

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie

Soldier, Battlefield Commander, Diplomat, Teacher and Corporate Leader

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AC DSC CSM retired as Chief of the Australian Army in July 2011 after an amazing 43- year career. In 1968, when he was 16, Ken Gillespie joined the Australian Army as an apprentice bricklayer. The career that followed now must rate as one of the most amazing stories of workplace success in the modern era.

Now Lieutenant General Gillespie enjoys the opportunity to share his insights and knowledge in a broad corporate environment. He is a gifted public speaker and is able to pitch his messages at many different levels of management. From apprentice brickie to Lieutenant General is a wonderful achievement and testament to his motivation and will to succeed. Lieutenant General Gillespie's leadership is inspiring yet he still maintains the common touch ... the brickie is still in his makeup!



About Ken Gillespie:

The military identified the young man as a potential leader at an early stage and he was sent to the Officer Cadet School at Portsea. He graduated as a young officer in 1972 and was commissioned into the corps of the Royal Australian Engineers.

In the years that immediately followed Ken Gillespie held a range of regimental and staff appointments where he performed many instructional, administrative and leadership functions, mainly associated with military engineering. During 1986 and 1987 he was the Australian Exchange Instructor at the Royal School of Military Engineering in the United Kingdom.

In 1989 he was second in command of the 2nd Australian Contingent to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia. For his work in Namibia he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal.

His leadership training continued through various postings. In 1985 he attended the Australian Command and Staff College, Queenscliff. In 1991 he attended the Australian Joint Services Staff College where he earned a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies and in 1998 he was a member of the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom. Command and administrative postings and promotions in rank followed.

The culmination was in 2008 when Lieutenant General Gillespie was made Chief of Army. He was now CEO of a 48,000 people, \$6-billion operating budget, multi-profession, output-focused enterprise. The General conceived, planned and successfully implemented the largest corporate restructure in some 40 years. He was able to maintain high industry outputs in complex security, fiscal and political environments while implementing a challenging capital reinvestment program.

The General led a major, successful savings program while delivering each of the organisations' exacting mission statements plus he led and succeeded in a highly challenging, and public, accountability environment. In the personnel areas General Gillespie implemented major people strategies relating to gender equity, workforce rehabilitation, career and talent management, workforce communication and workplace safety. All of these leadership challenges were in an environment where death, injury and grief were present.

For his distinguished service and high order achievements as the Vice Chief of the Defence Force/Chief of Joint Operations and Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Gillespie was advanced to Companion in the Military Division of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2011 Honours List.

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