

February 2017

Assembly led by Mark Skidmore, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding)

Courage

Unfortunately my assembly plans for today have had to be postponed. I have not been able to gather enough volunteers to deliver the message I was intending.

However this did make me think about why they had not found the courage to volunteer. Indeed it made me question what courage is and who is courageous.

One might argue that public speaking is courageous or performing in front of your peers at Gatton's Got Talent. Some might argue that sports people performing under extreme pressure have courage and I doubt anyone would argue that soldiers are courageous.

I have recently watched the series Band of Brothers again. For those of you who haven't seen it - it is an incredible account of E Company, part of the 101st Airborne Division during World War 2. There are many tales of bravery and courage but also of the opposite; soldiers freezing or capitulating to the terror of war. What does intrigue me, is that the same men who had been courageous could also succumb to the terror.

Looking in to this further I was given a copy of 'The Anatomy of Courage' by Lord Moran. He was a medical officer in World War 1 and went on to be Winston Churchill's medical officer. This is a challenging read but very worthwhile if you find the time. Lord Moran investigates courage on the battlefield and in the trenches of World War 1 and what he discovers basically boils down to this:

Everyone has a bucket of courage. When one performs a courageous act, some of the courage is emptied from the bucket and it takes time to refill. Some people have bigger buckets than others and some buckets empty and refill slower than others. But this is great news because it means everyone has the ability to be courageous. Courage is not something you have or don't have – you all possess a bucket of courage and the even better news is that your bucket is capable of growth.

Everyone has courage within them.