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Ralph Barrett was born on October 7th, 1894, to parents Archibald and Ellen (nee Earle) Barrett of Bay Roberts.

At age 18, Ralph enlisted in the Royal Naval Reserve on January 2nd, 1913, at the Port of St. John's. He enlisted as a seaman and given the Service No. 1136X. His paper is not signed but rather a line through the signature area. It is possible that Ralph could not write but that's solely based on the enlistment paper as it is not signed at all.

Following basic training that lasted from August to November 1914, he was deemed adequately prepared for what lay ahead.

From his service record which covers the time frame from enlistment (2 January 1913 to 15 December 1915), Ralph's conduct as a seaman was "very good".

He served aboard the Excellent from November 1914 to March 1915 or so it would appear from his service record but the HMS Excellent was not a ship at all, but the name given to a gunnery school at Portsmouth, England.

Here is some information on HMS Excellent:

H.M.S. Excellent (Gunnery Training School)

H.M.S. *Excellent*, also known as **Portsmouth Gunnery School** or **Whale Island** was the British Royal Navy's main gunnery training establishment for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Upon mobilisation in August 1914, the Gunnery Schools were cleared, it being thought that they wouldn't be necessary in time of war. The school was left in the charge of the Commander, Arthur J. Davies, and in the rush to mobilise some two hundred officers had left their kit in their cabins, taking only essentials with them. Men of the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Fleet Reserve came for training, and Excellent began to become overcrowded.

The Sub-Lieutenants course was discontinued and was later described by the Admiralty as "unfortunate for the future training efficiency of the Fleet." In 1915 the Long Course for Lieutenants qualifying in Gunnery Duties was restarted but was reduced by 50% to six months' length. The officers on the course were instructed by a Commander (G) from the Grand Fleet.

In 1917, women of the Women's Royal Naval Service were sent to Whale Island after the Director of the service, Dame Katherine Furse visited Excellent to check, in the words of one author, "the lay of the land". She apparently compared the place to a large London club. Captain Henry Ralph

Crooke later described the only incident he knew of between women and the men there:

“I had only once any difficulty with the Wrens. About a week after their arrival the Commander came to my office with a very gloomy face to report that on the previous evening about seven o'clock he had come across one of our men embracing a Wren in the Rock Garden. I directed the Wren Officer to deal with the female delinquent—in public before the rest of the detachment—and said I would see the man.

Him I found to be a 3rd Class Officer's Steward and very ill-looking to boot. I sentenced him to 14 days No. 10A and told him to tell everyone else the next offender would get a fortnight in cells and that the east end of Stamshaw Bridge was the limit for osculation.”

Ralph was stationed in St. John's on the training vessel “Briton” for most of 1915 and then it seems he was discharged to return home to Bay Roberts.

He did return home, the 1921 census showing him living at home with his mother, Ellen, who was now a widow.

Ralph would marry Pearl (nee Bowering) and they would raise their family in the Bay Roberts area.

Ralph passed away on November 30th, 1947, at the age of 52. He is buried in the United Church Cemetery, Bay Roberts. His wife, Pearl would pass away some thirty years later in 1977.