

Lieutenant Colonel Tom McDermott, CSC, DSO was born and raised in the United Kingdom. Following study in classics at the University of Warwick, he attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2001. He commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment and spent 14 years serving in a range of command, regimental and staff appointments in Germany, Canada, Australia, Belgium and the United Kingdom.



Lieutenant Colonel McDermott's experience in the first phase of his career was broad. Operationally he took part in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 as an Armoured Troop Leader, and then served in Afghanistan three times (including in support of special operations). In his last deployment as a Major in 2013 he was the Officer Commanding of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force for the 7th Armoured Brigade (the Desert Rats), a bespoke sub-unit responsible for 'find to strike' operations. For this he was awarded the United Kingdom's highest award for command and leadership in combat, the Distinguished Service Order. He has worked on the joint staff as an AdC and Military Assistant at 3* and 2* level in the European Union Military Headquarters, and as SO2 Campaigns at the UK Directorate of Special Forces. He attended the Australian Command and Staff College in 2011 and was awarded the Governor General's Prize as the overall best student. He finished his pre-Australian Army career teaching Command, Leadership and Management at the Joint Command and Staff College in Shrivenham.

Lieutenant Colonel McDermott made the transition to the Australian Army in 2015. He served in HQ FORCOMD as both SO2 Lessons and then SO1 PME, where he was responsible for the development of the Cove professional development project and the writing of a PME Strategy for Army as part of the Ryan Review. For this work he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross. In 2017 he became the Chief of Staff Operations for the Australian Amphibious Task Group, a period that included the realisation of the Full Operating Capability of the ADF's amphibious force, and a diverse Task Group deployment to Papua New Guinea for Op APEC 18 ASSIST. For this work he was awarded a Chief of Navy Gold Commendation. In 2020 he assumed command of the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry), where he is responsible for the transition of the unit to becoming the first Boxer CRV-enabled Armoured Cavalry Regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel McDermott has strong academic interests, holding an MA in Strategy and Policy from UNSW, and a series of Graduate Diplomas in defence studies, conflict and development, strategic planning, and higher education. He is a Fellow of the King's College London Centre for Military Ethics, and is an Adjunct Lecturer at UNSW. In 2016 he was accepted as a part-time PhD candidate with the Australian National University, where he is studying International, Political and Strategic Studies. He enjoys distance running, cycling and skiing.