00:00:00:00 - 00:00:06:05

first name is Ellen Ely, and last name is Johnson J. O h. And as a win. Okay,

00:00:06:05 - 00:00:26:12

From an ideal family decision. Currently, I'm the brigade s for Brigade, PBO and Deputy Spo. So what would you like underneath your all of that? So they can see all the jobs they give me? Recipient Yeah, yeah, yeah. Circa 2000 7000. Just like it.

00:00:26:14 - 00:00:30:03

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No brigades for is fine.

00:00:30:03 - 00:00:41:12

languages? I do speak a couple of foreign languages. I speak a little bit of French, obviously, as we go to Africa and second ASVAB and I speak Spanish more Spanglish or anything.

00:00:41:14 - 00:00:52:07

I took a lot of when I was younger throughout school and I lost some of it obviously when I've been using it. But so those are the two. I took German in college as well, but I remember none of it.

00:00:52:07 - 00:01:00:01

First, first, the questions here is going to be all about the mission. Sure. And so what is the mission of Security Force Assistance Command?

00:01:00:01 - 00:01:14:23

the overall mission of as FAC is for brigades to be reasonably aligned across internationally and then those brigades deployed to that respective command, whether it's AFRICOM for second ASVAB, you com SOUTHCOM all around the world.

00:01:15:00 - 00:01:36:04

From there they are assigned to a specific country and then those respective teams advise, assist and assess that country and the realm or the the branch in which they're supporting. So logistics maneuver with infantry or engineering, things like that. Thank you. Your one more time. Yep. Let's bring the pace down just enough. I mean, you're I'm a fast talker.

00:01:36:04 - 00:01:36:19

Yes.

00:01:37:09 - 00:01:51:11

The overall mission of best FAC is for brigades that are regionally aligned to deploy within those areas of operation by sending teams to advise, assist and assess a certain country that they're assigned to for that mission on their respective fields

00:01:51:11 - 00:02:01:08

now is do it super fast. Okay. Yeah, you're good, You're good. Okay. What would you say is the most impressive thing about security force assistance brigades?

00:02:01:08 - 00:02:12:14

I think the most impressive concept that this FAC has is our ability to assemble as teams and based on MLS is based on rank, based on experiences throughout the army.

00:02:12:14 - 00:02:41:05

We deploy together as a team and are able to collectively come together to support the overall mission that one might be assigned in that country and be able to advise at multiple echelons from a platoon through company, even up to potentially a battalion or brigade level echelon. And what are the challenges of working with a partner force? The challenges differ, I would assume, based on country, based on region in the world.

00:02:41:07 - 00:03:10:22

But there's definitely some times where the way in which our military is structured or some of the concepts or the way in which we just operate, maybe other countries, they don't operate as fast or time is a great concept and it's it's not the same. It's not black and white. And so that's that's one of the biggest things is at first before you get into actually advising on any military or operational tactic or task, you have to understand the culture first.

00:03:10:23 - 00:03:30:10

And if you jump into too soon and you don't learn that culture first, you're ultimately probably going to fail. Because around the world, just like in the US culture, is is part of our identity. And so if you're not understanding who they are as individuals before who they are as military service members, you're probably not going be as successful as you want to be.

00:03:30:12 - 00:04:02:01

That was a great answer. Also the correct answer. yes. let's see. How about what challenges are unique to ASVAB versus the conventional army? That's a really good question. I think some of the challenges that we might face, it's unique to the fab as opposed to a conventional unit that the conventional army is the not quite the work load but understanding the impact it has.

00:04:02:01 - 00:04:27:07

And so it's different when we get together in, in a company as a company commander, when I want my platoon leadership or squad leaders to train soldiers, they're training our soldiers based on doctrine that we all know and we are comfortable with, that we have learned at whatever echelon we're teaching at, CONUS or with other armies. You have to assess their level of proficiency.

00:04:27:09 - 00:04:49:08

And I think sometimes it's really hard to understand from from the hilltop and from echelons well above, you know, advising team. And so when an advising team gets on ground, assessing and realizing we have to start at A, B and C before we can get to X, Y and Z, and that might take longer than the higher echelons know then they want or they want to accept.

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But oftentimes we can't put the cart before the horse. And so understanding that is is probably the most difficult thing and it is definitely a test of patience. But that being said, yeah, the doctrine piece and just what we know, what we're familiar with is is different abroad. Not all of these countries have SOPs or their own doctrine that they utilize.

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And so sometimes you have to help them create that as well and you need to film anybody else. Got it right. Okay, let's move to it. Kind of like what I start. Soldiers are like, okay, okay, so what are the characteristics of a good ASVAB advisor? To be a successful advisor in the lab, you definitely have to be able to adapt.

00:05:36:00 - 00:06:02:17

There are things where you will face new challenges that you never could in the conventional army, and you have to be able to, on a short notice, redirect and drive on and be able to maybe reprioritize tasks or, you know, put more focus into one that you may not have thought you needed to. And so the mission changes, not every day, luckily, but the mission kind of changes the way the world flexes.

00:06:02:17 - 00:06:28:01

So that that's something really important. So definitely to be adaptable, you have to be creative, I think, and be able to thrive in ambiguity. But definitely the creativity because you get into these countries and while they are incredibly intelligent, I've met some of the smartest people in the world during the rotations that I've taken. What they have on ground to operate is never just about the same as what we have.

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And so in the absence of this amazing equipment maybe that we have or all these resources, you have to get creative. And how can you still get the mission done? So being able to, like I said, thrive in ambiguity and being creative in the is what can generally really make you be successful. And

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tell me one of your most successful stories from a deployment. That's a good one. So I went to Senegal from October of 2021 to April of 2022. I deployed my team, my El Cat Logistics company advising team to Senegal. And so while we were there, our overall mission was to assist the Senegalese army.

00:07:09:09 - 00:07:44:00

So we're talking about a level practically right below the Pentagon level maybe, and helping them to increase their efficiency and proficiency at sustaining rapid deployments. And so we worked at the what's called the DRAMAT Director of Materials, and that's a06 or a colonel level command. And so that was our primary mission within that, we were divided into about five or six different departments between maintenance, fuel warehouse operations, which is really just kind of a massive supply based operations.

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And then we had weapons and then we had munitions as well. And so within that, I would say one of the most successful times or tasks that we had was actually preparing them for real world rapid deployment. Senegal is considered basically a powerhouse across Africa. And so not just helping them train to think about the what if would be able to help them train and actually sustain the rapid deployment of their their army across the border into a different country and just seeing them being able to operate.

00:08:16:01 - 00:08:47:09

And this was probably about three or four months into our rotation. So seeing that happened, seeing that happen effectively and proficiently was was definitely rewarding. So you spoke about this. You just jumped through my questions with me on what at times you have to advise a higher ranking counterpart. Is that difficult? I don't think having to advise a higher ranking officer or, you know, a higher ranking military member is necessarily difficult.

00:08:47:14 - 00:09:13:03

It's more or less the same as it is for, you know, for a fellow soldier or officer, for me at least. So within that, the initial professionalism, Right. Decorum and respect is going to it's going to take you far. And again, it goes back to that, also understanding the culture. And so what, you know, we may take on is professionalism here, maybe to stand offish in another country.

00:09:13:08 - 00:09:30:23

And so respecting the rank, the Sir, the man, whatever it may be, But being able to build that rapport is obviously something you do a little bit differently abroad. So within that, taking the time to get to know them just like you would a soldier is really, really important. GET Yeah, getting to know them personally about maybe their life, kind of whatever they're willing to share with you.

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And then also again, how are the way in which you approach topics? If you go in very offensively and saying, you know, you do this wrong, this wrong, this wrong, this wrong, it may or may not be taken well, right. It just depends on the individual. But more often than not, it's going to make someone defensive. And so while they welcome us with open arms into their country, if we're not going in respectfully and being able to kind of tell the stories to why a fault they may have is important, they may not buy into it.

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And so that's that's the biggest thing, is recognizing all the work that they've probably done throughout their career, the importance of the command that they hold in the position they hold, and then approaching it from that lens. How would you say your work is received by partner nations? For myself and my team, when we went to Senegal, no issue.

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They were incredibly open, armed for us, my teammates, my NCOs that I had. I'd go anywhere in the world with them, their level of expertise, their proficiency in their own tasks, but who they are as people. Not only, of course, are they excited to get a six month rotation with this fab, but excited to go to Senegal and excited to meet the Senegalese army and the Senegalese people.

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And so that was that was really beneficial for us. This is a question I won't answer to. Sure. So I we know the answer, but I want to know how is it that probably normally when they read across time. Yeah, but this one, I don't know. We're going to talk. Yeah. He's a real person today for us last night, so I don't know what You're just glad I'm wearing magic.

00:11:08:21 - 00:11:34:20

So we have. Yeah. Yeah. My question that I don't know the answer to, but how does a team hand over their responsibilities before rotating back stateside the way in which we hand over, you know, our success or progress? It's a little bit team dependent, right, of how you want to consolidate a lot of the information and also probably depends based on your MOS.

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So as logisticians whether it's the jargon we use previous products that we came into the lab with or we've shared within our battalion, consolidating that information, you know, having a bottom line up front side, probably a face or slide. But then after that, each individual advisor that's coming in, if my future you know, my, my sergeant, that's that's as I'm aware, he works with the same team or the next team's future as well.

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Right. They're going be able to talk about the details. And so finding your your matching counterpart of the person who's coming to specifically replace you is going to be the best and most effective way. if you were recruiting somebody to come join you. Yes. What would you tell if I was going to recruit someone to come join the ASVAB any ASVAB?

00:12:24:11 - 00:12:55:12

I'm biased. The second ASVAB of course. I would definitely say it's an experience unlike any any other you can have in the army. There is a level of responsibility, of course, as an officer, not just being a team leader but also deployed. Right. And taking that team overseas to your respective respective area and then the strategic level which you work like we just talked about, advising a full bird colonel on how to do sustainment operations for an entire country's army is an incredible opportunity, incredibly humbling.

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And again, the responsibility that goes into that to set them up for success. So it doesn't matter if you're an NCO, does matter if you're an officer does matter, you rank, you're going to come in and be charged with more responsibility probably than you've had. But you're awesome, really empowered to do your job and you are seen as a subject matter expert.

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And so to be able to come in and this is your mission, whether you're on a team or you're a team leader or team sergeant, take your team across the world and go execute. And the freedom you get in a way to do that based on your leadership style is an incredible experience. So I'm

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go, let's go. I'm ready to roll.

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And I'm really fat and slow. I think you call that. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. All right. Our last set of questions here are on challenges in the future. Okay, so the first one is what are the biggest external challenges to s fac s fabs that they face?

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the biggest external challenges that we face as an as fab or and as fac or based off of the phases that we're currently in. So being in a competition phase and being able to deploy to our respective egos kind of without limits and where we're going and being able to advise based on potential future conflicts or crises is important, but it kind of depends on what the world's doing and what we're preparing for.

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So doing a lot of preparation up front for potential. I won't say future, but potential conflicts and just kind of adapting to that. So with a situation like Ukraine, can sparks complete their mission without boots on the ground? Okay, I've got no worries. Just go there to answer that. Okay, I'll put that one in fast, but put that under before I put that under.

00:14:46:05 - 00:14:56:09

When you talk about recruiting, what would you say to someone that you want to recruit? Yeah. Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay.

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I'm not sure. Yeah, I'm not sure. I don't know. You're probably not one of the premiere force to do it. Probably not. But that would have been so good with your head screwed. Yeah, we're the best.

00:15:09:09 - 00:15:38:04

Yeah. Yeah, that would be a good thing to ask. Yeah. Yeah, We're the best to do it. Yeah. We're the premier fighting force or advising force. Yeah. All right, we've got a couple more. Okay. And this one, we're go back to the. Okay. Yeah. What a fact. That state's army need as the US Army needs as fabs and advisors for being able to provide SMEs across the world.

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We are, wherever the sun rises, where the US fab touches. And so to be able to provide people that are incredibly proficient in their respective skill sets and their embassies, it's one thing to be able to instruct your own counterparts. It's one thing to be able to instruct soldiers and junior and CEOs and junior officers, but being able to go into foreign countries and work with foreign partners and help them increase their capacity.

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It takes a special leader and it takes a special kind of talent. And so that's kind of what makes us successful, is we're able to increase our own proficiency by doing so, to come back to the force and join conventional units and and bring that asset to the team. But to be able to do that and go overseas and again, like I kind of alluded to earlier, having the freedom to freedom of action and operate, how you know, in the moment I as Captain Johnson see fit because my leadership has entrusted me and empowered me to do so.

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You can't do that for everybody and not everyone can do that. And so that's something that's super unique is is finding the cream of the crop and the best the best to do that.

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That's that was their answer. There absolutely was a bank Two people off that one. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

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This is my business. Probably our favorite question that we usually have.

00:16:53:22 - 00:17:24:14

What is something we should know about Espouse that we haven't talked about yet here today. Something that is super unique to the SAB again is, is having a team environment and there's other units that create teams and there's other, you know, units that deploy across the road with teams. But the way in which a team can be so well rounded and so being on maneuver team, you have almost every aspect of MLS, you have the infantry, you have logistics, you have intelligence, you have fires, you have all those resources.

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And so that allows for all of those advisors to potentially get more proficient in those tasks that they ordinarily wouldn't have an opportunity to within a logistics team. I was a branch transfer. So before I became a logistician, I was military police. And so this was after my first command coming here and commanding again was my first real opportunity to immerse myself amongst logisticians.

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And so for me personally, all that I got to learn from incredible professionals, incredible logisticians is something that you won't get anywhere else. You can't replicate that. And so to be around your counterparts, whether it's in your U.S. branch or its a sister, sister branches or anything like that, is is incredible. And you also have the opportunity to work in joint spaces.

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And so, again, the what the center provides can't be found or replicated in any other unit really across the army. So what would you say is something that's misunderstood about aspects? Probably say something about a berets first, but we're super cool guys. But I think something is misunderstood about the ASVAB is, is the work it takes and it's kind of seen as this new unit and this new you force.

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And so some people again don't really know what we do. And so if people can see what our mission is and see highlights of us doing it on ground and get the mission, you know, spread out across the Army, I think, well, first of all, I would be more understood and then also recognizes as how important it is to

00:19:01:03 - 00:19:24:10

Okay? Campaign today to win tomorrow. Little more dramatic. Campaign today to win tomorrow. More fun Campaign today to win tomorrow. It sounds like you're not on microphone in front of you can pay day. Okay campaign today to win tomorrow

00:19:24:10 - 00:19:46:04

Also joining us, Fab allows you to explore your respective country or just parts of the world that you may not go to otherwise. And also with learning the culture, the people learning the history of the country. And so whether it's in Senegal, whether it's in Djibouti or across the African air, you get to see things and meet people again that you wouldn't be able to otherwise.

00:19:46:04 - 00:20:15:15

And so within that, we were able to see several historical sites within Senegal. We went to Goree Island, which is the space of the last known door, and so not the last known door, all sort of, okay, no, it's the door of no return. Okay. Also, one of the benefits of tribe and going to your respective country and my diploma in Senegal with my team is we got to see parts of the country that otherwise we wouldn't be able to.

00:20:15:15 - 00:20:50:22

And having Senegalese partners from the military that would invite us in to their homes, sharing meals with them and their families. Senegal is a 96% Muslim country. And so also getting to have a close up view of their culture within their religion as well. And so sharing meals with families and being taken on tours to home villages of some of the Senegalese officers and also going to historical sites that really help you understand the the relevance and the importance of holidays in their countries or just events or anything they celebrate.

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So we were able to go to Goree Island actually, which is where the door of no return is located. And so it is the westernmost part of Senegal. And so that's where slaves were imprisoned before they were transported across the transatlantic slave trade to to the Americas. And so getting to to walk in there and, you know, it's still in its primary construction and what it was when it was first built and just stand in that house where thousands of slaves, you know, remain before they were transported is incredibly heavy and important and really eye opening to to see, especially as Americans.

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And so to see where that kind of started to where, you know, slavery ended up, but also sharing weddings. And we had several advisors to my maintenance advisors that were invited to one of the Senegalese mechanic's sons weddings. And so, of course, started in a mosque. And then they were invited to the family's home after that. And so just things like that where you see how incredible it is to build rapport and how opening the, you know, open these people are and and they want you to to celebrate with them.

00:21:57:12 - 00:22:19:00

They want to share their culture with you. And so above all else, we were able to, you know, see that operationally, being able to build these long lasting relationships and get to know one another behind the uniform and who we are as people. You're going to realize that you have so much more in common with people around the world than you you think you do based on where you're from or the language you speak.

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We're so people at the end of the day. And so being in the US, getting to deploy to these countries for a period of time really helps you see that

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One of my selling points personally for coming the as fab was the opportunity to immerse myself in a different culture. And so for second, as far being able to potentially go anywhere across Africa and get to know the people in that respective country, of course, conducting operational tasks, but also again, getting to know the people and the cultural aspects to that country was enough to sell me.

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So there's 54 countries in Africa. You didn't know which one you were going to get. But to be able to go to Senegal and 96% Muslim country. And so a different culture, not just religion based, but just day to day and be embedded with them and be able to immerse myself and my team in that culture, of course, Monday through Friday or whatever the work schedule was.

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But on the weekends or days we had off to be able to travel across that country, whether we were being taken on tours by some of the Senegalese officers that we'd met, being taken to their homes, eating meals with their families, that they'd prepared for us, seeing villages in which they grew up, seeing incredible historical sites that you really only see in pictures.

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So to see Goree Island or the Renaissance statue just all across the country was incredible. A once in a lifetime opportunity that I would do again in a heartbeat.