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Twin Surgeons Take Their Rivalry on Deployments

Col. Vince Moss is three minutes older than his twin, Col. Vance Moss. The 49-year-old brothers are surgeons in the U.S. Army Reserve and at one point, Vince was one rank ahead. Now in a race to be promoted next, they reflect on their most recent deployment together, a six-month tour in Afghanistan. It was their first with the U.S. Special Operations Command, as part of a Golden Hour Offset Surgical Team working with Special Forces soldiers. Their answers have been edited and condensed for space.

1. Any glitches working with a new command?

There were times they didn't know we were two people. We would get, "Oh, wait a minute, Vince Moss, full bird colonel, and Vance Moss, full bird colonel, what are the chances?" It happened multiple times. They thought we were one person. We got a laugh out of it.

2. Were you received well by the Green Berets?

We are very specialized in what we do, and they're very specialized in what they do, and there is a little bit of interest on both ends as to the expertise that we practice, not only out there in the field, but as soldiers, just as regular soldiers. It was a mutual professional relationship.

3. Would they egg you on to provoke sibling rivalry?

They didn't really have to. We do it anyway, but they could sense the competition and would egg us on. Sometimes they would relay a scenario and say, "What if there's a patient who comes in with a gunshot wound to the neck? Which one of you guys will be able to handle it?" And then we'd start going after each other. They wanted to definitely see us compete.

4. Is it fun to deploy together?

[Vance:] I was really excited to go tour with [Vince] like we did in Iraq, but I reflected on some of the things I didn't like about it, just being brothers close to each other. That situation was reignited when we went



to Afghanistan, because that's just the way it is. And as much as I try to think that, "Oh, this time it won't happen" ... like, I don't keep my room very clean, so for him to come to my hooch and start complaining that my clothes are everywhere was incredibly annoying. Unfortunately for my brother, he understands that I am definitely the more focused surgeon, so he's going to always come back at me with things I'm a little deficient in. But that's OK. He's my big brother. What am I going to do?

5. Was life more austere with special operations?

As physicians, we were [used to] a nice room, air conditioning, carpeting, television, that kind of thing. So relatively speaking, this was incredibly austere and caused [us] to have even greater respect for what these guys do, the sacrifice they make, knowing that they have more frequent rotations in those types of environments. And you've got the civil affairs soldiers, the training cadre, the aviators, the surgeons, the

sustainment soldiers; you can go on and on. Not one of those units or entities can do it by themselves. It's impossible.

6. How did you take the same path?

Our parents were divorced when we were 4. They taught us that even though we weren't a nuclear family, we should be nuclear and help each other. We motivated each other and congratulated

each other, and we knew it was OK to do well in school. We talked about this in Afghanistan. With all the political and partisan situations going on in this country, [we] are hoping to be role models to our demographic, African American men, that it's not all about the fanfare and the easy money and that kind of thing; it's working hard, studying hard, going for the long term. Being educated is incredibly important, and we hope that others would see that and try to emulate that.

7. Who will make brigadier general first?

[Vance:] I believe they would love for us to be in different ranks just to see how we would be able to relate to that. [Vince:] I agree. [Vance:] I think I'll be the first general in the family because he was the colonel the first time. —Gina Cavallaro ★

U.S. Army Reserve surgeons and twins Col. Vance Moss, left, and Col. Vince Moss stop for a selfie in Afghanistan.

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