

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CRAIG IRVING

CLASS OF 2009



When did you attend Lowanna College, and what year level did you complete?

From 2003 to 2009. I completed Year 12 VCE.

What are your memories of Lowanna College?

I look back on my time at Lowanna with melancholy. I am glad to have moved on but I also miss those times quite dearly. From the ease of daily social interactions with my close mates to the educational opportunities provided which, during my time at Lowanna, I took for granted.

How do you think your experiences at Lowanna College helped you become the person you are today?

Lowanna for me provided life skills. I'll caveat this by saying that of all the subjects I chose to study, none of them have contributed to my career choice and pathway. That doesn't mean I didn't learn anything useful, but the person I am today is largely due to the choices I made during my time at Lowanna. Individual experiences will vary but I believe the routine, structure and discipline during my time during high school provided a foundation for me to evolve and develop into an adult in the big wide world.

Was there anyone at Lowanna College who had a positive impact and upon reflection, influenced you to follow the path you have chosen?

I'm not sure if he still works there, but my music teacher/tutor Cameron Nicholls. With the plethora of instruments available to learn I chose clarinet in Year 7. When he saw my commitment to music and my willingness to learn he took me under his wing. To this day I still think of our time together during our lessons, where it wasn't always just about music but life in general.

Tell us about your journey after leaving Lowanna College, and where are you now?

When I graduated from Year 12 I was lost as to what career pathway I wanted to pursue. I worked and studied for three years, during this time I was figuring out what drives me, what motivates me and what is next in my life chapter. I decided to enlist into the Royal Australian Navy where my life changed

forever. I joined in March of 2012 and in the blink of an eye I was learning new skills again, interacting with people from all corners of the country, learning to understand different cultures and seeing the world. From my little corner of life in Yallourn North to being thrust into the world stage was a phenomenal experience. I have deployed countless times into operational areas, visited 26 different countries, learnt how to control aircraft to hunt/track submarines and a vast

amount of professional development courses including a promotional course to the dizzying heights of Petty Officer. My job now as a Petty Officer Combat Systems Supervisor is to train, develop and lead my team of 30 sailors to track, report and engage if necessary on all contacts on our scope. To fit 11 years of my journey into a paragraph is difficult, but if anyone reading this has an interest in joining the ADF feel free to reach out to me.

What are your greatest accomplishments (awards, achievements, defining moments, travel, family etc.)?

After finishing my core role training at HMAS Watson in Sydney I joined my first ship HMAS Perth where we visited Pearl Harbour Hawaii. The ship was testing a new Anti Ship Missile Defence system conducting live missile firing against subsonic and supersonic targets. The thrill of being in the middle of the operations room, watching the tracking of the targets, the engagement protocols and rush of the missile as it left the launcher to engage the drones was a moment etched into my memory. But by far the biggest defining moment of my career was when I joined HMAS ANZAC and sailed around the world in commemoration of the centennial of WWI. Following in the footsteps of the original armada, we left Albany in Western Australia, sailed through the Suez Canal and proceeded to Turkiye. Then, on the exact day to the hour our ANZACS landed on the beach at ANZAC

cove, we sailed past 100 years on. Standing on the upper decks, a cool wind cascading through us as we looked upon the historical landing site. Taking in the arduous terrain and obstacles our ANZACS soldiers were forced to endure during their campaign was a sight to behold. I recommend anyone interested, at least once in your life, to visit ANZAC cove near Canakkale Turkiye.

As life went on, I found my life partner and married her in 2019. This is the defining moment of my life, followed closely by the three boys we now have.

What advice would you like to give to current Lowanna College students?

Take your time, slow down and enjoy school. It is a small portion of your life that will set you up for the rest of it. Find your passion, apply yourself to what drives you and what you enjoy, and the world will open for you.

