

HECTOR CHARLES PORTER

FULL NAME	Hector Charles Porter
RANK LAST HELD	Private
FORENAME(S)	Hector Charles
SURNAME	Porter
WAR	World War II, 1939-1945
SERIAL NO.	62162
GENDER	Male
FIRST KNOWN RANK	Private
OCCUPATION BEFORE ENLISTMENT	Warehouseman
NEXT OF KIN	Mr H. Porter (father), 41 Sherwood Avenue, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand
MARITAL STATUS	Legally Separated
ENLISTMENT ADDRESS	41 Sherwood Avenue, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand
MILITARY DISTRICT	Auckland
BODY ON EMBARKATION	Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF)
EMBARKATION UNIT	Infantry Reinforcements
NOMINAL ROLL NUMBER	WW2 4
PAGE ON NOMINAL ROLL	WW2 285
LAST UNIT SERVED	21Infantry Battalion
PLACE OF DEATH	Western Desert
DATE OF DEATH	22 July 1942
AGE AT DEATH	26
YEAR OF DEATH	1942
CAUSE OF DEATH	Killed in action
CEMETERY NAME	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt
GRAVE REFERENCE	I. A. 22.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES	Son of Harold and Alma Porter, of Auckland
DESCRIPTION OF IMAGE	Portrait, Weekly News
SOURCES USED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force Nominal Roll No. 4 (Embarkations from 1st April, 1941 to 30 June, 1941)Commonwealth War Graves Commission. URL: http://www.cwgc.org



Private H. C. Porter,
of Auckland, killed in
action.



Medals to 62162 Private Hector Charles PORTER

21st Battalion, 2NZEF



*1939 - 1945 Star; Africa Star; War Medal 1939 – 45; New Zealand War Service Medal.
New Zealand Memorial Cross*

Bruce Charles Gibson (formerly Porter) was issued with his late father's four WW2 medals.
The Memorial Cross was presented to Bruce as Hector's immediate next-of-kin.

Magnolia Tree

41 Sherwood Avenue, Grey Lynn, Auckland

When the present owners of 41 Sherwood Avenue in Grey Lynn bought the property some years ago, they were told by an elderly neighbour that the large magnolia tree growing in the front garden of the house was planted by previous owners in memory of a son who was killed in the war. In the 1930s and 1940s the house was owned by Harold Porter, and the tree was planted to commemorate his son, Hector Porter, killed in action on 22 July 1942 at the First Battle of El Alamein.



Harold and Alma Porter had 6 children. The eldest was Frederick (1908 – 1916), Alfred (1910 - 1995), Nell (1912), Joyce (1913 – 1950), Hector (1916 – 1942) and Robert (1919/20 – 1970). The family suffered more than its share of tragedies losing two children at a young age [Frederick at aged 7 and Nell after only 3 days] then Hector during WW2 aged 25. Their mother Alma died in 1920 aged 33 years, and Harold then married his second wife Annie Willis Garrett later that year. Harold died in 1950 and is buried alongside his wife Alma and their two infant children Frederick and Nell, in Waikumete Cemetery, Auckland.

Hector Charles Porter was educated at Grey Lynn Primary School, where he, along with 200 former pupils who served in WW2, were commemorated on a memorial. The original memorial was destroyed when the school was rebuilt in 1980.

In 1937 Hector married Rebecca Margaret Gibson, he was aged 20 and Rebecca was 19 at the time. They had a son Bruce Charles Porter who was born 27 December 1937. Soon after Bruce was born, they separated and were divorced in 1941. Rebecca initially lived with her mother and brother at the family home on Ngataringa Road in Devonport and then moved to Wellington where she worked as a furrier. Bruce stayed in Auckland and was raised by his grandmother, Rebecca's mother.

By this time World War 2 had broken out and Hector enlisted into the New Zealand Army, attesting on 3rd July 1940. He stated that he was legally separated at the time and had one child aged 2 years (Bruce Charles Porter). He was employed by A. Foster & Co (ship chandlery) based on 34 Fanshaw Street Auckland as a warehouseman. The business is still trading at that location today. Because Hector had suffered double pneumonia in earlier life, he was given a strenuous medical examination and declared Grade 1 fit.

Hector entered Papakura camp on 18 January 1941 for training and subsequently embarked with the 5th Reinforcements, 21 Battalion aboard HMT 25 which left Wellington on 7th April 1941. The troopship arrived in Egypt on 15th May 1941 and he was posted to 31 Training Battalion and then to 21 Infantry Battalion on 16 June 1941.

"21 Battalion fought in the Libyan Desert during 1941 including Sidi Rezegh where the Battalion had suffered fairly heavy casualties. In 1942, the Battalion was deployed in Syria but were soon recalled to take up defensive positions at Mersa Matruh, around 450 km west of Cairo. Seeking a more mobile role for his division, Freyberg moved the New Zealanders further south to Minqar Qaim. Within days rapidly advancing German forces had cut the New Zealanders off from Allied forces to the east. The only chance of saving the division lay in a breakout through the ring of German forces blocking the way. In the early hours of 28 June 1942, the New Zealand Division, led by 4th Brigade, burst through enemy lines, using their bayonets to telling effect in the savage hand-to-hand fighting that ensued. As the attack proceeded, the majority of the division slipped through a gap further south in what is now referred to as the Minqar Qaim breakout.

Following the breakout at Minqar Qaim in late June 1942, the New Zealand Division fell back to the Alamein Line, where it took part in the first Battle of Alamein (1–27 July 1942). At Ruweisat Ridge on 15 July 1942, and the El Mreir Depression a week later, the New Zealanders seized their objectives after successful night assaults. But on both occasions they were left unsupported by British armoured units, and when German tanks appeared they had no choice but to surrender. The inability to get anti-tank and other heavy weapons forward to the New Zealanders contributed to the debacles at Ruweisat and El Mreir. But its main cause was the failure of the British armour to move forward. Faulty orders and a lack of initiative on the part of the exhausted British tank commanders lay at the heart of the problem. The 4th, 5th and 6th (NZ) Brigades suffered heavy casualties in these battles, including Private Hector Porter was killed in action on 22 July 1942." ¹

¹ Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (6 April 2011). El Alamein - The North African Campaign. Retrieved from New Zealand History Online: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/the-north-african-campaign/el-alamein>

In Memory of

PRIVATE HECTOR CHARLES PORTER

62162, 21st Bn., New Zealand Infantry

who died age 25

on 22 July 1942

Son of Harold and Alma Porter, of Auckland City, New Zealand

Remembered with honour

EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY, EGYPT



Commemorated in perpetuity by

the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Porter Family

Harold PORTER

Born: ~ 1886

Married: 1907

Died: 24 May 1950, aged 64 years

Buried: Waikumete Cemetery, Non-Conformist Section, Block D, Row 1, Plot 48

= **Alma PORTER** (nee MERETT); wife of Harold Porter

Born: ~ 1887

Died 19 February 1920, aged 33 years

Buried: Waikumete Cemetery, Non-Conformist Section, Block D, Row 1, Plot 48

Children of Harold & Alma

Frederick Merett PORTER

Born: 1908

Died: 01 December 1916, infant

Buried: Waikumete Cemetery, Non-Conformist Section, Block D, Row 1, Plot 50

Alfred Harold PORTER

Born: 11 June 1910

Died: 8 August 1995, aged 85

Buried: North Shore Memorial Park Cemetery. Central Division, Bronze Section 6, Block A, Row B, Plot 15

= **Ivy PORTER** (nee SMITH); wife of Alfred Harold Porter

Died: 16 July 1985

Buried: North Shore Memorial Park Cemetery. Central Division, Bronze Section 6, Block A, Row B, Plot 15

Children of Alfred & Ivy

Mary Marguerite WALKER (nee PORTER, formerly MOUNT)

= **Maurice Leigh MOUNT**; husband of Mary Marguerite Porter

Died: 10 February 2006, aged 70

Buried: North Shore Memorial Park Cemetery. Central Division, Bronze Section 6, Block D, Row D, Plot 31

Children of Mary & Maurice

Peter Leigh MOUNT

Andrew Llewellyn MOUNT

Nell PORTER

Born: 16 August 1912

Died: 18 August 1912, aged 3 days

Buried: Waikumete Cemetery, Non-Conformist Section, Block D, Row 1, Plot 48

Joyce Marguerite CLARK (nee PORTER)

Born: 17 July 1913

Died: 7 May 1950

= **Cecil William CLARK**; husband of Joyce Marguerite Porter

Born: 18 Jan 1915

Died: 1996

Hector Charles PORTER

Born: 31 December 1916

Married: 1937

Divorced: 1941

Killed in Action: 22 July 1942

Buried: El Alamein Cemetery, Egypt, Block I, Row A, Plot 22 ²

= **Rebecca Margaret PORTER** (nee GIBSON); former wife of Hector Charles Porter

Born: 18 August 1917

Died: 18 December 1986

Children of Hector and Rebecca

Bruce Charles GIBSON; formerly Porter

listed on 1963 North Shore Electoral roll as Chemist and living at 64 Ngataringa Road, Devonport

Born: 27 December 1937

Died: 18 April 2009, Melbourne Australia

= **Margaret GIBSON** (living in Melbourne)

Robert Norman PORTER

Died: 1 May 1970

Cremated: Waikumete Crematorium

= **Gwendolyn PORTER** (nee BISHOP); wife of Robert Norman Porter

Children of Robert & Gwendolyn

John PORTER

Graham PORTER

Maree PORTER

= **Annie Willis PORTER** (nee Garrett) Harold's second wife and stepmother of Hector

Born: 29 May 1889

Married: 1920

Died: 09 Aug 1989, aged 100 years

Cremated: Purewa, Auckland.

² <http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/Cenotaph/30910.detail>

Gibson Family

William GIBSON

Address: 64 Ngataringa Road, Devonport, Auckland

= **Margaret GIBSON**

Died: 6th August 1971

Margaret's will records leaving her estate to Rebecca (Hector's former wife), Henry Gibson (Rebecca's brother), Bruce Gibson (Rebecca's son) and Henry JOYCE (friend) equally.

Children of William & Margaret

Rebecca Margaret GAIR (nee GIBSON, formerly PORTER); former wife of Hector Charles Porter

Born: 18 August 1917

Married Hector: 1937

Divorced Hector: 1941 - 1942

Died: 18 December 1986

= **Hector Charles PORTER** (*first husband of Rebecca*)

Born: 31 December 1916

Killed in Action: 22 July 1942 during First Battle of El Alamein, WW2

Buried: El Alamein Cemetery, Egypt, Block I, Row A, Plot 22

Children of Hector and Rebecca

Bruce Charles GIBSON; formerly Porter

Born: 27 December 1937

Died: 18 April 2009, Melbourne Australia

= **Margaret GIBSON** (living in Melbourne)

= **George Oswald Milton GAIR** (*second husband of Rebecca*)

Pauline Alma ALLAN (nee GIBSON)

= **James ALLAN**

Stuart Milton GAIR

Henry Kenneth (Ken) GIBSON

NZ 6495, former Vice President Takapuna RSA

Born: 5 June 1920

Died: 17 November 1995 (50th year of marriage)

= **Pearl GIBSON**

Children of Ken and Pearl

Yvonne **GIBSON**

Adrienne **GIBSON**

Jocelyn **GIBSON**

TRACING THE BABY

George Oswald Milton GAIR was second husband of Rebecca Margaret Gibson (formerly Porter).

2NZEF Embarkation Roll 7: 1 Jan 1942 - 31 Mar 1942 > Page 27

Gair, George Oswald Milton	73188	Pte.	Inf. Reinf.	S.	Wellington	Grocer	99 Hinson St., Newtown, Wgtn.	Mrs. D. Laidley, Panama St., Martinborough (m).
Galbraith, James Burgess	48190	Pte.	N.Z. G.C.	S.	Wellington	Electric welder	4 Hume St., Lower Hutt	Mrs. A. Galbraith, 31 Albert St., Linwood, Chch. (f).
Gale, Francis Douglas	71724	Drv.	36 Bn.	M.	Auckland	Butcher	17 Mostyn St., Kingsland, Auck.	Mrs. N. D. Gale, 19 Balfour Rd., Grey Lynn, Auckland (w).

Note. George's mother lives in Martinborough. The affidavit signed by Rebecca claiming the gratuity on behalf of son Bruce (the baby) was witnessed by Postmaster at Martinborough.

2NZEF Embarkation Roll 9: 1 Jul 1942 - 31 Dec 1942 > Page 74

Gair, George Oswald Milton	73188	Pte.	H.Q. 3 Div.	M.	Wellington	Grocer	99 Hinson St., Newtown, Wgtn.	Mrs. H. M. Gair, 61 Sealarkina Rd., Devonport, Auck (w).
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Note that the NOK is Rebecca, the former wife of Hector, and she lives at Ngataranga Rd, Devonport and is shown as "W" (wife). She has gone home to her mother whilst George goes to war.

Hector Porter married Rebecca Margaret Gibson mid 1937. Baby (Bruce Charles Porter) born 27th December 1937. They were aged Rebecca (19) and Hector (20) at the time of marriage. Rebecca and Hector separated shortly afterward the birth and had agreed officially to separate in April 1938. They got divorced after the prerequisite 3 years apart (no earlier than April 1941). Hector Porter embarked for overseas 7th April 1941 arriving in Egypt on 15th May 1941. His attestation papers show as legally separated at time of embarkation as divorce still being finalised. Hector Porter was KIA 22 July 1942.

On George Gair's first embarkation (prior to 31 March 1942), he is shown as single and gives his mother as next of kin. He returned to New Zealand that year and re-embarks prior to 31 December 1942 having married Rebecca. George and Rebecca Gair appear to have 2 children:

Stuart aged 68 in 2011 (i.e. born 1942 - 43)

Pauline aged 62 in 2011 (i.e. born 1948 - 49)

Electoral Roll 1963 > Wellington > Hutt > Page 34

25	GAIGER, Charles, 257 Waterloo Road, grocer
26	GAIGER, Joyce Beryl, 237 Waterloo Road, married
27	GAIR, George Oswald Milton, 4 Hooper Grove, grocer
28	GAIR, Rebecca Margaret, 4 Hooper Grove, married
29	GALBRAITH, Douglas John, 138 Oxford Tce., linotype op.
30	GALBRAITH, Joyce Mary S., 8 Willoughby St., married

Electoral Roll 1972 > Wellington > Kapiti > Page 52

40	Gage, James Maxwell, 267 Mill Rd., Otaki, comm. grwr.
41	Gair, George Oswald M., 9 Aperahama Rd., Paekakariki, self emp.
42	Gair, Pauline Alma, 9 Aperahama Rd., Paekakariki, teacher.
43	Gair, Rebecca Margaret, 9 Aperahama Rd., Paekakariki, married.
44	Gailbraith, Bruce, Paremata Rd., Paremata, mkt. gdner.

Indicates a possible daughter "Pauline Alma Gair" living with parents. Her occupation is teacher.

From "Old Friends"

Pauline Allan (formerly Pauline Gair)

"About Pauline:

62 years old and living in Wanganui. Living in Marton. No longer teaching. Working with husband in financial business as Business Manager."

Whitepages indicates ...

Allan J H & P A
39 Bond St Marton 4710
06-327 4574

Electoral Roll 1978 > Wellington > Kapiti > Page 18

103	GAFFNEY, Hilda Maude	68 Matai Road, Raumati Sth, Married
104	GAIR, Charles William	133 Alexander Road, Raumati Beach, Rtrd
105	GAIR, George Oswald M	93 Eatwell Avenue, Paraparaumu, Self/Emp
106	GAIR, John Irving	8 Annan Grove, Paremata, Public Serv
107	GAIR, Judith Alison	8 Annan Grove, Paremata, Married
108	GAIR, Patricia Alberta	133 Alexander Road, Raumati Beach, Mrd
109	GAIR, Pauline Alma	9 Aperahama Road, Paekakariki, Teacher
110	GAIR, Rebecca Margaret	93 Eatwell Avenue, Paraparaumu, Married
111	GAIR, Stuart Milton	9 Aperahama Road, Paekakariki, N S
112	GALBRAITH, Ainsley Helen	56 The Parade, Paekakariki, Student

Stuart Milton GAIR could be a brother of Pauline (Milton is George's 3rd given name) and therefore is a half brother of Bruce. Stuart had moved to Tauranga by 1981 ...

Electoral Roll 1981 > Bay of Plenty > Tauranga > Page 21

124	GAINSFORD, Esther Mary	2/80 Christopher Street, Attendant
125	GAIR, Antoinette Jill	72A Durham Street, Housewife
126	GAIR, Stuart Milton	72A Durham Street, Inspctr Elct
127	GALBALLY, Edna	34 Argyll Road, Retired

Whitepages indicates ...

Gair Stuart
Twentythird Ave Gate Pa Tauranga 3112
07-577 6898

From "Old Friends"

Stuart Gair

"About Stuart

68 years old and living in Bay of Plenty. Work in gate pa live in gate pa."

185 GAFFNEY, Edward Joseph	68 Matai Road, Raumati South, Retired
186 GAFFNEY, Hilda Maude	68 Matai Road, Raumati South, Retired
187 GAIR, George Oswald M	93 Eatwell Av, Paraparaumu Beach, Self/Emp
188 GAIR, John Irving	8 Annan Grove, Papakowhai, Public Srvnt
189 GAIR, Judith Alison	8 Annan Grove, Papakowhai, Housewife
190 GAIR, Rebecca Margaret	93 Eatwell Av, Paraparaumu Beach, Married
191 GAIR, Richard John	8 Annan Grove, Papakowhai, Student
192 GALBRAITH, Ainsley Helen	55 Motuhara Road, Pimmerton, Mother
193 GALE, Michael Warren	146 Kahu Road, Paremata, Civil Srvnt

Son and Daughter left home ...

Rebecca Margaret GAIR died in Kenepuru Hospital (Porirua) on 18 December 1986 aged 69. Rebecca was the mother of the Bruce Charles Gibson (formerly Porter) as well as Pauline Allan (nee Gair) and Stuart Gair.

Registration Number	Family Name	Given Name(s)	Date of Birth
1986/50743	Gair	Rebecca Margaret	18 August 1917

Cremation Details

Surname	GAIR
Forenames	Rebecca Margaret
Age and age unit	69 Years
Gender	Female
Date of Death	18 December 1986
Place of Death	Kenepuru Hospital
Date of cremation	19 December 1986

-----Original Message-----

From: James & Pauline Allan
Sent: Sunday, July 17, 2011 1:56 PM

I was thrilled and also saddened to receive your e-mail re the memorial plaque unveiling in August. My mother, Rebecca Margaret Gair (nee Gibson) sadly died 25 years ago this December and her son my eldest brother Bruce, died 18th April 2009. His widow, Margaret Gibson lives in Melbourne. If I can help with any additional information please don't hesitate to ask.

Pauline Allan

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Mount
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2011 1:11 PM

Yes, Hector was my great uncle and all the links you have in your e-mail are correct except that my mother Mary is now Mary Walker. My father Maurice died a few years ago and mum has remarried. Alfred, Hector's brother, (my grandfather) died 15 years ago. Their step-mother died around 1990. Hector died at el Alamein. I have actually visited his grave in Egypt at the Commonwealth Services Cemetery at el Alamein in 1985.

Peter Mount