

REAR ADMIRAL RALPH EARLE, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Rear Admiral Ralph Earle was born May 3, 1874 at Worcester, Massachusetts and died there February 13, 1939.

Rear Admiral Earle was appointed a Naval Cadet from Massachusetts in 1892 and received his commission as ensign in 1898. In 1903 he was commissioned Lieutenant and regular commander from July 1, 1914; captain from June 8, 1920 and Rear Admiral on the Retired List from June 21, 1930.

After serving on the HORNET, ESSEX and other vessels, Rear Admiral Earle was assigned to special duty in the Bureau of Ordnance in connection with the inspection of powder on the West Coast. In 1908 he was placed in charge of the Chemical Laboratory, Naval Station Puerto Rico. In August of 1916 he was assigned to duty as Inspector of Ordnance in charge of Naval Proving Ground, Indian Head, Maryland and in December of that year while in the grade of Commander he was appointed Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance with the rank of Rear Admiral for a period of four years.

Rear Admiral Earle was made Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance only a few months before the entrance of the United States into the War. At the outbreak of the war this Bureau was charged with the responsibility of providing arms and ammunitions for the enormously increased Navy. In addition to the heavy duties thus involved Rear Admiral Earle evolved and urged upon the Department the plan of closing the North Sea by a mine barrage, utilizing for this purpose an entirely new type of mine which, by the adaptation of scientific developments of the time, he felt could be constructed. He was able to convince the Navy Department and they in turn the British Admiralty, of the possibilities of this plan, and meanwhile pushed the experimental development of a new mine. With the success of the design of the mine and with the adoption of the plan, a tremendous industrial effort, directed by him, resulted in the delivery abroad in one year of about one hundred thousand fully loaded Naval mines.

These mines were laid by the United States Naval Forces in the North Sea Barrage, which it is believed had a substantial effect upon the early and successful termination of the War.

Rear Admiral Earle also conceived the possibility of putting into use some naval, fourteen-inch guns, as long range guns on the Western Front which resulted in a railway battery of guns carrying out bombardment operations against the enemy in the latter months of the war.

Rear Admiral Ralph Earle was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for services during the World War with the Citation:

"For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance. In this capacity he accomplished the organization of the mine barrage across the North Sea known as the Northern Barrage, and making of a type of mine entirely new to mining warfare, the conception and execution of the 14" navy railway battery operations carried out in France, the supplying a safe and reliable depth charge in sufficient quantities and on time, and other naval ordnance projects carried out during the World War."

Distinguished Service Medal by Army for services as Chief of Bureau of Ordnance during the World War in connection with War Department.

He was detached from duty as Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance in May, 1920, for command of the USS CONNECTICUT. On October 10, 1921, he reported for duty as Chief of Staff, Commander, Control Force, Atlantic Fleet, and attended the Naval War College, July 1, 1922 - May 26, 1923. He was Naval Inspector of Ordnance in Charge, Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island, from May 26, 1923 until August 25, 1927, when he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy at his own request, after thirty years' service. He assumed the presidency of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute at Worcester, Massachusetts and served in that capacity until his death February 13, 1939.

Rear Admiral Earle was awarded the John Scott Medal and Premium by the City of Philadelphia on recommendation of the University of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Academy of Sciences for the

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invention of the Northern Sea Mine Barrage and of the naval railway gun mounts.

He received the Sampson Medal (Medal commemorating naval engagements in the West Indies).

Spanish Campaign Medal (USS HORNET)

Mexican Service Medal (USS DOLPHIN)

Victory Medal -- World War

Commandeur de Legion d'Honneur by France

Companion of Order of the Bath of Britain

Grant of Dignity of the Order of Bath by Britain.

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