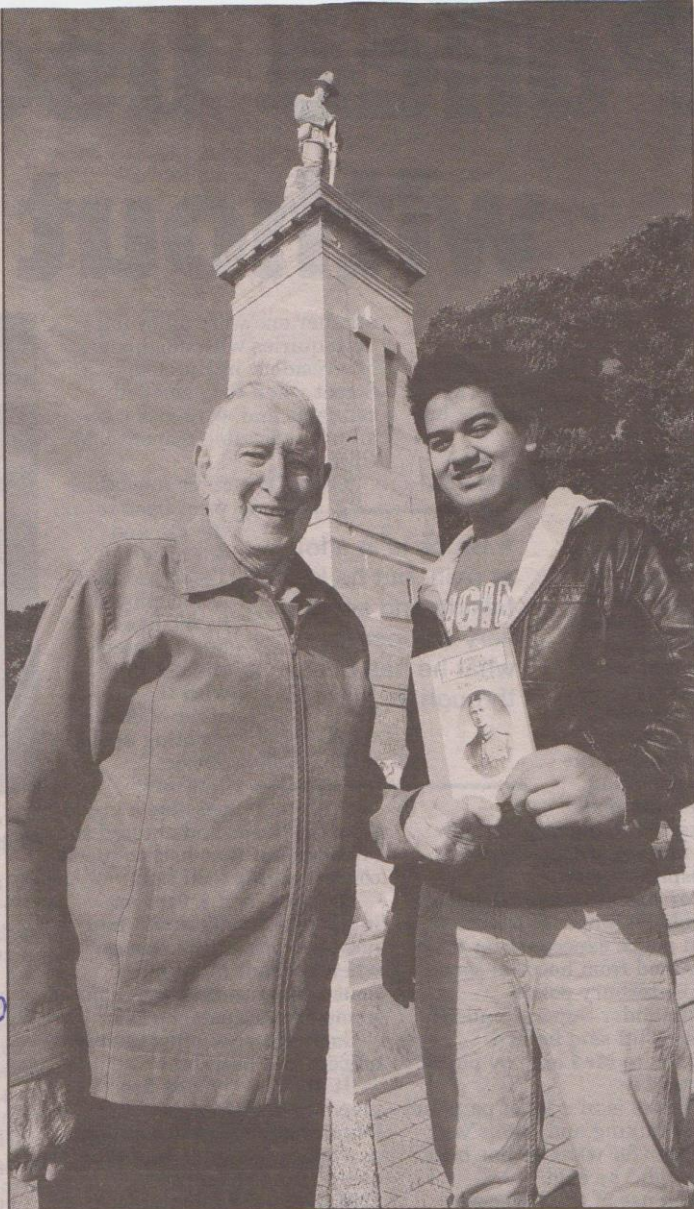


PIECE OF HISTORY:

Gisborne historian Dick Twisleton gifts Cruze Mataira-Kapa a book of his uncle's letters from World War 1 and the Boer War. Mr Twisleton read that Cruze had been given the opportunity to travel to Gallipoli with Prime Minister John Key for Anzac Day.

Picture by Paul Rickard

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Moving words inspire special gift to Cruze

by Jackson Payne

"I SAW the tears in our war veterans' eyes — I felt their pain," Cruze Kapa wrote in his diary while visiting Gallipoli on Anzac Day.

Words that made Gisborne historian Dick Twisleton cry.

Cruze was selected to join Prime Minister John Key as a member of the official New Zealand contingent at Gallipoli on Anzac Day.

Cruze, a deaf 17-year-old, was awarded the place for his sign language speech about the impact of war on a family.

Mr Twisleton read about Cruze's achievement in The Gisborne Herald and was so impressed, he gifted Cruze a book of his uncle's letters from World War 1 and the Boer War.

"It's real history in there," Mr Twisleton said, pointing to the two collections titled Letters from the Front and With the New Zealanders at the Front.

In return, Cruze gave Mr Twisleton a copy of the story he wrote about his trip.

"I felt the sorrow, the devastation," he wrote. "I didn't endure the hostile fields 95 years ago,

of flying shrapnel, booming of heavy artillery, blazing heat, the smell of death or see corpses laying on top of the earth.

"The steep terrain our soldiers were swallowed in, I saw it, I felt it. The sacrifices those soldiers and their families made unselfishly . . . I will never fully understand it but I felt it."

Mr Twisleton was touched by Cruze's words.

"Cruze couldn't be told anything that was going on but he was able to sense it from being there."

Mr Twisleton has republished the two collections of Major Francis Morphet Twisleton's war letters and described his uncle as an "incredible leader".

"The men who served with him said he was just an unbelievable leader of men.

"He wouldn't let another man do anything he wouldn't do himself."

The "real history" was important for young people.

"I think the possibility should be there that children should be able to read exactly what New Zealanders did at Gallipoli."