



**GORDONSTOUN**  
*Plus Est En Vous*

## *Commodore Catherine Jordan, LVO RN*

**Windmill, 1993**

*Recognised for a trailblazing military career, combining aviation and commanding officer positions in the Royal Navy, establishing precedent for female leadership.*

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Commodore Catherine Jordan LVO is a senior Royal Naval officer who has held a series of significant posts during her career.

Born in 1974 in County Durham, Catherine joined Gordonstoun on a Sixth Form Scholarship where her sense of adventure flourished. She took advantage of every opportunity, competing in the netball team, completing Gold Duke of Edinburgh, becoming a Guardian and House Helper and taking part in a Thailand Water project. Her love of flying was fostered through her service: Air Training Corps, where she was able to experience military aviation for the first time.

Catherine joined Britannia Royal Naval College in 1993 as a university cadet aviator. Graduating with a law degree and qualifying as a Lynx helicopter observer, she went on to become the first female flight commander in the Royal Navy in 2002, contributing to operations in the Middle East, Mediterranean and the Arctic.

She commanded several ships before going on to assume command of HMS Collingwood in 2019 - and by 2022 had established another first: as one of four women in charge of all four Naval training establishments. That same year she led the Royal Navy State Gun Carriage during the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, for which she was awarded the Royal Victorian Medal and became a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order.

**I have never thought about being the only woman in the room - I just concentrate on being a member of the team.**

Looking back now, I am hugely proud of my achievements which marked some firsts for women in the Navy, but it's taken some time to see it that way. Throughout the early part of my career, I was frequently the only female in the group, but the way the Navy operates is all about teamwork, so you never think about yourself in isolation. It's a good thing that this has changed hugely over the past 30 years - it's only when I look back I can appreciate that I might be seen as a role model for not only my daughters, but other women.

**I almost didn't have a role in the State Funeral of Her Majesty the Queen, despite years of planning for it.**

As Commanding Officer of HMS Collingwood, leading the Gun Carriage at a state funeral was attached to the job so we prepared for the event for years. Yet when it came to it, I almost missed out as I was just weeks away from handing over duties to my successor - but being there was the biggest honour and privilege of my career. At the time, my military mindset simply kicked in and it was all about executing our duty, but afterwards it felt very emotional. After all, my career has been spent at Her Majesty's Service - and through both my work and my time at Gordonstoun, I've been lucky enough to meet many senior Royals - so it was hard not to feel a personal connection.

**Gordonstoun taught me that only when you really stretch yourself, can you see what you can achieve.**

I found the character education offered at Gordonstoun replicated in different ways in military training - it really was an education for life. The value of giving young people a place to be curious, to try and not mind if you fail, is so key for true resilience building. The most important thing I gained from Gordonstoun was the confidence to know what I was capable of, where my limits were, and when to push them. It was a wonderful preparation for military life - the ethos of working as a team, considering others, helping those around you and keeping true your values translates so well, not only to my Naval career but to life in general.

*Plus Est En Vous*

