

Theodore Castleraugh Beresford Hayhurst.

By Alan Mckenzie

Theodore was born in Timaru and his birth registered there in 1899. His mother Estelle had two children born in England then four children later in New Zealand. His birth registration records his name as Theodore Castleraugh Beresford Kingsley. His father is recorded as Charles Kingsley, although no record of a Charles Kingsley has been sighted in Timaru. Estelle claimed to have married a Charles Kingsley in London soon after the death in 1889 of her supposed husband John Hayhurst of Temuka. John Hayhurst had spent considerable time in the 1880's in England and Estelle claimed to have been married to him – even though John had a wife in Temuka.

Estelle arrived in New Zealand in 1890 under the name Hayhurst soon after John Hayhurst had died and eventually was instrumental in having his body exhumed as she believed he had been murdered. She also sought recognition from the Hayhurst estate for herself, and her two oldest children born in England who were supposedly the children of John Hayhurst. Her claims were unsuccessful and she continued to live in Timaru on the corner of Grey Road and Arthur Street. By the time of World War 1 she was living in Banks Street.

Theodore took the surname Hayhurst despite his birth registration of Kingsley and was working as a farmhand at Patea in the North Island when he enlisted for service in World War 1. He was underage for service so deviously recorded his father as John Hayhurst, and his birthday as 5 November 1896 at St Helens, Lancashire in England. When his mother became aware that he had enlisted she wrote to the New Zealand Army Headquarters pointing out that Theodore was underage and shouldn't be sent off to fight for his country. Unfortunately by then the troop ship had sailed, Theodore was off to war, and of course Estelle would only have been able to present a birth certificate that recorded Theodore Kingsley was born in Timaru in 1900 and his father was Charles Kingsley - all contradicting the information Theodore Hayhurst had provided when he enlisted.

Theodore returned to Timaru after the war and married Ellen Margaret De Lury in 1920. His son Lawrence Edward Hayhurst was killed in action in Italy in 1944. Theodore died in 1937 and is buried with Ellen in the Timaru Cemetery.