormont, at St. Loubes and St. Pardon on the Dordogne River, and at Talmont near Royan, but these were not completed before the Armistice. A number of camps were built around Bordeaux, including camps for laborers near Bassens, Genicart Camp and Grange Neuve Camp at Lormont, Camp Le Hunt at Le Courneau, a combined artillery and balloon training camp at Camp de Souge, and cantonments at St. Loubès, St. Sulpice, Gradignan, and Begles. There was a base hospital for troops at Bordeaux, a veterinary hospital at Carbon Blanc, a remount depot at Marignac, and a motor park at Bordeaux. To serve the port of Bordeaux, a great storage depot was begun at St. Sulpice, nine miles from Bassens in March 1918.

In late December 1917 Captain Jackson wrote Admiral Sims from Paris that the Navy would have to face the necessity of sending troop transports to Bordeaux, for the Army was preparing camps there for the reception of soldiers. Since the Navy escorted the troopships, this plan gave it some concern. Captain Jackson believed it would be safer to route the convoy directly to Bordeaux than to shunt transports south from St. Nazaire to Bordeaux as the voyage along the coast would be dangerous. On the last day of the year he notified Sims that General Pershing wanted Bordeaux used to the fullest extent for troopships and that the Army was then ready to receive troops there. Although the troop convoys had not yet become nearly as frequent as they would, difficulty was being experienced in handling those that were arriving at Brest and St. Nazaire, which were the principal ports utilized for the debarking of troops brought to France in American convoys. Hence the Army's desire to use Bordeaux as a port of debarkation. Unwillingly the Navy yielded to Army pressure, for the despatch of troopships to Bordeaux meant the division of a convoy somewhere in the eastern Atlantic Ocean, which not only resulted in weakened escorts but put a severe strain on the Navy's ability to provide escort vessels. The dispersion of the troop transports was

a means of speeding up their return to the United States and so hastening the movement of troops abroad, and this was what was wanted in Washington.

Early in 1918 transports began arriving at Bordeaux, and in March 5,459 troops were landed principally from the Tenadores, Mercury, and Mallory. Smaller numbers were brought in on freighters in that and subsequent months. A somewhat higher number, 6,161, was disembarked in April chiefly from the Powhatan, Martha Washington, and Rochambeau. Some of these transports made repeated trips to Bordeaux. Although these vessels were among the smaller transports, some of them had difficulty in entering and ascending the Gironde. The commanding officer of the Powhatan reported delays in waiting for the high tide to get over the bar at the mouth of the river and at Pauillac in waiting for a berth. As the engines had to be kept running while at anchor at this place in order to shift the ship with changing levels in the river, no opportunity was offered for overhauling work. Transports continued to arrive, however, landing around 11,000 troops in both May and June. From the Tenadores Admiral Wilson received word in July that it had rested in the mud while unloading. Finally the Army, because of the difficulties encountered on the Gironde, adopted the policy in August of sending transports to Bordeaux only when they carried a large amount of cargo in addition to troops and their equipment and of occasionally sending transports there in order to return troops to the United States. A total of 50,000 soldiers was debarked on the Gironde.

The Army Transport Service was represented on the Gironde not only at Bordeaux, where a superintendent had been stationed in October 1917, but also at Pauillac and at Bassens. Troop transports of too deep draft to ascend to Bordeaux were discharged at Pauillac under the direction of Major H. H. Haines, Army Transport Service superintendent. He also boarded transports on the way to Bordeaux to present orders to the officer in charge of the troops. The handling of the transports at Bassens where they were discharged by the Army, was in the hands of a Marine Superintendent, who was a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve Force. The officer who reported for this duty on October 26, 1917 was Henry W. Barstow, a former ship captain in the Clyde-Mallory

Line; he filled the position until June 1918. His duties took him on occasion to Bordeaux, Pauillac, and Blaye. He was provided for this Army service at the request of the general in command of the Line of Communications, the term then used for the Army Services of Supply.

Although the Army and the Navy operated many U. S. Shipping Board vessels, that agency operated some itself. The U. S. Consul acted as the agent for the Shipping Board vessels, but he had only limited supervision. This position was filled throughout the war by George A. Bucklin. The Shipping Board vessels were assigned to French shipbrokers, to whose financial interest it was to delay a ship in port as long as possible. Mr. Bucklin found it necessary to keep constantly on the watch to see that the shipbrokers did not engage in improper practices and to insure rapid discharging, watering, coaling, ballasting, and clearing. He also found that through his intervention the passage of the vessels up the river through the hands of the various French officials could be expedited. His repeated requests that he be allowed to handle the vessels officially and thus prevent delays were denied by the government in Washington because it was necessary to continue peace time practices in order to maintain good relations with the French. Special permission was given the Army to unload powder ships, which were a menace to the installations and supplies at Bassens, but other ships loaded for the account of the French government continued to be consigned to private companies. Some improvement in matters resulted from the adoption of the suggestion made by Bucklin that the masters of the vessels be directed to communicate with the consul's office on their arrival and make it their headquarters while in port.

In a report to the State Department submitted in August 1918 Mr. Bucklin enumerated the causes that delayed vessels in port as follows: awaiting permit and orders to sail; left American registry; repairs and crew trouble; cargo for French government; awaiting berth; slow discharge and bunkering; awaiting convoy. Most delay was caused by the unavailability of berths. Shipping Board vessels were subject to more delay because their cargoes were often for the French and Swiss governments, which made securing berths more difficult.

Stevedores were poor and hard to find.

Despite these difficulties, the consul by collaborating closely with the Army and Navy officers stationed in the locality was able to assist in speeding up the turn around of the ships.

A further source of trouble for the consul was the crews of the Shipping Board ships which were necessarily a conglomeration of nationalities. So many seamen arrived in port without papers that in December 1917, Mr. Bucklin recommended that all Shipping Board vessels be manned by the Navy, a step he considered desirable to avoid trouble and delays to shipping.

Certain services were performed by the consul for the Navy. He took acknowledgments of and administered oaths to naval and military personnel, charging fees only for private business. He assisted in the repatriation of members of naval crews and made advances of money to naval signalmen.

Shipping Board vessels caused more trouble for the Naval Port Officers than either the Naval vessels or the Army transports. Their masters were often not capable men, owing to the decadence of the American merchant marine which had diminished the supply of trained officers, and they were frequently indifferent to the necessity for handling their vessels quickly. To the naval officers who reported upon activities of these vessels, it looked also as if they were not well administered; masters operated many of the ships without adequate instructions. Attempts by naval officers to expedite their handling brought forth exhibitions of ill will.

In October 1918 Admiral Wilson was authorized by Admiral Sims, who had instructions from Washington, to transfer to the N. O. T. S. any Shipping Board vessels on which crew conditions endangered the safety of lives or property. To accomplish this, District Commanders were directed by Admiral Wilson to request the necessary authority from him and to appoint a board to report on the circumstances of taking over a ship.

Just as the U. S. Navy and the U. S. Army had to

work together in handling American vessels in French ports, it was necessary for both to work with French officials, for in their hands remained largely the control of ship movements, pilotage, berthing, and mooring. The region comprised in the Rochefort District coincided with the 4th Arrondissement or Department de la Gascogne in which the supreme authority was the Prefet Maritime at Rochefort. His organization included four divisions: the Patrol Marine Defense, Communications, and Land Defense. The Patrol Division administered the patrol and convoy system through subordinates at La Pallice, Le Verdon, and St. Jean de Luz and the aviation patrols operating from bases along the coast.

At La Rochelle, Bordeaux and Bayonne were commandants du port, who were naval captains whose duties were principally those of information and communication. Commandants des Fronts de Mer were stationed at La Rochelle, Royan, and St. Jean de Luz for purposes of sea defense and information.

Among the French officials stationed at Bordeaux the chief was M. Clavel, whose French title was le Lieut. Colonel du Ingenieur en Chef des Ponts et Chaussees Chef d' Exploitation des Ports de Bordeaux et de la Gironde. He controlled American shipping in general but not in detail. Other French officers included a station commandant, a chief of Division of Patrol Ships of Gascogne, which also had a lieutenant attached to the U. S. Navy as a liaison officer, and an Inspector General of Department of Civil Engineering and Assistant Chief of Central Service of Military Operations of Ports. Commander Patton seems to have been supplied immediately with a French liaison officer. A French naval port officer and an administrator of marine were maintained at Pauillac, the latter representing the Navy Commandant at Bordeaux. At Le Verdon a French station ship, the Marthe Solange, served as an operation office for the convoy, and as a coaling, supply, and repair ship. The French Army of which the headquarters of the 18th Army Corps was in Bordeaux was also involved in the control of shipping as was the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce and the Pilots Association.

The existence of war obliged the French to enforce certain requirements of vessels entering the Gironde in

order to safeguard the interests of the nation and to further its war effort. These requirements were enumerated in printed instructions which were presented to the masters of foreign vessels. Upon their arrival at the entrance to the Gironde the vessels were required to seal their wireless apparatus; to fill in an examination form; to hand in all ship's papers; to submit a list of the names of all persons on board; and to restrict persons from going ashore without the necessary permission. These requirements were designed to prevent the communication of information helpful to the enemy; to prevent the entrance of enemy agents and sabateurs; to apprehend suspected persons; and to secure data useful for handling the vessel while on the river. After mooring in the port the master had to furnish another list of the members of the crew with certain information and to restrict their landing without proper authorization. During the stay in harbor the movements of persons attached to the ship were strictly controlled through the issuance of identity cards and permits of circulation; communication with war prisoners was forbidden; only persons with the authorization of the marine authorities were to be allowed on board ship; persons boarding surreptitiously were to be reported, as were members of the crew leaving ships without permission. At sailing time inspectors boarded the ship to examine the identity cards and to obtain their return; the captain was to insure that no suspicious person was on board and to furnish the names of missing members of the crew, and before sailing the ship had to have a "sailing license." These regulations, established according to French laws, decrees, and orders of 1916 and 1917 were enforced by the Navigation Police, whose chief was stationed at Pauillac, where vessels were inspected on their way up the river. At this place a quarantine officer also boarded vessels to conduct a sanitary inspection.

In the ports of France, American troop and store ships were obliged to pay for pilotage, ballast, water, towage, and handling of lines. The French government remitted the sanitary and quay dues, and there were no custom house or passport charges. The pilotage fees were required by French laws and had to be paid whenever pilot service was offered even though it was not accepted. Considerable correspondence was exchanged

with the French government on this matter, the U. S. Navy taking the stand that it should not have to pay and the French insisting that payment had to be made, except in the case of American patrol vessels regularly assigned to the station. Admiral Wilson pointed out to the French the difficulty he would have in certifying to his government bills for pilotage in cases where the pilot's services had been refused. The Chief of Staff of the French Ministry of Marine took up the matter with Captain Jackson at Paris in April 1918 asking that it be referred to the government at Washington. In forwarding the communication from the Chief of Staff, Captain Jackson pointed out that the practice of paying the pilotage bill if required by port regulations even though pilotage had been refused was quite widespread and suggested issuing instructions accordingly. The matter was referred by the Chief of Naval Operations to the Judge Advocate General of the Navy Department who responded on May 11, 1918 by quoting a statement submitted by the State Department in the preceding year to the effect that the doctrine of international law was that all vessels were subject to the revenue and police regulations, including those in regard to pilotage of the territorial waters which such vessels might enter. United States vessels were subject to the rules and regulations of the French ports, and the controlling factor was not the nature of the certification of the pilotage bill but that the port regulations made its payment obligatory. This opinion was accepted as the official policy of the Navy Department, and Admiral Sims published it for the information and guidance of all forces in Europe in his circular letter no. 65 of July 16, 1918.

The great increase in shipping on the Gironde River, the multiplicity of officers of various countries handling it, and the necessity for imposing war time restrictions produced a complicated and confusing situation, which was never entirely free of difficulties and friction throughout the period of the war. For an understanding of this situation, it is necessary to have a picture of the conduct of operations on the river.

Upon their arrival at the mouth of the Gironde River vessels were subjected to a rigid procedure which lasted during their sojourn. Entrance to the river through the protecting submarine nets stretched across

its mouth was under the watchful eyes of the escort vessels which had convoyed the ships to the river and the French patrol ship guarding the passage through the net, which was kept open at all times. Inside the net at Le Verdon was the French station ship Marthe Solange, an old sailing hulk, upon which was stationed the French officer in command of the convoy and the American Naval Communication or Liaison Officer, as he was later called. Information as to the probable date of arrival of vessels was communicated to the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux, who notified the Army authorities when Army cargoes were involved. At Le Verdon roads the vessels were visited by the French Navigation Police and by the American Naval Liaison Officer, the latter to present a copy of the Port Regulations and to receive a filled in form containing information about the ship necessary for its handling. The radio apparatus was sealed and thereafter was unsealed only by the French authorities or by the U. S. naval district radio repair officer. Preparations were to be made for unloading the cargo while the vessels were still at the anchorage in order that no time would be lost after they reached the docks. Certain restrictions imposed upon the personnel of the ships by the French have been mentioned; others were stipulated by the U. S. Port Regulations. Liberty parties were allowed under no circumstances at Royan or St. Georges, but when vessels were to be at Le Verdon for several days parties were permitted ashore under an officer accompanied by patrol. Data concerning the arrivals and departures of ships was communicated to the Commander U. S. Naval Forces in France to whose staff it was useful in planning and directing the movements of convoys and patrol and escort vessels.

The passage up the Gironde and the Garonne was under the guidance of a series of French pilots each of whom collected a fee. Off the entrance the vessels were boarded by the Royan pilots, who saw them through the net to the anchorage at Le Verdon. The Le Verdon pilot took vessels as far as Pauillac, where inspections were made by the French Navigation Police and the sanitation authorities. Vessels with cargoes for Bassens or Bordeaux were taken to those places by the Pauillac pilot, and the mooring at those places was in the hands of still another pilot. The Bordeaux pilots had to be secured for subsequent changes of mooring at Bordeaux and

Bassens and for entrance into the basin at the former place. On the voyage down stream this procedure was reversed. Dock regulations for the port on the river were issued by the French captains of the ports and came to be incorporated into the U. S. Naval Port Regulations. So many pilots for a mere sixty miles of river were quite unnecessary, and the chief reason for having changes of pilots was to collect more fees. This, however, was not a practice peculiar to French ports.

Vessels were discharged by the service to which their cargoes were assigned. Most of the vessels containing cargo for the U. S. Navy were unloaded at Pauillac, where a Transportation Department developed under the supervision of a naval officer subordinate to the commandant of the Aviation Assembly and Repair Station. Crews of U. S. naval vessels were required to assist in unloading in order to reduce the time spent in port. Work parties were organized to discharge certain holds on their ships, and when these were emptied the men were placed at liberty. The armed guards on board the ships were used as sentry's at the gangways and at the holds from which cargo was being taken. Assistance was given by the Naval Dock Officer at Bassens and the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux through whom orders concerning the movements of vessels were arranged. Daily reports were submitted to them as to the handling of the winches and gear, the consumption of fuel, and the progress of the unloading.

Other services were performed by the Naval Port Officer Bordeaux. He handled all cable and telegraph communication and incoming and outgoing mail. He arranged for the transfer of naval personnel to other bases in France and for the return of personnel to the United States. Fuel, water, ballast and ammunition were arranged for by the Naval Dock Officer at Bassens.

Army cargo transports and troop transports were under the jurisdiction of the Army Transport Service from the time of their arrival at Le Verdon. Their berthing, discharging, watering, fueling, ballasting, and guarding were handled by the representatives of that service stationed at Pauillac, Bassens, and Bordeaux. The revised port organization for base ports such as

that of Bordeaux-Bassens instituted by the Army in May 1918 comprised Administrative, Operations, Troop and Cargo, Terminal Facilities, and Supplies Division, each having a number of officers. The responsibility for handling cargo from the ship's hold to cars, trucks, and warehouses was in the hands of the Chief Stevedore in the Troop and Cargo Division. The discharge of Army transports was facilitated by the practice of having on board an Army Quartermaster who was familiar with the manner in which they had been loaded.

The Medical Officer attached to the Naval Port Office had important duties connected with the health of ships' crew and sanitary conditions on board and ashore. Neither officers or crew members were allowed to leave the ship until the medical inspection had been passed. Members of the crew found to be infected with venereal diseases were confined to the ship; others having contagious diseases were hospitalized. A Naval dispensary was maintained at Bassens for the treatment of persons on the sick list and a dental office at Bordeaux. A report of the sanitary condition of the ship was made to the Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux. Ashes and garbage had to be placed on shore in proper containers—not dumped into the river. A medical officer acted as liaison with the Army for the evacuation of sick and wounded to the United States. Severe cases of sickness or injury were cared for in the Army Base Hospital at Bordeaux.

By the middle of 1918 American naval personnel were a familiar sight on the streets of Bordeaux, and at times there were hundreds of them on liberty. Although the conduct of these men was generally good, instances of disorderliness, rowdiness, and drunkenness in which persons were sometimes injured were sufficiently numerous to require the establishment of a Naval Patrol by order of the District Commander of June 21, 1918. The duty of maintaining order and enforcing liberty regulations devolved upon the patrol, and by arrangement with the French the jurisdiction of the patrol was extended to the personnel of American merchant ships visiting the city. Liberty was allowed between the hours of 8 A. M. and 9:30 P. M., but the patrol was on duty somewhat later in order to pick up stragglers. Persons granted liberty by the commanding officers of ships were

required to carry passes signed by their executive officers. Special passes were granted for attendance at theatres with the warning that violations of the spirit of the pass would result in disciplinary action. Advice as to the danger of infection from associating with prostitutes and the addresses of Army prophylactic stations were supplied; badly diseased red light districts were set up as restricted districts and men caught with disreputable women were punished. Other causes of arrest were disorder, intoxication, refusal to obey orders of patrol, and absent overleave or without leave. The Naval Patrol at Bordeaux consisted of personnel attached to the Naval Port Office. At Pauillac no permanent patrol was formed, and patrols were furnished by the ships landing liberty parties. A Naval Ferry operated between Bassens and Bordeaux was much used by naval personnel going to the latter on liberty. Since it was the largest city in the region, Bordeaux attracted liberty parties from naval activities throughout that part of France.

The Naval Port Officer held court two or three times a week, dispensing what might be called naval justice. If Naval Regulations or the rules for courts and boards held, well and good, if not, he used his ingenuity, like a frontier judge of the United States, and devised penalties to fit the crime or misdemeanor. Private American citizens with grievances against the Navy or the French, and French citizens, as well as Naval personnel brought their troubles to the Naval Port Officer.

In the military port of Bordeaux there were special dangers incident to the war which had to be countered. Deserters from the Allied forces were looking for means of escape, sometimes as stowaways on board ships in the harbor; German prisoners were utilized on the docks in labor gangs; spies sought means of communicating with ships; other agents attempted sabotage on ships and attempted to stir up dissatisfaction among their crews. Consequently guards had to be maintained constantly on ships and docks. American Naval personnel were warned against bands of courtesans engaged in collecting information for the enemy; these were not only of the street walking variety but also the educated, well-dressed type whose particular prey was Naval officers.

In 1918 a counter espionage system was being developed by the U.S. Navy, which involved the assignment of intelligence officers to the headquarters of the French military regions to cooperate with the U.S. Army and French intelligence services. The district intelligence officer for Rochefort District was stationed at Bordeaux, and instructions were issued to the District Commander and the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux to furnish him with information and to assist him in his work. The officer assigned to Bordeaux at the end of February was Lieut. Comdr. William L. Stevenson, U.S.N.R.F. He performed some excellent work in organizing the counter espionage system in the 18th Army Region, in the opinion of his superior, Comdr. W. R. Sayles, the naval attache at Paris, but he did not establish proper relations with the District Commander at Rochefort and got into difficulties with his chief assistant, as a result of which both were disenrolled in June. The chief assistant became particularly unpopular with Commander Sayles because he represented himself as the naval attache in visits to ports south of Bordeaux. Lieut. Frederick C. Havemeyer, U.S.N.R.F. succeeded Stevenson at Bordeaux and remained there until the end of the war.

The material condition of ships was also a concern of the Naval Port Officer. Repairs beyond the capacity of a ship's force were handled by the repair officer, who from the summer of 1918 had available for this kind of work a repair ship, the U. S. S. Panther. There were dry dock and ship yards in Bordeaux, where repairs were also made upon American vessels. The repair officer handled not only the naval vessels based on the coast but also troop ships and cargo vessels whether Navy, Army, or Shipping Board. Repairs were also made by Army establishments. The scarcity of shipping made it imperative to keep all vessels in operation as much of the time as possible. Radio repairs were taken care of by an office at Bassens.

The establishment of adequate communications was of unusual importance to the Naval Port Office at Bordeaux because of the distance of that port from the sea and because of its supervision of other port offices on the river. For months the American naval port office system was dependent upon the French lines of

communication, which had never been planned for the load now put upon them. In the summer of 1918 work was undertaken upon independent telephone and telegraph lines but progressed slowly, owing to the lack of material and to the indifference of the U.S. Army to building purely Naval lines. In July 1918 a submarine cable was laid between Royan and Le Verdon; it worked a few days and then failed because of poor insulation. By the end of 1918 the Navy had constricted a complete telephone circuit from Rochefort via Royan, Le Verdon, Pauillac, Bordeaux, and back to Rochefort. This system included two cables under the Gironde between Royan and Le Verdon. All port officers could also communicate at this time by telegraph with the District Commander. Radio schools were conducted at Bordeaux and Rochefort for coaching operators on ships.

The last service performed by the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux and his subordinates at Bassens and Pauillac for U. S. ships was to get them started on the homeward voyage. A day or two before departure commanding officers called at the Naval Port Office for sailing orders. Ships ready to depart were required to make a search for stowaways, prepare a list of persons carried on board and a list of men left behind. After being cast off from the docks vessels which had been discharged by the Army again came under naval authority. The passage down stream was under the guidance of pilots, and at Le Verdon French officials came aboard for an inspection.

Le Verdon was the assembly point for convoys bound for the United States, which were referred to as the O. V. convoys and which were made up of vessels from the Gironde River ports and other ports on the southwest coast of France. No vessels, except naval warships, were allowed outside of the nets guarding the entrance to the Gironde without naval escort. The O. V. (V. for Verdon) convoy was established towards the end of 1917 by the Commandant Superieur des Divisions de Bretagne at Brest, under a French naval officer on the Marthe Solange. As the French escort was inadequate, several American yachts which had been serving farther north on the coast of France were based at Le Verdon early in 1918. The vessels usually assigned here during 1918 were the Aphrodite, Corsair, May, Nokomis,

Noma, and the Wakiva. Although orders for the convoys were issued by the French, the commander of the senior American escort vessel was given further information by the District Commander at Rochefort, on whose staff the Operations Officer had charge of the escort vessels assigned to the district. The senior escort commander communicated his final and secret instructions in a meeting attended by the ships' officers on the Marthe Solange. The usual procedure was for a group of three American and one French escort vessel to accompany the ships to sea for two or three days when they dispersed on divergent routes on the open sea, and then the escort returned to the Gironde. For the first 50 miles the escort, whose composition varied according to the number of craft available, was reinforced with gunboats and launches attached to the Gascony patrols.

In the summer of 1918 the number of ships in a convoy ranged from 22 to 36. With more or less regular periods for liberty and repairs, the monotonous escort trips went on and on. In these more southern waters there were few encounters with enemy submarines. Reports of the convoys were sent by the senior American officer to the District Commander. Between February and October 1918 twenty-four O. V. convoys comprising 437 ships were escorted from Le Verdon.

After April 1918 ships sailing from New York to Bay of Biscay ports were convoyed directly in what were called H. B. convoys. These convoys were operated by the British Admiralty, as were all other convoys of cargo ships crossing the Atlantic, until September when the U.S. Navy, having acquired experience in running convoys, took over the operation of the H. B. convoys; the more northern convoys traversing more dangerous routes remained under British control. The laden ships of the H. B. convoys were conducted by American or French cruisers to a rendezvous point off the French coast, where they were met by escort vessels which had brought out an O. V. convoy, and, whenever possible by destroyers from Brest, and taken to Le Verdon for distribution to the ports to which they were destined. This system required careful management and necessitated a constant flow of communication between Admiral Wilson's headquarters at Brest and Captain McCully's headquarters at Rochefort, in addition to communication

with the United States and the British Admiralty at London. Arrangements at first were for convoys every sixteen days, but by September there was a fast store-ship convoy every four days in addition to slow convoys; they comprised an average of ten ships. The Navy Department at this time considered increasing the number of convoys, but Admiral Sims advised an increase in the number of ships on the convoys as the more numerous the convoys the easier it was for the submarines to find them and the more escort vessels needed. Of the total of 255 ships taken to the Bay of Biscay in twenty H. B. convoys 202 were American.

Ships coming to Le Verdon to join the O. V. convoys, ships brought to that place in H. B. convoys for distribution to other ports on the coast, and ships engaged in coastwise traffic were escorted in coastal convoys which operated along the entire coast of the Bay of Biscay. These coastal convoys were run by the French Navy, and the officer stationed on the Marthe Solange at Le Verdon received orders pertaining to them. American naval vessels composed three out of the eight units of escort vessels employed on the coastal convoys.

Pauillac served as a supply base for the American escort vessels. At the completion of each trip to sea, they ran up the river to coal from colliers anchored at that place or from the coal piles at Trompeloup. Here they also obtained other supplies, including water, provisions, clothing, lubricating oil, gasoline, and engineering and electrical stores. Monthly visits were made by one of the yachts to Brest for other supplies not procurable at Pauillac. Because of the difficulty of coaling the yachts there, due to the lack of berths, the District Commander recommended the acquisition of two lighters. To meet the need which would eventually exist for a shore base for the vessels assigned to the district, he suggested, in a report of August 1, 1918 Talmont as the most suitable place because of its superior location. The construction of oil tanks at Furt, which was progressing at this time, would have provided a store from which to supply oil burning destroyers for escort duty--had the war continued longer.

American troop transports were provided with escorts and routed by Admiral Wilson's headquarters at Brest. These were given preferential treatment over the cargo convoys because they carried our manpower and because they were larger and more valuable ships. Convoys of transports routed to the Gironde under the escort of destroyers, which had met them at the rendezvous in the Atlantic, were reinforced at land fall positions by the American escort vessels attached to the Le Verdon station. It was sometimes necessary to weaken the regular Verdon convoys in order to accomplish this. Instead of being returned to the United States in the regular O. V. convoys, the troophips formed special O. V. convoys and were given destroyer escort to a safe distance from the coast, whence they proceeded alone, relying on their speed to evade any chance submarines that might be encountered.

Airplane escort was also provided for the convoys from nearby naval air stations operated by the French and the Americans. Towards the end of the war, after airplane escort had been regularly provided for some time, it succeeded in driving the submarines away from the coast out to sea, where ships were more scattered and difficult prey.

The O. V. convoys and the coastal convoys were largely comprised of American ships. For this reason and because the French did not operate the convoys as efficiently as they might have, Captain McCully recommended that control of the convoys be acquired by the U. S. Navy. He reported that the assignment of positions to ships in the convoy was not done to the best advantage, that the French vessels lacked sufficient signalmen, and that the convoy instructions were frequently unsatisfactory. Should American control be established, he advised that the senior convoy officer should be stationed at Le Verdon in a vessel from which he could arrange the formation of the convoy. To take care of the increased number of vessels which statistics showed would have to be handled, he proposed the assignment of additional escort vessels and stationing auxiliary vessels at Pauillac and Le Verdon. He believed that by means of American control efficiency would be increased and delays reduced. Admiral Sims directed Admiral Wilson on August 16, 1918 to assume

full responsibility for handling the H. B. and O. V. convoys as soon as possible. The H. B. convoys were taken over in the following month, but lack of escort vessels appears to have prevented the adoption of a similar course for the O. V. and the Coastal convoys before the Armistice ended the necessity for convoys.

To develop the Garonne-Gironde system into an efficient port organization, in order to speed up the turn around of vessels as much as possible, it was necessary for the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy to overcome numerous difficulties, some of which were physical in character and others administrative. Mention has been made of the work undertaken by the U.S. Army to increase port and rail facilities; much was accomplished in this direction, but ship traffic on the river was congested after it got into full swing during 1918. The impossibility of constructing sufficient docks quickly enough and the obstacles presented by the river itself which was difficult to enter because of the tide and a bar, difficult to navigate because of sandbars and a narrow channel, and lack of depth, and difficult to anchor or moor in because of the heavy tide, made it the more necessary to accelerate traffic by improving conditions that were not insurmountable.

Among the causes of delay encountered by American vessels in steaming up the Gironde River were the police and sanitation inspections conducted by the French officials at Pauillac. An American Naval officer who investigated shipping conditions on the river in the spring of 1918 reported that these inspections resulted in delays amounting in some cases to 12 to 24 hours or even longer and necessitated in some instances the return of vessels to Le Verdon before they could proceed up the river. The amelioration agreed upon for this condition will be referred to later.

More irksome to the commanding officers of the ships was the necessity for stopping their progress upstream so many times to take on new pilots. Nor was it agreeable to have to pay for pilotage that was not performed, yet the Pilots Association on the river kept track of the movements of ships and sent them bills demanding payment for pilotage. The refusal at first on the part of American Naval authorities to pay for

pilotage when services were not performed irritated the French pilots and caused them to perpetrate deliberate delays in handling ships. Waiting in midstream at Pauillac for several hours or overnight for a pilot and during the whole time keeping the engine running in order to shift the ship with changes in the tide was not calculated to promote good Franco-American relations nor the prosecution of the war. Not until the summer of 1918 was this matter settled, after reference to the Navy Department and securing a legal opinion, by the issuance of instructions which directed the payment of pilots whenever their services were offered.

Once at the docks, delay was again likely to be met because of lack of berths, railroad cars, stevedores, equipment, and harbor craft, and improper stowing of cargo at the ports in the United States. Berths were built, railroad cars, stevedores, and equipment were imported, and tugs and lighters provided, and the turn around was improved. Battalions of negro laborers brought over by the Army for use as stevedores were kept in camps near Bassens. Some difficulty was experienced in converting cotton hands into cargo handlers, but the transmutation was gradually effected. Additional German war prisoners were obtained for this work. In their own country they would have done good work, but in France they did not want to—and wouldn't. Discharging vessels was more an Army problem than a Navy one, and the remedies were largely of military devising. To speed up the unloading of its own vessels, the Navy required their crews to assist the labor available in port. Assistance was also afforded the Navy by officers of the Army Transport Service. Among the forces of the latter organization a competitive system of discharging ships was inaugurated to speed up the work, showing by means of charts the progress made by the various outfits in the "Race to Berlin."

Reports submitted by the District Commander at Rochefort contained suggestions as to means of preventing delays. A permanent Naval Port Detachment was recommended as a method of enabling Naval vessels to be discharged entirely by Naval personnel. More careful stowage of cargo in the United States would make easier unloading in France. Each port should have a marine Superintendent who should be a Naval officer assigned

to the Army for liaison duty between Naval Port Officers and Army Transport Service officers. In the United States there should be an officer familiar with conditions along the French coast. A further way of expediting shipping movements would be the adoption of a demurrage system, which would entail the payment of charges for the detention of ships.

Occasionally it was necessary to supply coal or oil to a vessel in order to enable it to leave the river. This could be done only with great difficulty, for fuel had to be imported. A recommendation by Captain McCully that ships leaving the United States be required to carry enough fuel to make the return voyage was forwarded by Admiral Sims to Washington with an endorsement to the effect that he understood it to be the department's policy to fuel vessels for the round trip. When this was not possible, he stated that it would be necessary for additional fuel to be sent in other vessels. He added that the construction of oil tanks on the west coast of France would make it possible to provide small quantities of oil to vessels that might require it. A practice followed with fuel as with other supplies was to have ships carrying an extra quantity unload some for the use of ships that might be short.

To provide stability, proper immersion to the screw, and maneuverability, it was necessary to ballast ships returning to the United States as there were few goods to be exported. Ballast, chiefly iron pyrites, was available at a reasonable price, but it required labor, rolling stock, and animal transport to load it, and these things were difficult to obtain and were needed for unloading cargoes. The Shipping Board and the Army Transport Service during summer months required ships to carry water ballast in their double bottoms, but the Navy apparently did not favor such an inflexible rule, which did not distinguish between oil burners and coal burners, the latter of which had coal to serve as ballast. Free water in the holds was tried but proved more dangerous than no ballast at all. Some vessels successfully used box tanks in the holds, which could be utilized for carrying cargo, and consideration of this method was recommended by Captain McCully. The amount of ballast to be carried by naval vessels was determined in a conference between their masters and

the naval port authorities, a method regarded by Captain McCully as being unsatisfactory because not exact. His proposal was for an inspection of each ship by a technical board in United States ports to decide the amount of ballast to be carried for various conditions and the means of carrying it.

The increase of shipping on the Gironde, the inexperience of many of the officers and crews on the ships, and their unfamiliarity with the region caused collisions, resulting in damages to U.S. Naval vessels and French vessels. Pursuant to U.S. Navy Regulations, such cases were settled according to the French Port Regulations by special boards, which were appointed to determine the responsibility and the amount of the damages. When French vessels were responsible for damage to U.S. Naval vessels, they made prompt payment, but there was no way in which the same treatment could be accorded them when the circumstances were reversed. Pay officers refused to make payment for repairs because they had no appropriation from which it could be paid, nor did the Navy Department have any appropriation available. Some French shipping companies paid large amounts to the United States, but could secure no payments from it for damages caused their ships by U.S. Naval vessels. Such cases, reported Captain McCully, brought the good name of the United States into disrepute. He recommended in May and again in August 1918 that funds be made available for the prompt payment in cash for damages caused by U.S. Naval vessels.

Even when a ship had been discharged and ballasted, further delay sometimes happened. Departure time arrived, and the officers and crews were not on board. The maintenance of discipline among green ships' forces, hard enough at best, was made more difficult by the uncertain and complicated control and administration on the river. When it was not known what to do, the rule was do as you please. Lax discipline was especially bad on Shipping Board ships, whose masters at times interposed trifling reasons for delaying their departure. As a means of promoting discipline, Captain McCully recommended a system of observation and report on the masters of vessels and an improvement of the system used for the commanding officers of U.S. Naval vessels. Of sterner character was his proposal that all cargo

vessels operating in the war zone be taken over and manned by the Navy.

At the convoy station at Le Verdon, vessels assembled for the westward voyage and waited for the escort vessels, if they happened not to be on the spot, which was the case at times because there never were enough vessels for the duty. To facilitate the arrangement of the convoy, Captain McCully attempted to keep an American Naval vessel stationed at Le Verdon, but it was necessary at times to send it away on other duty. Had there been a Naval vessel with a suitable staff stationed at Le Verdon, the time spent here by ships waiting to go up the river or waiting for convoy could have been utilized in exercising and training signalmen and radio men, conducting boat drills, and to inspect the ships to see that regulations were complied with. Captain McCully wanted to station there an officer of the rank of commander with experience in convoy work to make up convoys and issue their instructions. Had the war continued longer this step probably would have been taken, and the convoys placed under American Naval control.

Better results might have been obtained at Bordeaux and at other port offices in the Rochefort District, if additional personnel had been provided. The District Commander pointed out that communicating information about the arrival of ships to all the persons concerned was a complicated matter, requiring more personnel to accomplish properly.

In the latter part of 1918 some processed Port Regulations were issued by the Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux for the instruction and guidance of masters of vessels arriving on the river. The first edition clearly shows the origin of the regulations by appending to it numerous French and American orders regulating traffic on the river. Revisions issued in January and March 1919 were less of a compilation and more of a finished product and embodied further experience. These were undoubtedly of great assistance to ships' officers.

The primary cause for the delays to shipping on the Gironde was the lack of a coordinated system of

control during most of the war. Reaching an agreement was in itself a difficult matter because of the diversified character of the shipping and the multiplicity of the authorities attempting to handle it. The following classes of vessels arrived in the district:

- U.S. Naval Transports
- U.S. Navy Chartered Transports
- U.S. Naval vessels with cargoes for Army, Navy, and French
- U.S. cargo vessels for Army, Navy, French, and neutral powers
- Allied vessels with cargoes for Army and Navy
- Neutral vessels with cargoes for Army and Navy
- U.S. Shipping Board vessels with cargoes for Army, Navy, and French
- U.S. Shipping Board vessels chartered to French government
- U.S. Shipping Board vessels operated by private American parties
- U.S. Shipping Board vessels chartered to private French parties
- Special vessels in service of U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and Aviation
- Private vessels chartered to various parties

Special methods were necessary for handling each class of vessel. For the two first classes procedures were eventually worked out which operated with little difficulty.

The authorities concerned in handling the shipping from the United States were as follows:

- U.S. Naval Port Officers
- U.S. Military authorities (Army Transport Service)
- French Naval authorities
- French civil authorities (Ponts et Chaussees)
- U.S. Consuls
- Consuls of Allied and Neutral Powers
- Naval Port Officers of Allied Powers
- U.S. Naval Information Service (Office of Naval Intelligence)
- Private consignees, ship brokers, etc.

In view of this mixture of military and civil authorities of various countries and French private interests, it is not surprising that it was difficult to reach an agreement for the control of shipping. The French authorities and interests had been running things and naturally wanted to continue doing so. The American authorities were instructed to speed up the turn around of vessels so they were desirous of removing all obstacles to the movements of ships. All parties were influenced by political considerations, by local practices, by international law and custom, and by jealousies of their respective services.

Long before the volume of traffic on the Gironde began to be expanded by the arrival of American cargoes, the need for agreement as to its control was realized. Commander Patton in September 1917 urged upon Admiral Sims the necessity for giving attention to the question of Army and Navy administration and cooperation at Bordeaux and that suitable instructions be sent to him. At the time the U. S. Navy Department set up the district organization in France, it was giving consideration to the matter of reaching an agreement whereby all American ships entering the districts would be subject to the orders of U. S. Naval authorities and asked for the recommendations of Admirals Sims and Wilson on the subject.

After American Naval forces had been operating for several months on the French coast, recommendations began to be received at the headquarters in Brest concerning the handling of shipping. In an endorsement dated March 16, 1918, to a communication from Lieut. Comdr. Ezra G. Allen, of the U.S.S. Wakiva, pertaining to the mission of U.S. Naval Port Officers, Captain McCully advocated the extension of the activities of the port officers to include all American vessels. He believed Shipping Board vessels were capable of twice the work they were performing, if their movements were under a well systematized control. An extension of the port officer system would be necessary to establish this control. In place of absolute control of shipping by the U.S. Navy, which might not be necessary or desirable, he thought that the shipping could be managed efficiently by disseminating information concerning movements of ships through Naval headquarters at Brest,

where a Transportation Officer would be necessary. A representative of this office would be needed in the United States for coordinating purposes. Both of these letters were communicated by Admiral Wilson to District Commanders for their information and guidance. He planned at this time to make Allen the Transporation Officer in charge of the Naval Port Officers.

Experiences subsequently met by troop transports in ascending the Gironde elicited reports from their commanding officers on the need for improved methods of controlling shipping. Upon the arrival of the U. S. A. T. El Oriente at Le Verdon report was made to the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux, Lieutenant Bernier, who sent sailing orders to the captain of the ship, and Lieutenant Commander Barstow, Marine Superintendent, A. T. S. at Bassens, also sent sailing orders to the master of the ship. From the mouth of the river to the docks, four pilots were taken on board, and a visit was made by police authorities to inspect personnel. An Army officer came on board at Pauillac and delivered orders to the captain who turned them over to the senior naval officer. As vessels were being unnecessarily delayed in their passage up the river by this diversity of control, Lieut. Comdr. R. R. Smith of this vessel, recommended the establishment of the office of commandant of the Gironde district under a captain of the U.S. Navy in order to centralize the control of U. S. ships under Naval authority. In the same month, May 1918, the U. S. S. Martha Washington upon reaching Pauillac was directed by the Army representative to proceed to American Bassens with a favorable tide, but the French harbormaster refused to allow it to continue until the next tide which was not until the following morning. Lieutenant Bernier's explanation for this delay was that it was the result of misunderstanding and lack of coordination between the Navy and the Army and conflict of authority between French civil and naval authorities.

The difficulty experienced by the Martha Washington and other Army transports apparently led to an agreement between the Army Transport Service Superintendent and the Naval Port Officer concerning the extent of their authority. It was arranged that information about ships arriving at Le Verdon would be communicated to

the Army at Bordeaux via the Naval Communication Officer at Le Verdon and the Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, and that instructions as to the movements of the ships would be transmitted by the Naval authorities. After the ships received these instructions at Le Verdon, their further handling was under the Army Transport Service. The Navy was not to be involved again until the ships were discharged and cast off from the docks. Thus a definite agreement was attained, which was designed to avoid conflicting or duplicating orders.

After the establishment of the Naval Overseas Transportation Service in the Navy Department in January 1918, to direct the operations of the cargo vessels operated by the Navy, greater interest developed in the department in the turn around of Naval vessels in the ports of France. The Director of the N. O. T. S., Comdr. Charles Belknap, Jr., wrote Admiral Sims concerning this matter, expressing approval of the appointment of port officers, which he indicated correspond to the District Supervisors of the N. O. T. S. in ports of the United States. In April 1918 the Chief of Naval operations, under whom the N. O. T. S. functioned, ordered a party of officers headed by Lieut. Comdr. Daniel Bacon, U. S. N. R. F., a man of considerable experience in merchant shipping, to duty in France as representatives of the N. O. T. S. Admiral Sims was somewhat uncertain what to do with these officers and requested a report with recommendation from Admiral Wilson, who responded on May 9 in a letter in which he referred to the increase of shipping in French ports and to the inadequate facilities for handling it. As these facilities could be obtained only with great difficulty, except through the Naval Port Officers, they had assumed control of American vessels in French ports and of foreign vessels in American service. He continued as follows:

4. There appears to be a strong tendency toward separation of the control of vessels of these various classifications. From previous correspondence and from the daily press, it seems to be intended that there shall be in each port separate representatives to control each of these classes of vessels. This will lead to confusion of effort and to considerable delay in the

handling of vessels whose port representatives have not a control of the port facilities. What is required is an organization to insure that each vessel, regardless of classification, shall be boarded at its first anchorage on the coast of France by an English speaking official competent to give the Captain or master full information as to his future movements, and information as to the berthing of the ship, repairing, fueling, hospital and ballasting facilities of the port, pilotage, etc. The organization must keep the vessel under constant scrutiny while in port to insure that no time is unnecessarily lost in discharging the vessel or in dispatching from the port. Charts and hydrographic information must be available. Such an organization can be handled only by the Navy, and there has been established for this purpose a system of Naval Port Officers. For the further development of this system there is now required in the office of the Commander U.S. Naval Forces in France an officer of experience and rank whose function will be to direct and coordinate the activities of the Naval Port Officers and to control in all respects American merchant shipping except in matters of convoy and escort and matters pertaining to merchant seamen which will be handled through the Operations Officer and by the U.S. consuls as at present. In order that this officer may have the necessary power it seems necessary that the Commander U.S. Naval Forces in France be constituted the representative in France for the United States Shipping Board and for the Naval Overseas Transport Service.

Upon the arrival of Lieutenant Commander Bacon in London, Admiral Sims ordered him to Paris for conferences with representatives of the Navy, the Army and the U.S. Shipping Control Committee, and to Brest for consultation with Admiral Wilson, then to return to London. After completing this tour Bacon was assigned to Pauillac with his party of six men to investigate conditions there and to prepare suggestions for managing ships at other ports. The party reached Pauillac on May 16, and on the 23rd Bacon was back in London

again reporting to Admiral Sims. In an endorsement of the following day to Admiral Wilson's report of May 9, Admiral Sims wrote to the Secretary of the Navy as follows:

The situation in European ports, and particularly the French ports with respect to control of United States shipping is unsatisfactory, and it is thought that the movements of ships could be very much expedited if all vessels were placed under the control of the Navy. The ideal plan to meet wartime requirements would be to have all vessels regularly commissioned Naval vessels, but in the absence of such an arrangement, which is recognized as impracticable at present, the next best thing would be to have all vessels when in port subject to Naval jurisdiction in all matters concerning their movements and discharge.

He referred to the establishment of Naval Port Officers in Europe and to the fact that they lacked authority to deal with any but regularly commissioned Naval vessels. He regarded the creation of the N. O. T. S. as a step in the right direction. He did not endorse Admiral Wilson's suggestion that he be designated as representative of the Shipping Board and the N. O. T. S., but he did recommend that the Navy be given

authority to control the movements, while in port, of all vessels flying the United States flag or under charter to the United States Government, including vessels in the service of the U.S. Army. With respect to the last named vessels, it seems desirable, under present conditions, that the discharge of cargoes and the landing of troops be under Army authority.

The letters of Admirals Wilson and Sims were referred by the Chief of Naval Operations, who was in accord with their views, to the War Department and were considered by the staff of the A. E. F. in France. General James G. Harboard, head of the Services of Supply, reported to General Pershing that the operation of the transports while in French ports, including their discharge, was so closely related to the work of the terminal facilities, warehousing, railroading, and

dealing with the various supply departments that it should remain under Army control. It was no time to substitute something new for a smoothly working organization. Upon reading the foregoing statement in a letter from Pershing, Admiral Sims wisely concluded that a change from Army to Navy control was inadvisable. By this time closer cooperation had developed between the two services.

Admiral Wilson had also been in touch with the Director of the Army Transport Service concerning the discharging of Naval vessels, which was difficult for the Navy to effect since the Army had control of most of the facilities. The willingness of the Army to unload or assist in unloading Naval vessels whenever practicable apparently made it unnecessary for Admiral Wilson to carry through a plan he had for the establishment of a Naval organization for discharging vessels.

Lieutenant Commander Bacon returned to Pauillac for duty in connection with the handling of shipping, but remained there only until the middle of June, being detailed then to Brest, whence he returned to the United States in the following month. He became connected thereafter with the administration of N. O. T. S. matters in the Navy Department, giving it the benefit of the knowledge he had acquired of conditions in France. Four members of his party became permanently attached to the station at Pauillac, while the others were soon sent away.

In a letter of May 27, 1918 to Admiral Wilson, Admiral Sims remarked about the shipping problem in France that "It is not in the least our fault. There is evident lack of coordination of these various functions in Washington." There was evidently some truth in this statement, for early in 1919 the Director of the N. O. T. S. and the Shipping Board corresponded concerning the designation of a liaison representative to expedite business between the two agencies.

The situation at Pauillac was improved towards the end of May 1918 as a result of an agreement between the Army and the Navy. In dealing with American officers at that place the French port officers were

uncertain whether to take up matters with the Naval Port Officer, the commandant of the air station, or the Army Transport Service officer. After the French called attention to the Pauillac situation at a meeting in Paris, Brigadier General Atterbury proposed to Admiral Wilson that a trial be made of having the Army officer determine priority for ships berthing there. This was agreed to as a temporary measure by the Navy, which was willing to try anything to better conditions at Pauillac docks. As late as October 1918, however, trouble was still being experienced at Pauillac in the discharge of vessels.

Early in June an agreement was reached with the French as to the whole shipping situation on the Gironde. This seems to have resulted primarily from the efforts of Lieutenant Commander Stevenson, the Intelligence officer who had been assigned to Bordeaux, whose instructions directed him to investigate the causes for the delays to shipping on the Gironde River. He looked into the matter and discussed it with Bernier, Barstow, and Major C. A. Stern, Army Transport Service officer at Bassens, all of whom stated that political conditions had prevented improvement. Believing that something could be accomplished, Stevenson went to Brig. Gen. W. S. Scott, commanding Headquarters Base Section No. 2, Bordeaux, presented the matter to him and discussed the remedies. At a meeting called by General Scott, attended by the French admiral, the Army Transport Service officer, the Marine Superintendent at Bassens, the U. S. Naval Port Officer, and the U. S. Consul, a preliminary arrangement was made to overcome delays to shipping.

Not long after the foregoing arrangement had been effected, Admiral Wilson communicated to the District Commanders in France a letter from the Director General of Transportation, U. S. Army, to General Scott, embodying an arrangement which had been negotiated with the French for increasing the efficiency of U. S. Shipping on the Gironde, providing as follows:

- A. Direct American telephone service between the French port offices and the American offices.
- B. Sanitary and police inspection of Army and Navy transports at Le Verdon instead of at

- Pauillac.
- C. Shipping Board vessels with mixed and civilian crews carrying commercial cargoes were to submit to the same regulations as the ships of French and British merchant ships. Such vessels as carried cargo for the French government were to be considered and treated as military vessels.
  - D. U.S. Transports to be boarded by U.S. Naval Officer at Le Verdon, representing both Army and Navy, to secure information and to give movement and berthing instructions. A direct line of communication was thus established between transports arriving at Le Verdon and the offices at Pauillac, Bordeaux, and Bassens. The Army Transport Service officers were to inform the Naval Port Officer of expected arrivals and the berths to be used, which information the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux was to transmit to the French authorities.
  - E. French pilots were to take vessels from Le Verdon to their berths at Pauillac, Bordeaux, and Bassens without stopping for change of pilots or for inspections; the pilots to be returned by boat or by train to Le Verdon at the expense of the United States.
  - F. Transports were to be allowed to move during the night as soon as Colonel Clavel was satisfied that there was sufficient tow-boat power.
  - G. All pilots were to be under the control of the French Naval authorities.
  - H. Berthing was to be arranged and decided between officers of the Army Transport Service and the U.S. Naval Service, and berthing orders were to be transmitted to the French port authorities through the Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux.
  - I. Berthing of either Naval or Army transports containing explosives was to be handled by the Army, whose job it was to get the explosives away from docks.

This disposition of matters covered many of the problems that had arisen, but it was unfortunate that it had not

been accomplished earlier because the bulk of the troop transports had already arrived and departed.

The series of agreements which have been described did not settle all of the difficulties on the Gironde. Some of the stipulations of the accord with the French did not go into effect. The Port Regulations issued subsequent thereto indicate, for instance, that the pilotage system continued as before, as do entries in log books of ships that visited Bordeaux, although changes in pilots do not always seem to have been made.

Judging from the following lines in the Port Regulations of January 1919, the Army and the Navy had a difference of opinion concerning sailing orders:

The Marine Superintendent, Army Transport Service, Bassens, is endeavoring to usurp this proper duty of the Naval Port Officer. That officer has been informed that such orders are not proper.

Commanding Officers of U.S. ships are instructed not to receive "steam" or "sailing orders" from the Army, except in case of emergency. If such an order is delivered to a U.S. ship it will be returned with the following endorsement:

"Returned. By direction of the U.S. Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, you are informed that no steam order or sailing order from your office will be obeyed, except in an emergency case. Such order should originate from U.S. Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, or his representative."

This type of direction would seem to be the kind that should not have been put in the Port Regulations.

A method of getting around the French Navigation Police inspection of personnel attached to U. S. ships that was considered by U. S. Naval authorities is worthy of mention. This proposal was that to avoid the inspection of suspected persons by the French, ships' personnel should be thoroughly examined before leaving the United States, and a certificate issued to the master or commanding officer to satisfy the French. Regular Naval personnel serving on U. S. ships had

means of identification, but this was not always true of civilian crews.

Although the war ended with the armistice of November 11, 1918, the U. S. Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux was continued for almost a year longer. The naval port organization built up during the war was used afterwards in returning soldiers to the United States, handling storeships bringing in supplies for the troops remaining in France; assisting Shipping Board vessels, which began arriving with commercial cargoes, and ships with cargoes of relief food and supplies sent over by the Food Administration and the American Relief Administration. All of these activities made the Naval Port Office at Bordeaux a busier organization than it had been before.

Commander Craft was relieved as Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, on November 23, 1918 by Capt. Frank D. Berrien, who had been engaged in strenuous duty as a destroyer escort commander. No long afterward Captain Berrien was instructed that his authority covered the supervision and control of American shipping in the Gironde River from Bordeaux to the sea, except for the Pauillac air station. Lieutenant Bernier continued to serve as executive officer, being concerned also with the settlement of claims. The personnel on duty in the office in December 1918 totaled 346 men, of whom 102 were comprised in the Naval Patrol.

When Captain McCully was ordered to northern Russia, he was succeeded as District Commander at Rochefort on October 5, 1918 by Comdr. Lamar R. Leahy, who had been attached to the district office since the previous February. The district organization in France was demobilized on November 25, but a Naval Port Officer was continued at Rochefort. The Naval Port Officer at Royan was abolished at this time. That at Pauillac operated under the commandant of the Aviation Assembly and Repair Station from about this time until February 1, 1919 when it was returned to the jurisdiction of the Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux.

The embarkation of troops from France was placed by General Pershing under the Chief Quartermaster, and ports of embarkation were designated at Brest,

St. Nazaire, and Bordeaux. It was planned to make more extensive use of Bordeaux than had been made in bringing troops to France. At the embarkation camps at Bordeaux, known to the soldiers as "The Mill," they were deloused, cleaned, and clothed for the journey home. To facilitate its operations in this region, the Army took over in January 1919 the considerable plant, including barracks, which the Navy had constructed at Pauillac. The homeward movement of troops began at the end of November 1918 and continued for over seven months, more than a quarter of a million troops being embarked. Much quicker turn arounds were made now than when troops had been disembarked. The Cape May remained at Bordeaux only 1 hour and 19 minutes on May 17, 1919 during which time it took on 1928 troops. After the embarkation of the last of the troops in July, the Army still had some occupation for the Navy in connection with the return of Army cargo which could not be disposed of abroad. Over \$7,000,000 worth of Army surplus stock at Bordeaux was purchased by the American Relief Administration from the U.S. Liquidation Commission, loaded on board ships for transfer to Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Jugoslavia, Russia, and other parts of France.

The Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, was still being assisted in March 1919 by a U.S. Liaison Officer at Le Verdon stationed on a submarine chaser, a port officer at Pauillac, who was then an officer in the Army, and the U.S. Naval Dock Officer at Bassens. The Pauillac office was demobilized towards the end of that month. In May Rear Admiral Alexander S. Halstead, who had succeeded Admiral Wilson on January 30, visited Bordeaux, where it seemed that demobilization of the Naval Port Office had not proceeded as fast as it might have. Captain Berrien was relieved on June 6, 1919 by Captain Frederick (Julius F.) Hellweg, who after service in European waters, part of the time as commanding officer of the Marietta on the Gironde, had recently been District Supervisor of the N. O. T. S. at Norfolk, Virginia. Captain Hellweg found the port office at Bassens to which it had been removed because the transports berthed there. The office was in a building on the same floor of which was the Army Transport Service office with which it cooperated in handling the transports. By August the port office at Bordeaux was reduced to 5 officers and 25 men. Lieutenant

Bernier remained with the office until the beginning of that month when he was placed on active duty at his own request to take a job with the Shipping Board at Paris. On September 30, 1919 both the Naval Port Office and the Army Transport Service were closed. Captain Hellweg transferred to the base at Brest which was demobilized in the next month, but the Naval Port Office continued at that place until July 1920, being the last one to be disbanded. The furniture which had been used by the Naval Port Office, Bordeaux, was transferred to the office of the recently established port representative of the U.S. Shipping Board.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Manuscript Sources

#### Navy Department

##### Office of Naval Records and Library

No files of the Navy Port Office at Bordeaux exist as such, nor are there files for the port offices at Pauillac, Le Verdon, and Royan, nor for the District Commander's Headquarters at Rochefort, nor for the Headquarters of the Naval Forces in France at Brest. At the time the Naval Port Office was closed at Bassens, several filing cases of records were boxed for shipment to the Navy Department in Washington. The same step was taken, presumably, by the other offices mentioned above since instructions were issued by the Navy Department to this effect. When received in Washington, these records and all other records pertaining to the activities of the Navy in Europe during the war, together with records of the Navy Department, were "archived." The process of "archiving" involved making selections of what were considered the records of permanent value and filing them by subject in a classification devised for the purpose. An enormous chronological file was also set up, consisting to a large extent of duplicate copies but including documents not to be found in the subject file. This is called the "area file," and for area 3, which covers Great Britain and France, it comprises six filing cases of material. An additional file of material selected for a publication that never

appeared was also built up and is still preserved as the "print file." Some fragments of the records of the different headquarters and bases in Europe have remained intact, but the bulk of them were placed in the subject file, in one of the other files, or destroyed. Thus disappeared the files of the Naval Port Office, Bordeaux; the District Commander's Headquarters, Rochefort; the Naval Headquarters, Brest; the Naval Headquarters, London; and the files of all the other bases, port offices, and naval air stations established by the U.S. Navy in Europe during the First World War. The student desiring to investigate a topic connected with the U.S. Navy in that war is therefore obliged to consult a considerable number of widely scattered subjects; to examine amazedly the chronological file only to conclude that for his subject as well as for most others it is impossible to wade through so many filing cases because of the shortness of one's life. In the collections of the Office of Naval Records and Library, folders bearing the following file designations and labels were used:

- CG Mercantile Convoys, H. B., from New York
- CG Mercantile Convoys, O. V., Verdon, France
- KD Vessels, Disposition of, Forces in France
- KN Forces in France, Organization, Charts and Orders
- KN Organization of Naval Forces
- KN Organization, Forces U.S. & Allied
- KO U.S. Naval Forces in France, Demobilization
- KO Ships' Movements, Foreign Ports
- P Bordeaux
- P Rochefort, General
- P Rochefort, Organization, Plans
- P Rochefort, General Reports
- PA Pauillac, General
- PA Pauillac, Arrival, Position, Character & Departure of Vessels
- PM Four Districts off French Coast
- PM Rochefort District
- PO Bordeaux
- PO La Pallice
- PO Pauillac
- PO Rochefort
- PO Royan

WX-3 U.S. In France, Intelligence, Service,  
and Publication

ZP Rochefort, France

ZPA Pauillac, France

ZPA Pauillac, France, Transportation Department

U.S. Naval Forces in France, War Diary, 1917-1918

Bureau of Naval Personnel

General files (officers' records) of the following:

William V. Astor, David F. Boyd, Alexander S.  
Halstead, Lamar R. Leahy, Newton A. McCully,  
Charles B. Smith

Office of the Judge Advocate General

Court of inquiry record, 7591

National Archives, Division of Navy Department Archives

Bureau of Naval Personnel

Fitness reports of the following Naval Reserve  
Officers: Henry W. Barstow, Louis L. Bernier,  
George F. Keene, Alfred K. Schanze

General files (officers' records) of the following:

Daniel Bacon, Henry W. Barstow, Louis L. Bernier,  
Frank D. Berrien, Herbert R. A. Borchardt, Ralph  
P. Craft, Frederick C. Havemeyer, Julius F.  
Hellweg, George F. Keene, John B. Patton, Andrew  
Robeson

Log books of the following U.S. ships: Aphrodite,  
Beaufort, Corsair, El Capitan, El Occidente, May,  
Panther, Powhatan, Tenadores, and Marietta

Log books of Naval air stations: Arcachon, Pauillac

Muster roll of U.S. Naval Base, Bordeaux, 1917-1918

Office of the Judge Advocate General

Naval examining board records of the following:

Frank D. Berrien, Herbert R. A. Borchardt, Ralph  
P. Craft, Julius F. Hellweg, John B. Patton,  
Lamar R. Leahy

Office of the Secretary of the Navy, General file,  
1917-1918

Department of State

Correspondence between George Bucklin, U.S. Consul at  
Bordeaux, and the Department of State, 1917-1918

Department of War

U.S. Army, American Expeditionary Forces,  
File 18563-A

Published Material

- Baedeker, Karl. Southern France, including Corsica; Handbook for Travellers. Leipsic, Karl Baedeker, 1902
- Courteault, Paul. La Vie Economique à Bordeaux pendant la Guerre. Paris, Les Presses Universitaires de France; New Haven, Yale University Press, 1925
- Crowell, Benedict and Wilson, Robert F. Demobilization: Our Industrial and Military Demobilization after the Armistice, 1918-1920. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1921
- Crowell, Benedict and Wilson, Robert F. The Road to France: the Transportation of Troops and Military Supplies, 1917-1918. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1921. 2 vols.
- Delmas, G. Americans in Bordeaux; a Practical Guide-Book with Colloquial Sentences. Bordeaux, 1917
- Edwards, W. Atlee. "The U.S. Naval Force in Action, 1917-1918," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, XLVIII (Nov. 1922), 1863-1882
- Frothingham, Thomas G. The Naval History of the World War; the United States in the War, 1917-1918. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927
- Gibbons, Herbert Adams. Ports of France. New York, London, Century, 1926
- Gleaves, Albert. A History of the Transport Service; Adventures and Experiences of United States Transports and Cruisers in the World War, New York, George H. Doran, 1921
- Harbord, James G. The American Army in France, 1917-1919. Boston, Little, Brown, 1936
- Hurley, Edward N. The Bridge to France. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1927
- Husband, Joseph. On the Coast of France; the Story of the United States Naval Forces in French Waters. Chicago, A. C. McClurg, 1919
- Paxson, Frederic L. America at War, 1917-1918. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1939
- Thomas, Shipley. The History of the A. E. F. New York, George H. Doran, 1920

U. S. Army. American Expeditionary Forces. Chief Engineer. Historical Report of the Chief Engineer; including All Operations of the Engineer Department American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-1919.  
Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919

U.S. Navy Department. Annual Report, 1917-1920.  
Washington, Government Printing Office, 1918-1920

U.S. Navy Department. Navy Register, 1917-1919.  
Washington, Government Printing Office, 1918-1919

U.S. War Department. Annual Report, 1918-1920.  
Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919-1921

Wilgus, William J. Transporting the A. E. F. in Western Europe, 1917-1919. New York, Columbia University Press, 1931

#### Interview

September 2, 1943 with Capts. Frederick Hellweg and Vaughn K. Coman, last Naval Port Officer at Bordeaux and member of Admiral Wilson's staff, respectively, now attached to the Naval Observatory. The writer wishes to express his thanks to these officers for certain information relating to the period after the war.