ENGLISH: *ENCOUNTERING CONFLICT*

Conflict is Inevitable

I have chosen to write a creative response to the prompt "Conflict is inevitable". My piece is an article in a school newspaper. The language employed is emotive to reflect the astounding nature of the women discussed, yet factual as the true stories of the women do not need altering. My links to the text include discussions about the real life women who are represented in Paradise Road, such as Margaret 'Daisy' Drummond, Adrienne Pargiter and Rosemary Leighton-Jones, as well as the choir and tensions that were experienced by the characters.

NEW EMAIL MESSAGE **Monday 15th April 4:04pm**

To: Kerri Parker
From: John Smith
Subject: ANZAC Women
Attachment: Conflict article

Dear Miss Parker,

Here is an article I wrote over the weekend about Anzac Day. I was wondering if you might be able to put it in the school newspaper this month because I think everyone should be aware of the significance of women's involvement in, and contributions to war. I hope there's room in this month's issue so that we can all read it before the Anzac Day celebrations.

Thanks,
John Smith

ANZAC Women

John Smith, year 12

Anzac Day is just around the corner. Already shops have the little boxes on their counters where you can buy pins, pens and bracelets. Around town there are posters encouraging us to go to a service at the local RSL, and we all know that the Anzac Day assembly is coming up soon. But why do we have such an assembly? All the year 7's are expected to be silent, and the year 12's to be all grown up and reflective, but why should we think about some old, dead guys? We all know their stories, but what about the stories of the other people who were involved? What about the nurses, the mothers, daughters and sisters who were never supposed to be affected, yet had their lives shaped by the conflicts of World War I and World War II? Why aren't they remembered?

Men aren't the only ones thrust into war; women too are often placed right into the heart of the mess. Although the Anzac Day we celebrate today is centred on World War I, we should also remember the impact World War II had on Australia. Many Australian women were living in Singapore during World War II, some as nurses, others as wives to the soldiers and officers stationed there. Little did they know, but their peaceful lives were about to be turned upside down as they were faced with the conflict the rest of the world was already involved in. When the Japanese troops invaded Singapore in 1942 the women and children were told to evacuate as soon as possible. Although they were not soldiers in the war, ships carrying the women and children were bombed, taking hundreds of innocent lives and leaving the others in the hands of Japanese prisoner of war (POW) camps. The sheltered lives of the women were no longer peripheral to the war, but these innocent victims had been flung into the chaos simply because in war there are no rules.

In order to survive ordinary people find they can do extraordinary things. Stories of survival in POW camps throughout history show that in the most horrible situations, individuals can show extraordinary abilities. Although nothing could prepare the women to cope with such inhumane conditions and cruelty, they managed to survive, further exemplifying the astounding ability for humans to have hope. Margaret Dryburgh and Norah Chambers, both found themselves interned in a POW camp after the Japanese invasion of Singapore. Together, the astonishing women put aside personal prejudices and fought against the oppression by their harsh captors to form a choir. For over a year the choir performed, bringing hope in a single moment of beauty to the camp. Although Norah Chambers had a musical background, both women stepped out of their comfort zones. While they were faced with cruelty everyday and were surrounded by a diverse group of women, these inspirational women put aside personal prejudices to come together for each other. Seeing a need for some kind of order in the chaos, Margaret Dryburgh and Norah Chambers put the other women above themselves, risking their lives to organise the choir and perform against the wishes of the guards. Not only did the choir bring a sense of hope and purpose to the women and children in the camp, surprisingly, the group found a mutual understanding with their captors through the music. Although conflict between the women in the choir was inevitable, they were able to put aside their arguments and prejudices to stand as one against the unavoidable war.

Margaret Dryburgh is remembered for her strength of character, leadership, and her faith. It was through her faith that Margaret gained the ability to forgive and resist further conflict. Whilst many situations in the war result in hatred by captors and prisoners, prodigious Margaret found that the worse her captors behaved, the more she felt sorry for them. It was this understanding that helped Margaret to live without hatred and remorse for her final days in the camp. Others who did not have this strength found themselves further imprisoned by their inability to forgive their captors. The suppression of human rights and extreme violence exacerbated tensions in many camps. Some women held onto other hopes to keep them alive, whether it was love, anger, or in the case of Vivian Bullwinkel, the need to return home and share her stories. She is remembered for her unwavering resilience after being the only survivor of a shocking massacre that took the lives of 22 nurses she was travelling with. Determined to return to Australia to tell the stories of her friends, Vivian survived internment in a POW camp and returned home triumphant to begin a memorial museum. However, some women could not find the forgiveness in themselves and their peers to survive. During the war, ordinary men and women carried out evil deeds deliberately, systematically and over years, and for some prisoners, they can never be forgiven for these actions. Not all women survived the camps, or life after the war, being unable to return to civilian life or have hope in human nature. Unlike Margaret Dryburgh, the inability to forgive their captors ended in further internal conflict for many women after the war, leaving them unable to move on with their lives.

Whilst innocent victims are inevitably involved in conflicts, true strengths and character are often found in the worst situations. For some victims of conflict, their ability to survive comes from faith, others from a need to share their stories, whilst others rely on each other for strength. Stories from World War II show us that restricted human rights and appalling conditions can often exacerbate small conflicts, but that a common goal can sometimes alleviate tensions. In order to survive afterwards and to avoid further conflicts, individuals must find forgiveness in themselves and their captors. This is why we celebrate Anzac Day. To remember the immeasurable sacrifices that astounding women, as well as men, made for us to avoid further such conflict in our times.