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## Growing Together: Kevin Bazeley's Inspiring Passion for Diversity and Inclusion

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When the Royal Air Force (RAF) dismissed Kevin Bazeley in the 1990s for being gay, he was devastated. It was a real crossroads: He could let it consume him, or he could see it as a turning point in his life. Bazeley chose the latter.

His experiences with the RAF spearheaded Bazeley's fight for justice and a lifelong commitment to championing inclusion and diversity in the workplace. This commitment was recently recognized with Bazeley's nomination for 'Inspiration of the Year' at the 2021 [Ex-Forces in Business Awards](#).

Bazeley is a well-known figure in Cheltenham, UK, home to GE Aviation's Systems business for Power Distribution & Controls. In addition to his role as Staff Technical Product Manager, he tirelessly promotes inclusion to make GE a better place to work and somewhere his colleagues feel a sense of belonging.

This unwavering commitment to inclusion was borne from Bazeley's experiences with the RAF. Following his dismissal from the RAF, he was embattled in a years' long fight for equality and compensation, a fight that played a part in the UK Armed Forces becoming an employer of choice within the LGBT community.

Bazeley's dismissal from the military was a real mental and financial challenge for him.

"I lost the only career I had ever wanted," he explains. "It was tough having to start at the bottom rung of the career ladder when most others in the field had ten years' experience."

However, that wasn't a deterrent for Bazeley, who went on to retrain as a chartered management accountant before securing a project accountant position at GE Aviation in 2001. "I was thrilled to get the role at GE, not least because it was aligned to my lifelong passion for aviation and aerospace – that same passion which had first driven my interest in the RAF."

Given Bazeley's past experiences, the employer he chose to work for moving forward was always going to be a significant consideration.

"I was impressed by GE's ethos. Diversity in a company with the global reach of GE is a fact," he says. "What lifts GE above many is the drive to be inclusive; to make everyone in the team feel they're a valued and productive contributor. That's exactly the sort of company I wanted to work for."

And it's at GE Aviation that Bazeley has thrived, with his many successes now being recognized through his nomination for 'Inspiration of the Year.'



The award recognises service leavers who have overcome adversity to achieve success in business and is the world's largest celebration of military veterans in second careers. After receiving more than 500 nominations, Bazeley is one of only ten finalists in his category. It's a fitting tribute for what he has achieved during his career at GE thus far and how his example can inspire and empower other veterans.

Bazeley is incredibly passionate about inclusion.

"It's only when every member of the team is appreciated and recognized on their merits and abilities, and any other characteristic that is just a factor of their being is forgotten, that maximum potential is achieved and results are delivered."

At GE, Bazeley leads the Pride Alliance Network for the Cheltenham and Gloucester region and was instrumental in the launch of Growing Together Inclusion & Diversity at GE. Founded in 2016, the goal of Growing Together was to provide personal and professional development around Inclusion that wasn't tied to specific defining characteristics.

If that wasn't enough, Bazeley is also an active member of the Veterans Network, one of GE's employee resource groups. Over the years, Bazeley has helped coordinate a range of events, from visits from Her Majesty's (HM) Forces teams and mental health awareness seminars to Remembrance Day events such as a [giant human poppy](#) for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One.

"I'm incredibly proud to have people like Kevin as an employee and fellow colleague to help set such an inspiring example for us all," said Brad Mottier, president of Systems for GE Aviation. "It's remarkable to see the progress Kevin has helped achieve toward equality over the last 20 years. I hope this recognition inspires all of us to work together to continue the progress."

Regardless of whether Bazeley wins the award, it is fair to say that he is already an inspiration in the eyes of his colleagues.