00:00:00:00 - 00:00:16:09

My first name is Paul. Will last name Fedoras and FTD or ESO and. All right, Paul. And what's your current rank and by current rank, duty is I'm a command Sergeant Major and I am the Command Sergeant Major for a second Security Force Assistance Brigade

00:00:16:09 - 00:00:30:01

So I've currently served with the Fab for 22 months, so I'm about two months from coming out of position. Fabulous. And I keep asking you this because I'm so interested in this. I don't speak a foreign language. Do you speak a foreign language?

00:00:30:03 - 00:01:04:05

I do not speak any foreign languages. I'm right there with you. I'm right there with you. Okay. So let's talk about the mission now. What is the mission of Security Force Assistance Brigades? So the Security Force Assistance Brigades Mission is to partner with foreign security forces to improve their institutional and operational capacity. And then for a better understanding of our capabilities and their capabilities so that in the event of a crisis or a conflict, we cut down that that time to trust.

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Perfect. And why was Security Force Assistance Command stood up? So the Security Force Assistance Command was stood up to institutionalize the advisory mission. Historically, we had done it through individual attackers, bring a team together rapidly, train them and get them forward where the brigade was stood up or the brigades were stood up to take some of that tax off the operational force so that it is no longer an ad hoc mission that is pulling from operational brigades.

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It's a standing unit that then can take all those missions and free up operational brigades to generate, you know, combat power for whatever the nation needs it for. Perfect. Okay. Fabulous. This is I've got a whole array of question answers on this one, so I'm interested what you think. What do you think is the most impressive thing about as fast?

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The most impressive thing that I've seen about fabs is comparative to our relative size, the impact that we could have with our foreign partners. So as an example, I recently attended the African Senior Enlisted Leader Conference and I had a forces sergeant major from a country highlight two NCOs that were both Sergeant First Class or junior by name.

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As you know, something he is striving to institutionalize in his army. That was a great example. A great example, and those are all examples are great as it pulls in our audience. Okay. We're not talking about late. I'm not sure that's like a concrete thing. That's super great. So you have more of those use that kind of language as well.

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Do so you're talking about the partner force. What are some of the challenges of working with a higher force? So some of the challenges of working with partner forces in general, we're all extremely prideful. So everyone wants to put their best foot forward, always highlight the things that we are great at, where in order to truly have a partnership, you need to understand not only what people are great at, but what what they're not great at, or what areas need to be improvement.

00:03:09:19 - 00:03:37:11

And often that the greatest challenges is coming to that level of trust where, you know, the other person's not going to view a need as as a weakness or something that is looked down at yet. Perfect. Okay, so what challenges are unique to an SX fab versus the conventional army? let's think about it. That's a good question.

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So to answer your question of what challenges are unique to an SX fabs versus a conventional unit in the Army where we place much more on our individual advisors. So ensuring that we select, train and empower the appropriate individuals because often they are operating in extremely small groups or independently. So they need to have the utmost character and discipline.

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We're in the conventional army. You can often, you know, self-police or, you know, assign a battle buddy that is kind of the accountability agent for others. Fantastic.

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Can you tell me a little bit about how these fabs operate during the competition, during competition, crisis and conflict? Okay. So the way the fabs operate in competition is it can be a myriad of things. So the goal in competition is one to partner with the military of choice or whichever security partner that we have and improve their institutional or operational capacity building so that they're working with them at their schools to share lessons learned.

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Here's a way, not the way, and kind of share what we've learned. And while we're doing that, we're we're also extremely appreciative of lessons that they're passing back to us because there's always multiple ways to do the same, the same tasks. So it's that information exchange that really takes place in the competition environment. That one shows we're all fighting the same challenges, but, you know, relays that, that it is an enduring partnership in crisis and competition.

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It's that ability to understand the partner force, understand our own force, and then where we can complement each other or who needs to, you know, who has a means to to fill a need from the other. So and that's whether it's being in a partner force headquarters and tying back to two U.S. entities for logistics or intelligence or fires or in the event that, you know, the partner forces better position than we are, you know, how are we able to to get them to leverage their assets and support us?

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I like that, too. Okay. We're going to give it to the soldiers now. Okay. So what are the what characteristics make up a good fab advisor? So a good aspect advisor. The characteristics that I would kind of say is common to all. One is intellectual curiosity. You have to understand there's there's multiple ways of doing things. There's plenty of aspects to every problem.

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So, you know, you need to be curious. You always have a growth mindset, empathy, being able to see, you know, a position from another person's stance, discipline. You have to have initiative and be willing to, you know, in the absence of clear, concise orders, understand what the commander's intent is and then go forth to best position the U.S..

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I like to. Intellectual curiosity. Yeah. You're the first one to say that. And I think that makes perfect sense like that. I think most people are saying, you know, a continuous learner or continuous student type stuff. I think that's one of my favorite phrase. I like that a lot. Can you tell me a little bit about the eight month, 8.8 month rotation?

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Yes. So the aspect currently or is moving to the fourth generation timeline, that is a 24 month period. So that's broken down into an eight month foundational period where that is focused on individual skills and competencies. So getting individuals through the combat adviser, advisor training course, then into any mission enhancing or mission essential schools that would provide that advisor either at greater depth in their individual competency or in the event that there is a gap in a team.

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You would provide them with, you know, a second set of expertise to where if, you know, for example, or the communications advisor, they may be able to double down on, you know, the team medical advisor if they attend one of the austere care courses after the individual phase or the foundational phase comes to an end. The culminating event is what we call trap the training readiness assessment program.

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So for individuals that are familiar with the expert skills, badge expertise, field medical Badge, or the Expert Infantryman Badge, it is a standardized set of criteria and a list of tasks that every advisor is tested on to verify that they have met their individual training gates. From there, we progress into an eight month collective phase that moves through the different echelons of collective training from body team through small section into team integrity.

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Our team complete training that is a myriad of live fire and situational training exercises. And then the culminating event for that is the the validation exercise which occurs at either the combat training center or up in Camp Atterbury, what we call Operation Combined Victory and that's the entire force package comes together to replicate the full hierarchy from battalion through division and how that's going to marry to a joint force or a U.S. pure force.

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And then from there, they're available for an eight month employment window worldwide based off their geographic limit. Yes, it's quite early and we don't know the answer. And you may or may not have the answer either in person? We asked. It wasn't sure. Why is it an employment versus a deployment?

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So that's an excellent question. So we don't know. So I don't know if my assumption is it's based off of the means in which we were sent forward. So because none of us are placed on deployment orders where we're operating in a temporary duty status. So, yeah, we're really curious about the results. No one knows. Okay, awesome. So thank you.

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Have you deployed? I have deployed with SARS, so I have not deployed with fabs other than episodic me just going out to do battlefield circulation to check on that. The teams that are forward in the respective countries to verify that we're meeting the countries objectives, we're meeting or assesses objectives and that we're generally doing the right thing. One of the most recent one, so the most recent battlefield circulation that I did was in August, and that was going to Djibouti.

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Djibouti. Right. Could you tell us what that was like just as someone who went I mean, this is for soldiers, but we also have a broader audience of the United States and other countries. What's that like going in and checking on? Yeah, you tell that to a doctor. So so the great thing about my position is I get to check on the entire myriad of mission sets that we have for the brigade.

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So on my most recent battlefield circulation, we went to our higher headquarters or our forward supported higher headquarters, which is CTF F in Vicenza, Italy. We maintain a small coordination. So there that ties directly with them to control current operations. And then from there we went down to Djibouti. And in Djibouti, we have two teams that are partnered with a rapid intervention battalion that is being built basically in close comparison to a light infantry or kind of a U.S. Ranger battalion type contract.

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So and our advisors there are working on everything from individual skills all the way up through company above collective, and then staff processes, maintenance functions, logistics capabilities. So when we go there and check in with it, it's one verifying with the the embassy team that that everything is still in good standing. We're still getting after, you know, the the talking points and themes that they want to get into, kind of getting their feedback on what the current situation is inside of the country and with the the partner force and then with the team is, hey, are there any any areas that we're seeing great success that we need to capitalize or are there any frustrations

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that we need to take back and work with higher or with the embassy? And then the final touch point is with the partner force themselves, how are they seeing the partnership going and what concerns frustrations? Do they have? So it's it's great for us to get to see because it really puts a lot of context in the reports that are coming forward so that we can go and advocate on their behalf.

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Have you ever been interviewed? So this is my third trip to Djibouti. Okay. Okay. So this this will have a lot of weight that I my my question was going to be is like, that's great. You've told me now what your mission is. And then from there and back. What's it like for you personally? Yeah, like what about you?

00:12:47:02 - 00:13:15:00

The man, the soldier? Like going into the places you've been three times now. Have you seen progress with that? What was that like? So that that is also the benefit of my position is because over each of our employment cycles only last 6 to 8 months. So a team go in for six, eight months. Macy Incremental growth or depending on what they're doing, that there may be no clearly visible growth to them.

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However about the opportunity to go see the same partner force three times over three separate force packages. So I'm able to relay the context of, hey, 18 months ago, this is this is where they were and this is what they were doing. So it it helps to track progress over time. And how is that progress? So I think with the the case in Djibouti, it is coming along on the on the exact milestones that have been set out for us.

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Fabulous. Thank you. Okay. So sometimes you might have to advise a higher ranking counterpart. How does staff prepare you for that as Fair prepares you for that? We do what we call a mission readiness exercise for each force package, and that's focused on our AOA or specific mission parameters. So that goes over embassy engagements. Here's how to interact with that, whether it's the OSCE, the chief of mission or the ambassador, and also through the course of conducting our duties, there is routine interactions with senior leaders, echelons above our current rate, where they're using that original characteristic that I referred to earlier of empathy, you know, being able to see things from their point of view

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and, you know, also understanding that we don't have every right answer. We have our answer. So approaching it like that is super beneficial. So we have to ask this and I don't know the answer, where do you if it's if a 12 person team goes in to Djibouti, for instance, where do they live? So that where a team lives and their kind of their security posture is 100% dependent by location.

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So we have a great working relationship with the embassy in the OSCE in every country that we go into. And one of our first touch points that we have in every country is that embassy team through the OSCE, getting with the regional security officer. And then based off of their assessment of the country, if there is no established U.S. presence or kind of a partner base that would facilitate us, we we take all guidance from them to make sure that we're being good neighbors that are our advisors are in the best mitigated risk situation possible.

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And so that could be everything from living on a U.S. base, as is the case in Djibouti or a partner force base, as is the case in some other countries or about on the economy, depending on what the the individual cases are, We have to use that. Have we not asked that because you've left us? Because I know that which is you to.

00:16:09:23 - 00:16:38:04

Okay, great answer. Yes, we need to do that for sure. Okay. When? So this is another thing I thought was really interesting. As I've been learning more about your organization, how does the handover of responsibilities before coming back stateside work to the benefit of of the ESP being over geographic airline is all of our handovers are internal to our brigade so we control every one of them.

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Were my previous deployments during a global war on terror. You may have a first Infantry Division brigade getting relieved by a 101st Brigade getting relieved by someone else. All of our force packages are handing over with a force package from our own brigade. So there is command oversight into how that handover is going, both on the outbound side and the inbound side.

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So we're able to better coordinate who gets what, when and how, force the tie ins, and then we maintain the reach back capability in the event that the force package that just went in and assumed has some questions that pop up or they need to honestly trace on something that they're seeing on the ground really like that because of the example of the provisional.

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Yeah, it can be. It fits in with it for sure. Okay. If you were recruiting someone to come join you, what would you tell them? So if I was recruiting someone to come to the ASVAB, I would tell you you're going to get an experience in the US fab that you're not going to get anywhere else in the United States Army.

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So as an individual, you're going to get a a breadth of knowledge and a perspective that you can't replicate anywhere in the operational force. You know, as an example, we've had Staff Sergeant and 74 Deltas, which is a chemical NCO that have served as an embassy L.A. So they're tied into everything that an embassy country team is doing, visibility on an entire country where that is likely not going to happen anywhere else.

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So you also have the opportunity to attend schools that would not necessarily be open to you in your your position. You could learn a second MOS or a second warfighting function competency just based on the needs of your team or the mission set that you're aligned against. And then for where you go get 24 years in the Army.

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I never thought I'd see Africa, and I've been down to back and forth to Africa for the last two years. So the opportunity for travel, seeing things that you never thought you saw. Working with like minded individuals is another thing like it. It is. It's good to go to work when everybody around you wants to be doing the same thing that you're doing now.

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That is fabulous everyday job out here. I mean, we're we're in the last third set of questions here and we're talking a little bit about some of the a couple more challenges in my life in the future. But what would you say are the biggest external challenges to ask that as fab space? So to bit the biggest challenge that I think the fab faces external to the fab is just understanding of visibility of what we're doing.

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So 95% of our contributions to the force occur outside the United States, away from most conventional forces in remote little locations where the reports go up through the army surface component command to the GS, the geographic combatant commander, and then to the Department of Defense. Now, where we have challenges, all of our Army peers that are at the division and below don't necessarily get to see our contributions to the the greater the greater cost.

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That's why we're here. Got you. Okay. So this is the one I want to look through. All the knowledge does not out. Why does the United States Army need aspects? So why does the United States Army need s fabs? So for the longest time we were doing all these exact missions that these fabs are doing, but we're doing them with operational brigades that then would be disaggregated and we're burning readiness while they're completing all these missions.

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When the s fabs were stood up, it freed all these organizations to to train and deploy organically to maintain that readiness or to generate more readiness. So that's the number one reason why the Army needs as fabs. A long term benefit of fabs is the institutional and personal relationships that come with advisors being forward in these countries, working with up and coming leaders of foreign militaries.

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Because you go ten, 15 years down the road, the the staff sergeant from partner force, military ex is going to be there, a senior enlisted leader or the captain is going to be a senior colonel or a general. And there's going to be that that personal connection, that exposure to Americans that you may or may not buy down some of the misperception is that is the best, concise answer.

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That's great. You give us that future piece. That was really good right there. That was said that to me answers the problem and

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what is something that we should know about as fabs that we haven't talked about here today can be anything. So something that we haven't talked about as fabs today that I think is worthwhile to know is our value in the crisis and the conflict phase.

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So our original purpose of why Esper were stood up was to free up two operational brigades to do large scale combat and to maintain unit readiness. Through one of my previous positions, I served as an observer coach trainer at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Huntsville, Germany. And every time there was a multinational rotation, you would watch that organic maneuver combat brigade rapidly hit the problem set of how do you resource man and place L.A. teams with all those partner forces.

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And it was always coming out of hide reallocating equipment that they didn't necessarily have as of and it it degraded their readiness with them trying to accomplish the partnered task force. So as fabs, even in crisis and through conflicts, are holding true on our value proposition to the army of freeing up operational brigades to do large scale combat operations.

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Campaign today to win tomorrow. A little more good campaign today to win tomorrow when we're down a little space between the two firsts campaign today to win tomorrow, Jack. And the second one is victorious together, victorious together.

00:23:18:17 - 00:23:25:15

A little more victorious together now, a little more space between worth Victorious together.