

ROYAL NAVAL WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

2. George Major

1st Writer RNVR

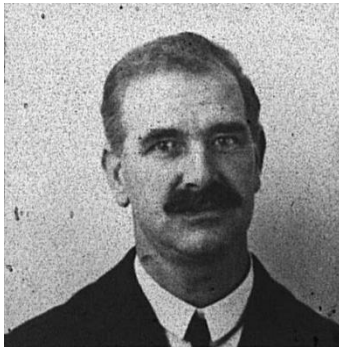
Service Number Clyde 4/2269

B: 28 October 1883, Belfast

D: 31 August 1917 Somme

Memorial: Scottish National War Memorial

George was the eldest of five children borne to George and Harriett Major in Belfast. His father was a Chief Steward in the Merchant Navy. *(pictured)*



In the Ireland Census of 1901, they were all living in Belfast but sometime later they moved to 63 Minard Road, Crossmyloof, Glasgow.

George joined the Clyde Division of the RNVR on 24 February 1913 as an OS and was allocated to the 4th Company. His civilian occupation at the time was as a Draper.

At the outbreak of war, he was drafted to Crystal Palace for training in the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Naval Division (RND).

Although not confirmed, it was very likely that he was sent to Antwerp in October in the defence and retreat in Belgium and seems to have acquitted himself well as he was rated LS on 5 October.

In August 1916, he was transferred to Hood Battalion and given leave to UK in October.

On 7 June 1917 he was embarked in HM Transport Ship *Legantic* to Marseilles.



It is not known why but he changed branches and became a 2nd Writer on 5 December 1914 and drafted to "A" Company, Collingwood Battalion in January 1915.

He was rated 1st Writer on 6 March 1915 and three months later was serving in the Records Office in Alexandria during the Gallipoli campaign.

George was appointed as the Orderley Room Sergeant, Hood Battalion in France and then moved to Northern France where the Battalion had been involved in heavy fighting at Ancre and Gavrelle.

George was killed in action on 31 August 1917 and was buried by the Rev. W J Harding in an isolated grave 4.75 miles NE of



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Arras then subsequently exhumed and reburied in Point du Jour Military Cemetery (pictured) on 29 October 1920, 2.5 miles NE of Arras.



There are two postscripts to George's story:

His younger brother Charles enlisted in the Royal Irish Rifles and died from gas poisoning and wounds in 1918.

Extract of Hood War Diary for August 1917.

Gavrelle.

Aug 29th. Very quiet. No enemy artillery fired all day. Fires observed at night in Bianche.

Aug 30th. Enemy artillery and T.M. (Ed. Trench Mortars) active in afternoon owing to better weather conditions. Three patrols sent out.

Aug 31st. Siege batteries engaged Crumpet (Ed. a heavy, relatively low velocity shell) during day. Enemy retaliation on our front line causing casualties.

The only other member of the RNVR Writer Branch to die in action in WW1 was 2nd Writer Patrick Ryan who was awarded the MSM and MiD. He died following a motor accident whilst working for the PSTO(N) in France.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY. (Brass heading not required.)				Army Form C. 2118.
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and reference to Appendix
GAVRELLE WINDRILL Belle	1917			
	Aug 29		Ration strength 24 off 790 ORs Very quiet. No enemy artillery fired all day. Fires observed at night in BIANCHE	Hood
	30		Ration strength 24 off 799 ORs Enemy artillery and T.M. more active in afternoon owing to better weather conditions. Three patrols sent out	Hood
	31		Ration strength 24 off 839 ORs Siege batteries engaged CRUMPET during day. Enemy retaliation on our front line causing casualties.	

