

Lieutenant General K.J. Gillespie, AC DSC CSM

Chief of Army

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie was born in Brisbane on 28 June 1952. He enlisted in the Australian Army as an apprentice in 1968. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea in 1972 and was commissioned into the corps of the Royal Australian Engineers.

Lieutenant General Gillespie has held a range of regimental and staff appointments. These include: instructor appointments at the School of Military Engineering and 1st Recruit Training Battalion; regimental appointments in the rank of Captain and Major in the 2nd, 5th, and 2nd/3rd Field Engineer Regiments and the 1st Construction Regiment; Company Commander at the Army Apprentices School; and Senior Instructor at the School of 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 raised, and then deployed as the second in command and operations officer, the 2nd Australian Contingent to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia. In 1990/91 he was the Standing Chairman of the Quadripartite Working Group - Engineers in the ABCA Armies Agreement. In 1999 and 2000 he was the Senior National Officer for Australia in the ABCA Program.

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. In 1998 he was a member of the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom.

Senior appointments have included: the inaugural commanding officer of the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, Staff Officer Operations to the Chief of the Defence Force, inaugural commander of the Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre (ASTJIC), and the inaugural Principal Staff Officer - Intelligence, Headquarters Australian Theatre. Lieutenant General Gillespie was promoted to Brigadier in January 1999. In this rank he was the Chief of Staff Training Command - Army, he commanded the United Nations Sector West multinational brigade in East Timor, and he was the National Commander of Australia's contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom.

For his eminent service 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. He was previously advanced to Officer of the Order of Australia for his service as Commander Australian Contingent, Operation Slipper, having been a Member of the Order for his service as Commander ASTJIC. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his command and leadership in East Timor in 2000/2001 and the Conspicuous Service Medal for his work in Namibia in 1989/90. Lieutenant General Gillespie was awarded the Legion of Merit (Commander) from the United States of America in 2009. In 2010, the Republic of Singapore awarded him the Meritorious Service Medal (Military - Pingat Jasa Gemilang).

Lieutenant General Gillespie was appointed as Land Commander Australia in January 2004. He was promoted to Lieutenant General and appointed as Vice Chief of the Defence Force in July 2005.

Lieutenant General Gillespie assumed the appointment of Chief of Army on 4 July 2008.

He is married to Carmel and they have a student daughter. He has two grown children from a previous marriage. He is well travelled, enjoys most sports, particularly golf, and is a keen reader.