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JR to Dr.

Tingira Boy Follows His Dreamtime

Rewards are a plenty for this former Newcastle teenage Sea Cadet.

Joined the Royal Australian Navy as a 15 year old Junior Recruit at HMAS Leeuwin and has never looked back.

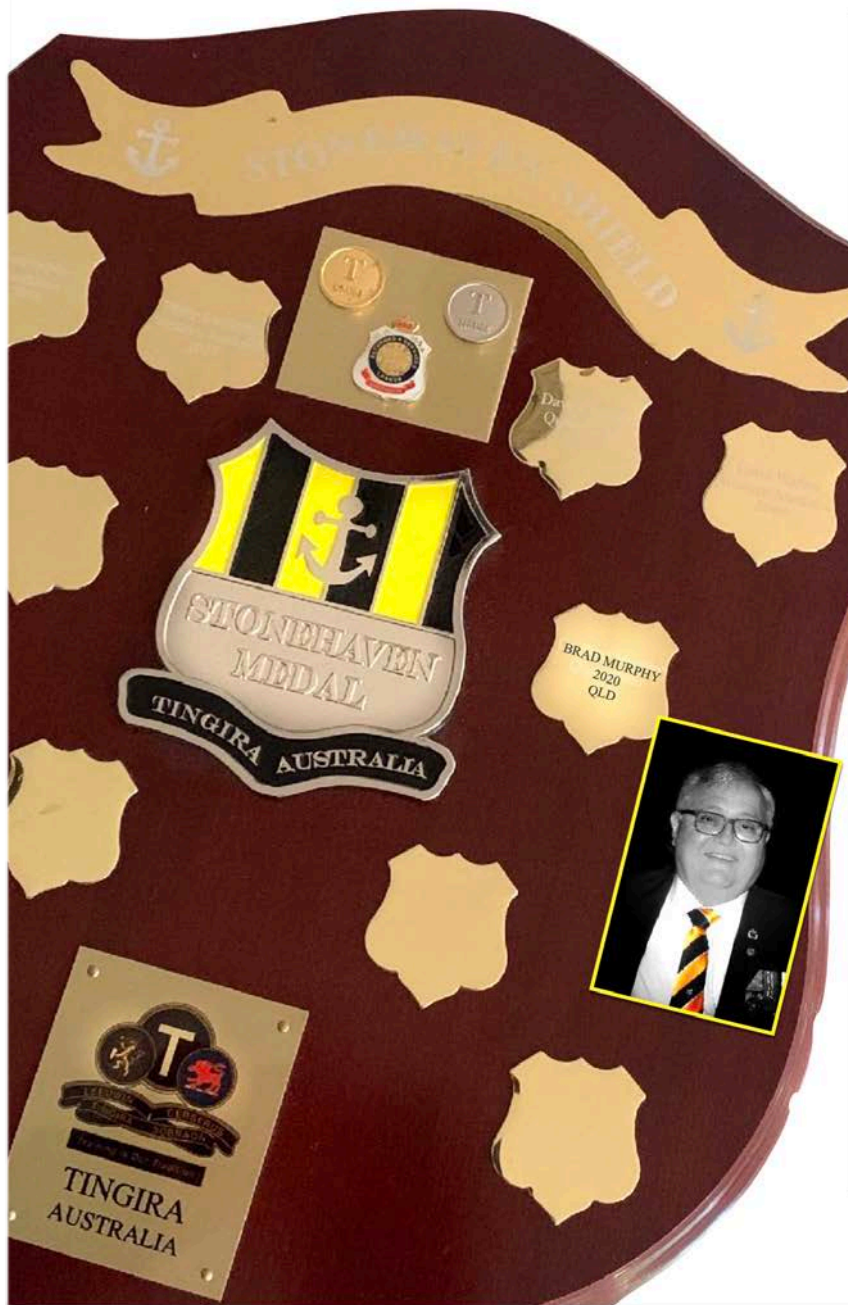
Brad Murphy, would go onwards to pursue a career in the Australian medical field, high ambitions and dreams of one day becoming a 'Doctor of Medicine' and to service his Defence and Indigenous communities.

39 years onward, 'Tingira Boy' Dr. Brad Murphy, is at the top of his tree in life and the medical profession.

A man of many skills and attributes who has constantly given 'above and beyond the expectations of his communities' is honoured and awarded the 2020 Tingira Stonehaven Medal.

Dr. BRAD MURPHY

2020 STONEHAVEN MEDAL



Tingira Australia Association President, Lance Ker, announced on Tingira Day, that former Royal Australian Navy Junior Recruit, Dr. Brad Murphy, from Bundaberg, Queensland, is the winner of the 2020 Tingira Stonehaven Medal.

The Stonehaven Medal is awarded to the Tingira member who can show cause in their local community or present naval duties 'above and beyond the expectations of his communities and normal call of duty.'

Tingira Boys, Ray James, Danny O'Riordan and Greg Read were also finalists in this years nomination list from members of the association.

Brad Murphy was judged as the most outstanding of the four candidates in this years nominations for his recent industry and community achievements.

"The workload and commitment that Brad has achieved and displayed amongst his Defence and Indigenous community duties left him a standout winner" said Tingira Australia Association President, Lance Ker at a recent private presentation to Brad, family and friends at his GP Practice in Bundaberg.



Brad's Story...

By **Dr. BRAD MURPHY**

Compiled with
VoicePipe Editor
MARK LEE

“My mum Helen and father Alan, ran the Court House hotel in Manilla, a little town just out of Tamworth in north west of NSW. One day the publican of the near by ‘Attunga’ hotel was picking me up from school. Dropping me home he asked me “what I wanted to do when I grew up?”

I mentioned “I was keen to be a doctor,” following on from my mother's lead as a nurse. I had enjoyed helping her on many occasions patch up the hotel guests following their Saturday night altercations in a country hotel. He said “I should consider becoming a medic in the Navy”. I don't recall why he would have said this but it stuck with me throughout my early days at this stage in life. With that conversation, at the age of 10, the words ‘navy medic’ had stuck firm in my mind.

Life in the pub was different from most kids in my school class. Apart from the bar fights, I helped mum deliver a baby in the Court House beer garden when I was 10. I guess that puts medicine and inspiration right in your face at a young age! It's also where I learnt to wash and iron all things laundry at such an early age, I was really good at ironing tea towels, table cloths and bed sheets!

The regular patrons from the pub front bar would often spoil me when I put my face above the counter. Lemonade and crispy chips when mum wasn't looking. One Christmas they gifted me a guitar, payback for all that bandaging I learned from their altercations in and outside the pub, it sits pride of place in my office today signed by many famous Australian – country music and rock stars as well as others – the origin of the nickname ‘Rock Doc’ that would be bestowed upon me down the track.

Life moved on from Manilla. Mum and dad sold the hotel and Newcastle become our new home. Dad went back to his old game of house painting, mum went back to nursing, they were happy.

1978 - As a prospering bright young country teenager now establishing a new life in the big smoke of Newcastle, on a trip to the beach at Nobby's Head we drove past the Australian Navy Cadets base of Training Ship TOBRUK, one of life's epiphanies. At the age of 13 (1978), quick as a wink, I was in uniform! Australian Navy Cadet, Brad Murphy.

On my way to navy cadets I would ride my pushbike past this huge new ship they were building at the nearby Carrington Shipyards, HMAS TOBRUK.

A new troop and transport carrier for the navy and army troops, I often wondered if one day I would be on a big ship like that? This was the start of my humble sea voyage, boyhood day dreams, there were to be so many great moments and memories like this over the coming decades. I recall upsetting one of my future shipmates when assisting HMAS VAMPIRE to depart her berth in Newcastle harbour one day when I dropped the heavy mooring rope into the water, some choice words were exchanged as he dragged the now heavier rope aboard – some memories are with you forever!

In this new navy cadet crew I took to vacant 'first aider' role and was quickly anointed 'ships medic', although I had to purchase my own first aid kit!

I very much remember a two week training exercise at Garden Island, Sydney. We were 'camping in' onboard the fleet maintenance ship, HMAS STALWART, the navy's floating engineering workshop. This was to be a real eye opening experience, suddenly my veins were converted to 'navy blood'.

I met a few of the Stalwart medical sailors in the ships sickbay; who would have thought that in years to come, some of them would become my best navy mates. These guys were a great inspiration to me as a young wide eyed teenage country kid on a navy camp holiday, they even refilled my little first aid kit to overflow status.

Telling mum that now I was really keen to join the navy she did not hold back, instantly upping my status and taught me to wash and iron all my own 'kit' as good as when I did the hotel laundry back in Manilla. Learning these skills at a very early age had me in good stead for the navy. I consolidated the uniform maintenance skills, learning to iron bell bottom trousers with the 'seven seas', spit polish boots and shoes to see your face and sew badges and button; this would all prove to be such a great positive skill in my early navy Junior Recruit days.

My love of all things navy suddenly made me very curious when I was about 14. I was one many local lads that were regular visitors to the local Defence Force Recruiting Office, collecting navy recruiting posters and glossy colour handouts with warships at their finest. I could recite the vessels statistics, cruising speed and ships compliment, Navy was now certainly in the blood!

The day I turned 15, I applied to join the navy. After the initial testing and medical check I was recruited, what a moment the day I opened that yellow envelope!

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7 JANUARY 1981 - From downtown Newcastle onto a country train trip to big smoke Sydney. Next stop; Navy Recruiting Office.

I am in a large office type room with 30 other boys with a mixture of street clothes and combination of 'all styles' haircuts amongst the group. A navy Chief rounds us up into a small group. Huddled into the front of the room, all standing at ease but shivering in our boots, we were all guessing what was next?

A Navy Officer in his neat white shorts, white shirt, white socks and white shoes appears from the door in back of room, quick introduction he commences our induction ceremony. "Hand on bible lads, repeat after me the allegiance to the Queen. Now you are in the Royal Australian Navy". Bus ride to mascot airport, within hours my first ride on a plane, to Perth, what a day, what a journey, Newcastle to Fremantle!

Recruited into 74th Intake of the navy Junior Recruit Training Scheme. Based on the foreshore of the Swan River at HMAS LEEUWIN, East Fremantle, Western Australia. Along with 59 other lads all from the wide spaces of Australia, we were all as excited as we were petrified, what had we got ourselves into?

I was put in Stephenson Division. Within 48 hours we have new navy uniform kits, haircuts, money, washing powder, an iron and a housewife kit, to sew buttons and badges, I was right at home!

For the next four months it was full on, marching drill, gunnery drill, seamanship, normal high school classes six hours a day, sport, religion and first aid, I'm loving this. After this I was hoping to get a position in basic medical training as my next big step in my new navy career.

Instead I was destined to become a navy Radar Plotter, inside a ships blacked control room, watching a screen for surrounding ships and aircraft. As there were no vacancies for medics amongst our intake this looked like it would be my calling. I was deeply disappointed with my focus being squarely on being a navy medic at the time. I still had that vision of one day becoming a doctor.

One morning my Divisional Officer, called me to his office. I'm in big trouble here I thought.

Then a lucky break in life. I have had a few but this was very special so early in my career.

I was selected to be an 'Officer Candidate' (OC) a very unique opportunity for me at the time, with the promise of studying towards a degree in Medicine – a Naval Ship's Surgeon! I spent a good deal of my time at HMAS LEEUWIN alongside my Junior Recruit shipmates - them learning parade drill with SLR's and OC Murphy, learning sword drill!

After months of extra study into my Officer Candidate course some bad news came my way. The navy would no longer fund medical school training with changes towards graduate-entry level Officers. I was offered a position on a Basic Medical Training course at HMAS CERBERUS, Crib Point, Victoria.

I grabbed the opportunity. I'm now in the medicine category, I was at the bottom of the ladder as a seaman trainee, however, I was now on the right ship, Dr. Brad one day?

I left Officer Candidate training and returned in time to graduate with my Junior Recruit entry mates after a rapid focussed drill training course in order to be able to participate in the graduation pass out parade.

Special highlight at Leeuwin was as a member of the Rugby League team that went through the season in 1981 against local civilian teams as 'Champions' undefeated. I received the 'Clubman Award' strangely enough as the teams first aider. I played in the team for the first part of the season, broke my collarbone training for Rugby Union which took me out of the Rugby League team, however, I continued as part of the team as the first aider.

Another sweet memory was a local group of young ladies preparing for their debutante ball were all accompanied by the Leeuwin JR's from our intake. You don't forget attending many weekly dance lessons and practice sessions. Completing the Debutante Ball with my partner Angela, me in winter dress uniform No. 2 complete with white triangular arm sling, there's a picture, next page!

Whilst at Leeuwin, my love for medical in these early days resulted with my weekend voluntary participation in the local Fremantle St John Ambulance Brigade.

I recall the thrill of attending the speedway one night as one of the community duties. I was given special leave, this was so good at the time! I was a good student at St John's and enjoyed all the practical challenges it put before the young group of fellow local teenagers.

DECEMBER 1981 - Graduation day - Mum made the trip west to Fremantle, I was so excited to see her. Marching was easy, it was a great relief by time it all ended. To my great surprise, I was awarded at the graduation ceremony the 'Sir Frederick Samson Memorial Prize for Good Citizenship'. The trophy was presented by Rear Admiral Sir Paul W. Greening, Flag Officer Commanding the Royal Yacht Britannia, that was visiting Fremantle at the time. This was a big bow in my tally band at the time!

1982 - HMAS CERBERUS, Crib Point, Victoria, the coldest place in the world and I'm a long way from my warm childhood days back in country Manilla of North West NSW.

Into the navy training system I went, medical training was a dream come true for me at age 16, again I excelled at training and was dux of my course. I won the role of the 'team medic' for the local Crib Point AFL team; this was real hands on weekend work, few pegs up from my Fremantle days at St Johns. I felt I had just gone from band aids to bandages overnight!

Interestingly at age 16 we had a midnight curfew so only "overnights" where by way of sponsorship for me with POMED Ray Dybala and his lovely wife at their home - Thanks guys!"

After many months intensive training we were certainly a bit more than the average nurse with 'L' plates. We were thrown right into front end navy postings, where day to day medical was first stop for all Sailors and Officers at all levels to be 'medically fit' for sea duty.

Following a successful HMAS CERBERUS graduation, I was posted to HMAS PENGUIN, Balmoral, Sydney.

After another long interstate rail journey from Crib Point to Balmoral, I am then confronted with the situation that there is a surplus of navy medics at the navy hospital HMAS PENGUIN. Being the junior sailor, I was sent across Sydney Harbour to HMAS WATSON, Watsons Bay.

New role in life, scullery duties washing dishes, pots and pans in the Junior Sailor's mess, think I might be back at dad's old pub! Those were the days, got my hands dirty and very clean in the process. I'm still only just turned 17, interesting times.

Several months later I was I returned back to HMAS PENGUIN. Continuing my medic career, this is where the RAN hospital is located on top of the hill overlooking the northern end of Sydney harbour, it has to be the nicest navy establishment in Australia.

1983 - I then spent 12 months at HMAS KUTTABUL sickbay on Garden Island. I never got to experience any real sea time as a medic apart from a few day trips aboard some Oberon Class submarines. The staff at HMAS PLATYPUS organised these jolly's for us. When they had civilians or senior Naval VIPs on board they would have a navy medic on standby. I had the opportunity of deploying from HMAS PENGUIN on several occasions to do these submarine trips. This was a big highlight for me at the time, it was certainly an insight into the lives of submariners working in close quarters - hot bunking and the likes!

St John featured whilst at HMAS PENGUIN as I worked with a fellow medic 'Squizzy' Taylor from South Australia, we manned the first aid room on Balmoral Beach on weekends. I also spent many weekends teaching first aid at the Headquarters for St John Ambulance Association in central Sydney for community and some corporates - where I taught my first of many classes for managers at Kentucky Fried Chicken throughout Sydney.

During my time here in these early days at HMAS PENGUIN. I was allocated to work in the Laboratory and later assisting Surgeon Commander, John Anderson. I had some good times and experience at the Pathology Lab at Penguin. Working with Steve Moore and the Pullman brothers when automation was being introduced to the lab. Learning to do the tests mostly manually was a real challenge, you would rarely see this done today. It was a time when HIV had just been identified in 1983. I was studying up on this and gathering statistics through the HIV Bulletin.

Surgeon Commander Anderson, had been Medical Officer in the '70s at HMAS LEEUWIN. I worked as his personal assistant as D/MOIC including assisting with medical re-categorisation of sailors for sea-going suitability and medical discharge from the RAN.

After a 12 month posting at HMAS PENGUIN, I am sea rostered to join HMAS STALWART. Well, not really sea time, she is known as building 215 at Garden Island as she sits off an anchor with her rear against the sea wall looking up harbour, told she only goes out once every two years. Sea time on HMAS STALWART, extra wages, that's what counts as an 19 year old!

Sea postings were slim pickings for Able Seaman Medics - too many medics and so few ships, different these days. The posting HMAS STALWART was to be such an exciting step in my career but I did not get to take up the posting, an accident causing a significant back injury put paid to that notion.

I experienced many new challenges with lower back pain due to the accident which then saw my first sea posting to HMAS STALWART cancelled. I was replaced by one of my best mates, ABMED Ian McLaughlin, who took my place and is one of my life's terrible reflections of consequences.

Ian lost his life in a gassing accident at sea onboard HMAS STALWART October 1985.

It has always been important for me not to reflect on "that could have been me" as even if I had been there I may not have suffered the same terrible fate. I have carried a lot of guilt knowing had I been there, that Ian would not have been, as such this has been a motivation of mine throughout life to ensure I don't waste the opportunity I have been afforded as a result of this catastrophic situation, R.I.P. AMBED Ian McLaughlan - gone but not forgotten).

The way the navy handled his death and the resistance towards the opportunity for his very close mates to attend his funeral in Melbourne ended up with the family approaching one of the Current Affairs programs at the time resulting in us being able to attend.

I recall the Surgeon Captain, John Clift, held a "clear lower decks" stating the words to effect that the unrest was unwarranted as he should have expected to sacrifice his life enlisting in the Navy - the problem was this was not wartime or active service it was a sad and avoidable accident.

Suddenly I am promoted to Leading Seaman during this period, I am now 20 years old, I have a new girlfriend Maria and life is suddenly at a turning point for me. This was all a bit of a shock to me. Serving during what DVA call 'the Great Peace' I had the opportunity of doing ride-alongs with the NSW Ambulance Service Intensive Care Paramedics and saw all those emergency skills in action – Ultimately this led for me to leave the navy in May 1986 to embrace a new career as a NSW Ambulance Officer.

Of special interest I recall the XO of HMAS PENGUIN who heard my discharge application at my own request said ***“Leading Seaman Murphy, you will be back inside the navy within six months”***. I believe these comments to be true to this day, had I not embraced a new career opportunity joining the NSW Ambulance Service at the time of discharge.

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1986 - The camaraderie in NSW Ambulance was similar to navy days. I easily transformed to this new breed of civilian lifestyle without having to re-enlist back into the navy. I think the background of all this lay in the absolute unwavering trust you place in your mates to have your back always in episodes of conflict and threat of danger. This similarity between Defence and Emergency Services is why I feel so many of us find our post-military comfort zone in such careers, I was no exception, it was to be blue skies ahead, but there was still the dream to one day become a Doctor of Medicine.

After completing ambulance training in Sydney I was posted to small country town of Hay, far west country NSW which was where my father grew up, small world!

1988 - Lots of high speed road trauma and firearm incidents. Small country town, many opportunities to engage in the community and found myself on many local committees. I almost ran for local government at age 23, a real 'proving ground' with so many lessons and positive experiences. A highlight was certainly in receiving the Australia Day 'Young Citizen of the Year', good medicine for me at this point in my life.

2000 - Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) offered a new course at James Cook University (JCU) Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery. I applied, was accepted and graduated 2005.

2003 - As a young aspiring medical student, the Federal Australian Medical Association (AMA) awarded me the 'National Best Contribution to Healthcare in Australia' award. Very humbling to be honoured by this prestigious association recognising a 'road less travelled' getting to this juncture in life. A new medical school brings many more opportunities to be a part of new committees and opportunities and I relished being part of this and gave me a taste for medico-politics and a chance to meet many great mentors.

2005 - I became the Chairperson of the National Rural Health Network (NRHN) representing the rural health clubs at all universities around Australia with over 5,000 members. This was such a great experience embracing all health rather than just medical and a chance to sit at the table on several occasions in our Nations Capital with the Prime Minister and Health Ministers of the time advocating for changes in health training across the country.

2007 - My indigenous background and heritage offered me the privilege of being a founding member of the new National Advisory Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). This was the start of a very exciting phase in my life advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people at a national and international level.

2010 - I founded the National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health within the RACGP whilst still studying towards Fellowship to be a fully qualified General Practitioner. Chair of this new Faculty came with a position of six years on the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) National Council. The position gave me opportunity and a great insight into the medico political arena. Life's lessons continue to broaden including an opportunity to participate in the World Medical Association Leadership Development Program at the Prestigious Executive Business School INSEAD in Singapore (*I finally got to Singapore but by this time there had been many changes!*)

I have worked from Central Sydney to Central Australia. Have met many amazing individuals and communities and learned so much about medicine and health and what makes people tick. It is the collection of these people and the experience – A well rounded life experience opportunity - that I feel has now prepared me for my ongoing career as a Specialist General Practitioner.

A new challenge has opened before me, complex and demanding, the field of negotiating with the national Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) and the various legislations that affect veterans. With my General Practice attracting a growing veteran base and the realisation of the complexities and the relative shortfall in understanding amongst both the medical and veteran community alike. I have realised an opportunity to learn and share these lessons with my colleagues locally and nationally to support our veteran brothers and sisters and their families through their post military lives. I had the opportunity of working with Rear Admiral, Jenny Firth whom I served with when she was a Surgeon Lieutenant, a great opportunity and honour to work alongside once again in such a positive manner.

The aim is to work with DVA to optimise the potential outcomes for my veteran patients and their families. Often the journey to negotiate entitlements with DVA is a different situation to that required for long term health support, not unlike Workers Compensation.

The veterans journey can often exacerbate psychological aspects of their injuries and military experiences. There is a need to increase focussed support throughout this period.

My lived experience assists me daily with my interaction with patients. We all have individual and unique journeys but often those shared experiences can create links on which you can launch the trust needed to have difficult conversations and challenging journeys. That is the core of general practice. I am certainly proud to use these experiences in caring for my veteran and Indigenous patients.

2016 - I was awarded 'Indigenous 'Doctor of the Year'.

2017 - I work closely with many former defence colleagues in the medical and political circles inside the corridors of power in Canberra. I enjoy what I have to offer in knowledge and experience when advocating for veterans and education of GP's and their teams on matters relating to DVA and veteran support. In the past I was not real keen on the winter sojourns south but with the drastic changes as a result of COVID-19 who would ever have forecast the changes we have seen around the country and globally! Changes to travel and the way we work and the pressure to stay at home is order of the day. Certainly a huge challenge to the way we do medicine and healthcare in general practice.

2018 - My daily routine is fast and demanding. I own and operate a general practice in Bundaberg, Ashfield Country Practice. A distinct focus on defence veterans and their families' health is the major client base. Building upon specialised services for veteran, families and local Queensland indigenous communities is the road I have been heading down over the decade since establishing my feet on the ground here in the Bundaberg region.

My wife Jackie is my right hand in the practice. General Practice is complex and embraces so many aspects of medicine and healthcare – a real ‘Specialist in Life’ is the RACGP advertising campaign and that is what we do. A real team-based approach to optimising outcomes in the short and longer-term for all our patients and the wider community

I have a reliable network of specialist colleagues with whom I work with. Former RAN Surgeon Lieutenant (Dr Chris Blenkin) has been following my career since the days when I was a Leading Seaman medic on board HMAS PENGUIN. Chris and I now have the chance of working together as I refer to him my ‘upper limb’ orthopaedic patients to his Brisbane-based practice. I had the chance of keeping a watchful eye out for his son as a contender in the Famous Fred Brophy Boxing Troupe tent in Birdsville in recent years – isn’t that what mates do?

Last year the practice won the RACGP National ‘General Practice of the Year’. A big surprise, at the same time a real honour and large feather in our cap, certainly serves as justification for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes for a well oiled machine to be effective, especially in these challenging times caused by COVID-19.

Touching back to navy days is perhaps one of my saddest memories. I don’t think many sailors would have seen the ‘birth and death’ of a ship, I have. From those early navy cadet days in Newcastle and then as a sailor, I watched the construction of HMAS TOBRUK, her commissioning and then followed her sea duties for the next few decades. Roll on 30 odd years.

Late last year I was saddened to witness the sinking of ‘my’ former ship HMAS TOBRUK off the coast here in Bunderburg, she now serves as a dive wreck. A little like myself really with a navy career starting in Newcastle and many adventures along the way before settling in Bunderberg.

Modern technology gave me the opportunity of making contact with my old shipmates of the 74th JR intake and discovering about the TINGIRA Australia Association via Facebook groups. Suddenly I found a ‘tallyband’ that covered many of my former shipmates, all 13,000 of them! The HMAS LEEUWIN, Junior Recruit Training Scheme, I was a Tingira Boy!

I couldn’t sign up for that Tingira Foundation membership quick enough back in 2011. I wear the silver lapel and stripe tie so proudly. The Tingira association and the RSL have really opened my eyes to commemoration events and the importance of catching up with old navy mates and making new navy mates; in the moment it all seems just like yesterday.

From this experience I can see how some of today’s navy veterans really ‘hang on’ to those old tally bands of the ships they served in. For me those days at HMAS LEEUWIN are top of the tree for me, that’s where this adventure really started and still holds great memories of a journey commenced at the tender age of 15 – I would do it all again in a heartbeat!

2019 - Former HMAS TOBRUK is laid to rest off Bundaberg and I have some of her featured at the surgery. The ‘Crows Nest’ is in our garden memorial, a bulkhead door and portholes will be featured in future renovations. These items and others gifted to us by patients from their service days spark many conversations amongst both visiting veterans and patients as they reflect upon their adventures and engagements with HMAS TOBRUK and other RAN ships and military adventures.

I was one of many in our navy vintage really looking forward to the Tingira 2020 JR Reunion in Perth last month. That's all history now with Covid-19 changing our lives past, present and no doubt the future for many of us! I feel the pain of the sub-committee, two years of work just out the door, I hope that they can just keep things rolling, what an effort!

We commemorate Anzac Day at my medical practice. I have built a small memorial centrally in the gardens, with the help of many local veterans in this close knit community. It has become a big event and serves as a great opportunity to support and acknowledge the 'trials and tribulations' of our veterans and establish our practice, grounds and team as a safe and supportive practice for veteran care.

2020 - Informed that I have won the 'Stonehaven Medal' was just a very special moment. How proud I am, did not see this one coming. Presented the Stonehaven Medal by the Tingira President, Lance Ker, one of the many former JR's who worked on Tobruk last year making her ready for that final sea voyage, it all seems like a big dream!

In reflection, this storybook clearly shows how focussed I was on this medical career. I still only have that Year 10 education - now I am Associate Professor at Australia's Private Bond University.

I am very honoured to be awarded this prestigious award by my fellow navy shipmates, this is top shelf, thank you Tingira, ***who would have thought from JR to Dr in this 39 year journey!***

Thank you Australian Navy Cadets, Royal Australian Navy and long live TINGIRA, my shipmates for life!

ENDS RELEASE

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PICTURE DESK . . .



Dr. Brad Murphy, accepting 2020 Stonehaven Medal from Tinaira President, Lance Ker



Dr Brad Murphy of Bundaberg, celebrating with friends and family when he received his Tingira Stonehaven Medal recently