

Jo Salter - Citation – 2022

Pro Chancellor

Jo Salter became the first female fast-jet pilot in the RAF and has gone on to use her experiences to inspire and motivate others. Today, in addition to leading thousands of air cadets on flights as an Honorary Group Captain, Jo is Director of Global Transformative Leadership at PwC.

Jo was inspired to join the RAF after attending air shows, including the Bournemouth Air Festival, as a child. At age 18 she joined the RAF's University Cadetship scheme in the first year it was opened to women. Having qualified as an Engineering Officer, a change in law enabled women to become pilots for the first time and Jo began her flight training. She later qualified as a fast-jet pilot and became the first woman to gain combat-ready status. This led to NATO exercises around the world, including supporting the 'no-fly zone' over Iraq in the mid-1990s.

In an already high-pressure role, Jo recalls the added stresses of being one of only a handful of women to be flying at this level. While she was confident in her own abilities and readiness for the job, she concedes that it sometimes felt some of the air crew were not quite ready for her. She remains grateful for the support of her family during this time, delivered via regular long-distance phone calls.

While serving in Iraq, Jo embarked on an MBA with the Open University Business School and went on to become an Associate Lecturer at the institution for 17 years. She reflects that her experiences in the male-dominated world of the RAF had made her passionate about inclusivity, and this value felt like a natural fit with the Open University.

Now, as a Director with PwC, Jo is helping to shape the organisation's future leaders. Her message to today's graduates – as well as to her own two daughters – is to take time to celebrate your achievements and to take store from those moments you have had to dig deep to overcome challenges.

Pro Chancellor. I have the honour to present Jo Salter and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.

Words: 356