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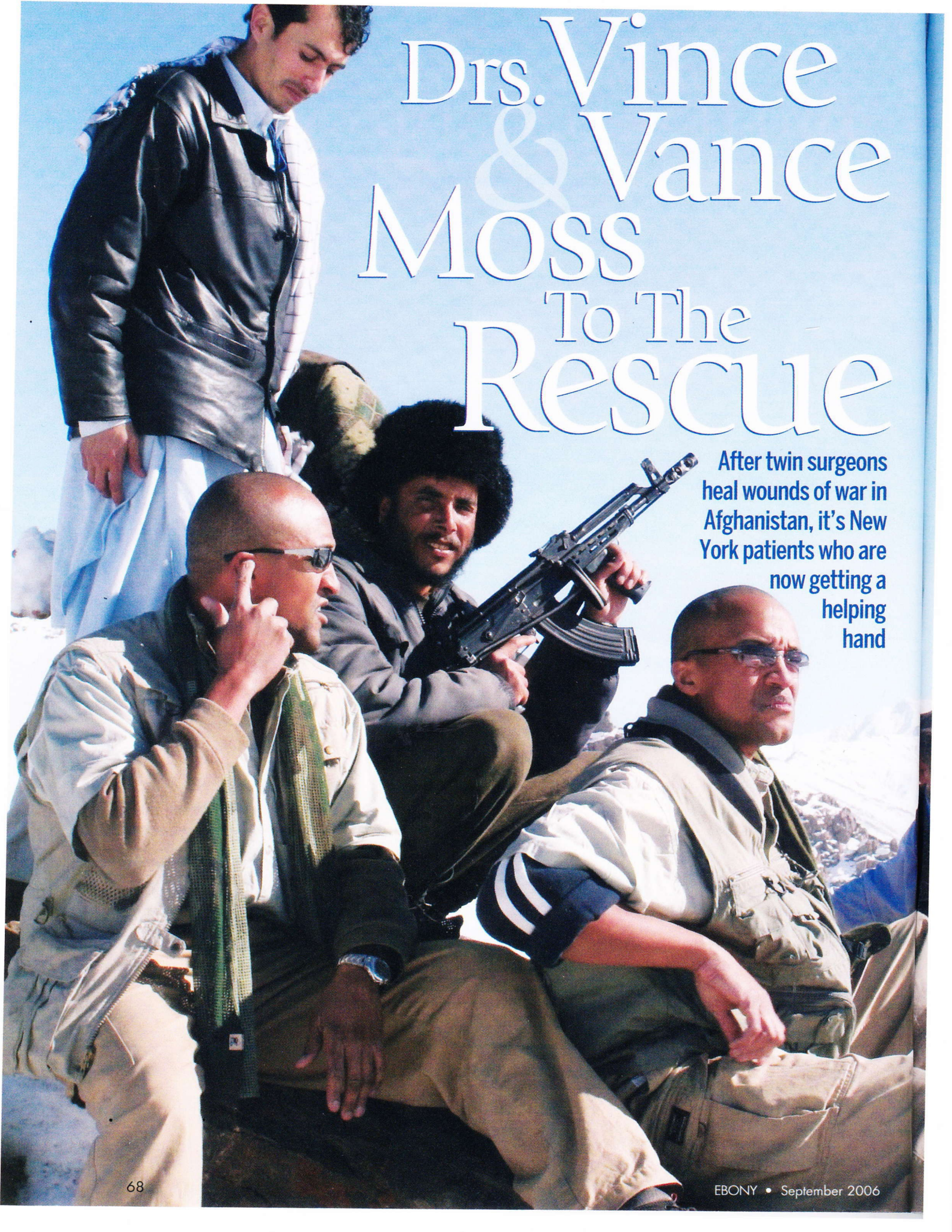
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PLUS
20 YEARS LATER:
SPIKE LEE
Still Gotta Have It



Drs. Vince & Vance MOSS To The Rescue

After twin surgeons
heal wounds of war in
Afghanistan, it's New
York patients who are
now getting a
helping
hand



IN Afghanistan, an area torn apart by decades of war and destruction, where malnutrition, people with disabilities and disease continue to rise, 35-year-old twin African-American surgeons from New York City performed operations through the night to save lives. Oftentimes, in make-shift medical tents, the brothers worked in the dark by flashlight or under the light of cell phones to carry out their dangerous mission.

"We couldn't stop working because it got dark," says Vance Moss, M.D., a urologist at Stony Brook University Hospital in Long Island, N.Y. "We had to work fast and move on or we might be killed."

"You might hear gunfire everywhere," adds Vince Moss, M.D., a cardiologist at Kimball Center in New Jersey. "You didn't know who was friend or foe. For as many times as we saved children's lives, we wondered if we were ever getting back home."

During their nearly four-month stay in Afghanistan, word quickly spread throughout the villages that the Moss brothers were lending their healing hands to tend to the

Giving medical attention to the sick and injured at a village clinic in Afghanistan, Drs. Vince Moss (l.) and Vance Moss (r.) spent five months in the war-torn country (far left). Both surgeons (above) are on staff at New York and New Jersey-area hospitals. They also have a private practice in New Jersey.



To The Rescue



In Afghanistan, Dr. Vance Moss (left) examines an Afghanistan boy who lost his limbs after a land mine exploded. At right, Dr. Vince Moss gives a young patient encouragement following an operation. Back in New York (below), the twin surgeons consult with a patient during their rounds.

sick and injured. It was not uncommon for barefoot children to follow their medical convoy, running and chanting a single word in the Farsi dialect: "Dogonogay," meaning same-face healers.

After a five-month stay in Kabul last year, the Moss doctors are back in New York City, where they have assumed regular medical duties, after participating in what they call a "suicide mission."

The two surgeons ended up in war-torn Afghanistan as members of the U.S. Army Reserve 344th Combat Support Hospital. They were activated for duty to work with American troops in the heart of al-Qaida territory.

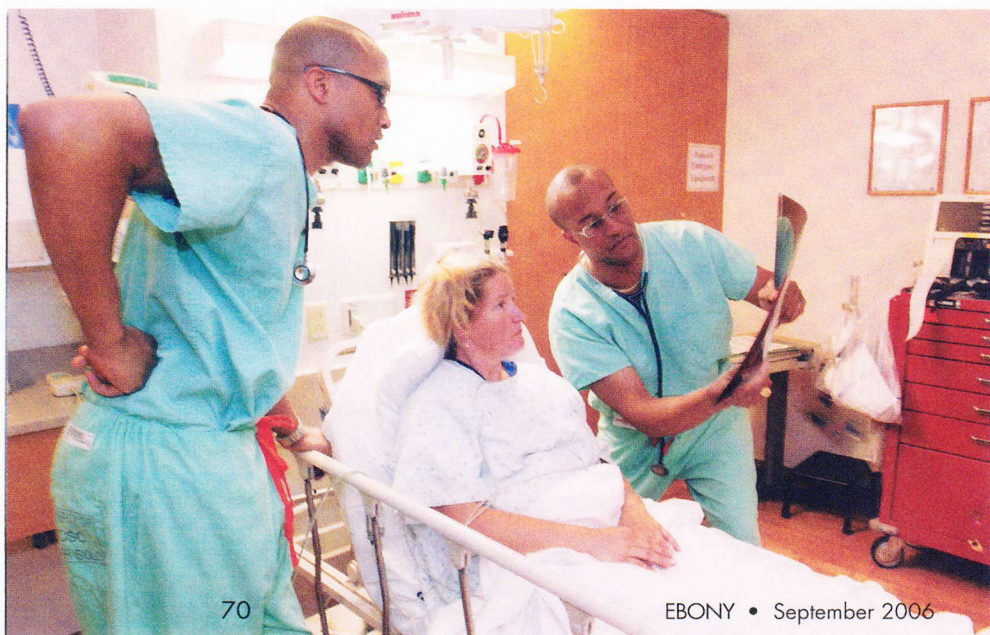
It started out as a routine mission, but the Moss brothers learned of the distressing situation in remote Afghanistan villages, where people were suffering and had no access to modern health care.

"As soon as we landed, I saw three children who had lost their lower extremities after stepping on land mines," Vince says. "They transported themselves in makeshift vehicles. Many Afghan people were infected with dog bites and other infections, suffered from untreated diseases, and some had horrible genital deformities."

The brothers requested a formal military mission to provide medical care to the locals, but superiors denied their request. "They said it was too risky," Vance says. "We would be on our own."

With a single-minded, can-do attitude, the Moss brothers joined forces with Northwest Medical Teams, which are civilian groups of highly trained volunteers who respond to disasters by supplying antibiotics, surgical kits, bandages and needed medical attention to survivors.

"Basically, this was a mission like no other," Vance says. "Just about everybody had packed up and left the



To The Rescue



In their regular practice, Dr. Vince Moss is a cardiologist at Kimball Center in New Jersey and Dr. Vance Moss is a urologist at Stony Brook University Hospital in New York. The 35-year-old twins (below) have an appreciation for each other's gifts and are often together.

people without any health care because the situation was so dangerous."

With no U.S. military protection, the brothers maneuvered as civilians throughout the villages, treating as many of the locals as possible. "We presented ourselves as healers," Vince says. "We took a risk because we wanted to help. The children would come and sit on our feet and tell us, 'Don't leave yet.'"

During their five-month mission, both Vince and Vance lost about 30 pounds, existing mostly on rice, raisins and bread. They agree that it was their own rush of adrenalin, daily encounters with death and despair, and the support of each other that motivated them to complete the mission. "It was the first time we were working together," Vance says. "I would look over and see my brother operating next to me and be amazed

by his surgical skills. We had an appreciation of each other's gifts."

Throughout their lives, the twins have done almost everything together. Natives of the Washington, D.C.-area, they excelled in school as Boy Scouts,

earned high rankings as members of the Civil Air Patrol and later graduated from the Temple University School of Medicine. In 1998, both were commissioned as captains in the U.S. Medical Corps, and promoted to the rank of major in 2004.

When it came to further medical education, they made different choices. Vince completed his general surgery residency at Saint Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center and was trained at the State University of New York (SUNY), Brooklyn campus for cardiothoracic training. Vance completed his urologic surgery training at the New York Medical College and completed his fellowship in transplantation at SUNY, Stony Brook.

Today, the Moss brothers are busy with daily medical routines in New York City, but the Afghanistan experiences have transformed their outlook on the world. "Traffic doesn't seem that important anymore," Vince says. "We have a better appreciation of America. [Afghanistan] made us better surgeons."

—Tracey Robinson-English

