

Biographical Details – Andrea McMahon

Andrea McMahon was born in Geelong near Melbourne, Australia. Following her family's move to Canberra, she grew up and was educated in Australia's capital city. On graduating from high school in December 1982, she enlisted into the Australian Army on 26 January 1983 as a musician in the Australian Army Band Corps; her primary instrument is the flute. At the time, she was the second female soldier to have joined the Australian Army Band Corps.

Her initial posting as a Musician was in Canberra where she joined the Band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. As well as their primary role at the College, this Band was responsible for all musical activity in support of the Governor-General of Australia in addition to many military, regal and vice regal and community engagement tasks. After four years Andrea was promoted to Lance Corporal and in January 1988 was posted to the 4th Military District Band based in Adelaide. During the following three years she successfully completed a number of Army promotion and leadership courses, as well as specialist musicianship courses. She was promoted to Corporal in June 1989 and Sergeant in March 1991 on posting to the 3rd Military District Band based in Melbourne.

Following her selection to attend the prestigious Band Officer Course, Andrea commenced 18 months of study in Melbourne at the Defence Force School of Music, studying conducting under maestro Robbie Rosen. In July 1993 she was the first female to graduate from the Band Officer Course, was awarded the Percy Grainger Prize as the top performing student in all aspects of the Course and was promoted to Lieutenant. Her first appointment as a commissioned officer was as Second in Command of the Australian Army Band based at the Army's recruit training depot in Kapooka. On promotion to Captain in June 1995 she returned to the Defence School of Music as an instructor, followed by promotion to Major in January 2001. There then followed eight years as music director appointments in Melbourne, Kapooka and Sydney. In January 2012, Andrea was the first female officer in the Australian Army Band Corps to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, the highest rank available to Band Officers, and, over the following five years, was initially

Commanding Officer Defence Force School of Music and then Commanding Officer Australian Army Band / Head of Corps.

Andrea's military operational deployments have included touring bands to Bougainville, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. Awards include: the Australian Active Service Medal; Australian Service Medal; Iraq Campaign Medal; Australian Defence Medal. Two significant highlights of her career occurred on ANZAC Day in 1990 and 2015. In 1990, as a Corporal, she had the honour of being part of the Army Band selected to travel to Turkey for the 75th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings. In 2015 she returned to Gallipoli for the 100th Anniversary, this time as a Lieutenant Colonel and Commanding Officer of the Australian Army Band.

In August 2017, Lieutenant Colonel Andrea McMahon transferred to the Australian Army Reserve after a career spanning 34 ½ years. She remains active within musical circles and is pleased to be one of the adjudicators at the NSW State Band Championships.

During her down time, Andrea greatly enjoys travelling, and is currently planning a trip to South America and Antarctica in 2020 with her husband Mike.