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Sgt William Soutra with Posha

Marine Dog Handler Awarded Navy Cross

The Navy Cross, the second highest award for combat valor was presented to a U. S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) dog handler, Sgt. William Soutra, for actions taken in Helmund Province in southern Afghanistan. During a brutal two day battle that took place in July of 2010, Sgt. Soutra and other warriors from the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion exhibited extraordinary heroism during combat missions.

What makes this award even more amazing is that Posha, Sgt. Soutra's solid black German shepherd dog worked with him, attached to his hip during the entire mission, showing neither fear, nor hesitation and allowing his handler to take extraordinary actions.

Posha was lost last year to cancer. That loss was hard and this piece was written by Soutra to honor his best friend.

"I wish I could tell you that it's going to be okay, but the truth is you've always been the one to pave the way. You were always two steps ahead making sure that the paths we traveled were safe."

And although you've done enough already I ask that you still watch over me, making sure the roads I travel without you are safe."

POSHA F-738 "YO"
Sept, 2003-0831 Aug 11, 2011

SECNAV Decorates MARSOC Warriors With High Combat Valor Awards

By Cpl. Kyle McNally

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (Dec. 3, 2012) – In a rare public ceremony, four silent warriors from the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, were recognized with the nation's second and third-highest awards for combat valor in a Monday morning ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and MARSOC commander Maj. Gen. Mark A. Clark presented Sgt. William B. Soutra with the Navy Cross, and awarded the Silver Star to Maj. James T. Rose, Staff Sgt. Frankie J. Shinost and Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Patrick B. Quill for the extraordinary heroism they exhibited during a combat mission in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, nearly two years ago.

Then deployed with Company B, 1st MSOB, the Marines and their Afghan Commando partners were tasked with a critical mission in the bloody district of Nahr-e Saraj. Their objective was to capture an insurgent bomb factory and disrupt the enemy's activity in the area.

After two days of brutal fighting, and with the patrol's water and ammunition quickly diminishing, the violence culminated with an Improvised Explosive Device blast that triggered an insurgent ambush and left element leader Staff Sgt. Chris Antonik mortally wounded.

According to Clark, the men he and Mabus recognized on a drizzly December morning at 1st MSOB's headquarters displayed "great heroism, extraordinary bravery and conspicuous gallantry" in the harrowing moments that followed.

Soutra, then a dog handler, and Quill, the team corpsman, received the distress call from Antonik as they were making their way back from another platoon's position with a partial resupply of ammo. Before

they could move further, their position erupted with flurries of insurgent machinegun and mortar fire. Pinned down, their Commando partner force became disoriented.

According to his citation, Soutra then "immediately and boldly took charge." "Moving exposed down the line," he signaled the Commandos to concentrate their fire on the enemy's position, often physically maneuvering them to do so. With his platoon oriented, he and Quill then rushed into the kill zone to find Antonik.

After moving 150 meters through swarms of machinegun fire, they reached the blast site, where Antonik lay semi-conscious beside a wounded Commando. With rounds zipping past, Quill immediately went to work rendering lifesaving aid to Antonik, shielding him with his own body. Soutra applied tourniquets to the wounded Commando's legs. After dragging him to a ditch for cover, Soutra returned to Quill, only to discover that Antonik could not be moved hastily due to his injuries. All three men stayed in the kill zone, despite the intensifying enemy fire.

Rose was listening to the deteriorating situation on his radio. With the ambush site's dense vegetation rendering air support impossible, Rose organized a quick reaction force to attack the enemy compound that was pinning down Soutra's Commando platoon. The QRF, which included Shinost, the team's Joint Terminal Attack Controller, charged through volleys of small arms fire directly at the enemy's position. While engaging targets, Shinost managed to pinpoint an enemy position in the southern treeline, and directed a surgical A-10 airstrike that destroyed the threat.

With the enemy temporarily disoriented, Soutra and Quill carried Antonik to safety. Rose and Shinost continued to engage the insurgents in the compound, who now concen-



Above: Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the Honorable Ray Mabus presents Marine Corps Sgt. William Soutra with the Navy Cross medal on behalf of the President of the United States during an award ceremony at Camp Pendleton. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Sam Shavers/Released)

Below: (From left to right) Hospitalman 1st Class Patrick B. Quill, SSgt. Frankie J. Shinost, Maj. James T. Rose and Sgt. William B. Soutra of 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, stand at attention after being awarded the nation's second and third highest awards for combat valor. Rose, Shinost and Quill were each awarded the Silver Star for extraordinary heroism exhibited during a combat mission in Helmand Province, Afghanistan nearly two years ago (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Kyle McNally/



trated the majority of their fires on them. Rose stood fast, engaging targets less than 50 meters away. The fire was so intense that a bullet severed his rifle sling.

Shinost repeatedly exposed himself to the barrage, locking on targets for the A-10s and marking a drop zone for the MEDEVAC helicopter. Coordinating with Soutra to identify insurgent positions, Shinost directed his aircraft to silence the enemy guns for good with a final airstrike.

After more than 48 hours of sustained fighting, the Marines and the Commandos pulled out. They had destroyed the bomb factory, and had killed approximately 50 enemy fighters.

Antonik was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V".

According to their citations, Soutra, Rose, Shinost and Quill each "epitomized" their respective combat roles, and their actions saved the lives of their fellow Marines and Commandos. Additionally, SSgt. Bradley A. Harless, who is currently on deployment, will be presented a Bronze Star with V upon his return for his heroic actions during the same operation.

"This is a chance to recognize people who don't get recognized much," said Mabius. "Most of their missions are classified, most of the time we don't hear anything about them or the extraordinary actions they take on a daily basis. And to be able to do this publicly, to recognize these four extraordinary human beings...is very special for me, for the Marine Corps, for the Navy, and for the country."



Above: U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Chris Willingham and Cpl. William Soutra, both assigned to the U.S. Army's 2nd Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, direct Posha, a military working dog, to search an area during reconnaissance operations in Al Qadasiyah, Iraq, Feb. 25, 2009. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Eric Harris/Released DOD)

Right (courtesy photo to MWD TSA) and below (courtesy of DOD): Cpl Soutra, Posha, SSgt Chris Willingham and Lucca.



Left: Sgt Soutra and Posha. Photo courtesy of DOD.

Right: Posha with Kong toy. Special courtesy photo to Kennel Talk.



First Night on Post

(An excerpt from the book:

Remember the Alamo: A Sentry Dog Handler's View of Vietnam from the Perimeter of Phan Rang Air Base)

By Carl Adams

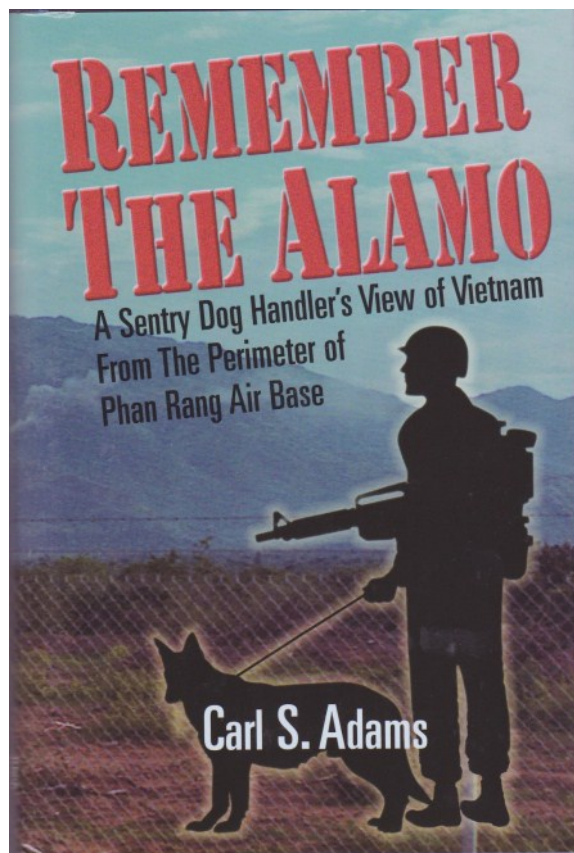
I remember the first night Andy and I were on the perimeter alone. That ride out to my first post was no different than the hundreds that would follow. The handlers were sitting in the back of the duce-and-a-half on wood slat benches that ran along both sides of the truck bed. The dogs were muzzled and sitting between their handler's legs, facing the center of the truck. Every once in a while, two of the dogs would decide to fight, but their handlers would put a quick stop to that nonsense. Jokes, slams, laughter and loud talk mixed with the music from the Armed Forces Radio Network playing on someone's not so secret transistor radio and the unforgettable sound of the truck's diesel engine.

The "duce" bumped along the perimeter road making unceremonial stops at every third post marker spaced approximately a quarter mile apart along the distant perimeter road. As soon as the truck came to a stop, a handler would jump off the back of the truck and lift his dog and set him on the ground. He would slap a clip into his CAR-15 (a shortened version of the M-16 rifle with an extendable stock.); jack a round into the

chamber and yell, "OK". With that, the truck would grind into gear and head down the road to the next drop off point. Soon it was my turn. Someone yelled out my post number as the "duce" came to a stop. I went through the routine and yelled "OK". The sound of the diesel engine immediately drowned out the talking and the music from the back of the truck as the duce pulled through the convoy gate and headed for the next post.

I cannot remember the post number, but just about everything else about that first post is still vivid in my mind. It was located immediately West of the convoy gate on the North perimeter. There was a canal to my right and another natural barrier to my left that prevented the handlers on either side of me from reaching me directly along the fence line if I needed some help. They could get close, but not all the way to me without circling back to the road and coming up from behind.

It was one of those dark moonless nights. Once the lights from the posting truck disappeared you could hardly



see your hand in front of your face. I dropped my ditty bag containing my rain gear, extra canteens of water for Andy, extra C-rations, and a few other odds and ends on the ground a few yards from the

road and waited a few minutes while my eyes adjusted to the darkness. Even with nineteen-year-old eyes, I couldn't see more than twenty or thirty feet ahead of me. I removed Andy's muzzle

and replaced his choke chain with the leather collar and attached his leash. I picked up my ditty bag, checked the wind and started to clear my post as I'd been trained to do at Lackland.

Here I was, nineteen years old, fresh out of dog school, in the middle of Vietnam, with a dog I was just getting to know, on the first solo K-9 patrol of my life. In early 1967, the posts and the area outside the fence line had not been cleared of vegetation. The post was covered with tall elephant grass intermixed with sporadic clumps of cactus, scrub brush and large outcroppings of boulders and rocks. There weren't any sentry towers. They would come some months later along with an overzealous bulldozer operator who pushed away all of Charlie's cover along with ours. The only ones anywhere near Andy and I was the handler on either side of us and at that particular part of the perimeter, they could be as much as a quarter mile to a half mile away.

Toto....I don't believe we're in Kansas anymore.

The posting truck had by now moved well out of earshot. I knew that the three strands of concertina wire that formed the fence line were about ninety to one hundred yards from the perimeter road. There was an easy wind blowing off the China Sea some eight or ten miles to the East. We went to the West end, the downwind end of my post near the road, and began the process of clearing the area to make sure the VC hadn't ar-

rived before we did. My night vision was working fairly well so I was able to avoid walking into any sharp needled cactus or tripping over rocks. Andy was not having any trouble at all.

A dog's senses are superior to a human's by hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of times. Andy had no difficulty seeing and walking around whatever object we came upon in the darkness. I wasn't looking around much. There was not much that I could see. My full concentration was on Andy as we crossed back and forth across my post from the road to the fence line and back again in a zigzag pattern as we slowly progressed to the canal that marked the eastern edge of my piece of the perimeter. We were still doing our sweep and were somewhere near the middle of my post when Andy went on alert.

I was a very inexperienced handler. All I knew about handling a sentry dog I had learned in dog school and everything I knew about Andy I had learned in training sessions back in the kennel area. At the kennels, they had set up scenarios where you patrolled between two points while one or more of the trainers snuck up on your position, or someone would hide and you would patrol the area until you found them. Your dog would alert you when he detected their presence, but that was in broad daylight and they were Americans. I knew that a sentry dog will alert differently to an American than they will to a Vietnamese. A

person's body odor is directly affected by their diet. The Vietnamese diet was very different from ours, so consequently, their body odor was different as well. Different odor, different reaction to it. Every dog has his own unique behavior, so I had no idea how Andy would act when he ran into Charlie. This was very different. Andy was acting in a way that I had never seen at Lackland or at the kennels. I knew by Andy's body language that it wasn't an American out there. This was something new. It must be the Viet Cong. Andy was pulling on the leash with all his might in the direction of the fence line that I estimated to be about fifty yards away. He really wanted to go.

One thing Sgt Vargo taught me during the three nights we worked together as part of my orientation, was that if your dog went on alert, you called Central Security Control, (CSC), on your radio for a time check. To the complotter in CSC and everyone else on the radio net, with the exception of the other handlers, your request simply meant you wanted to know what time it was. To the K-9 troops out on the line it meant, "my dog's on alert". This transmission accomplished two very important things. First, it told everyone on the perimeter that something may be happening and signaled the handlers on your immediate right and left to start heading in your direction to back you up if you needed fire support. Second, it kept the three man back up teams away. I know that that may seem strange, but the last thing you wanted

in the first minutes of contact with Charlie was friendly fire up your butt. If the shooting started, someone would call it in and back up would get there. In the meantime, it was just between us handlers. The handlers nearest you would not say anything over the radio. You just took it for granted that they were coming. It was a given. The sun came up in the morning. The beer was always warm in the airman's club and the guys next to you were coming down the fence line if you called in a time check. It was just that simple. I called in a time check.

Andy was really acting weird. He was going from right to left and then back again, all the while pulling like an Army mule right for the fence line. Every ten feet or so, he would stop and turn his body 180 degrees from the fence line and look over his shoulder in the direction of his alert. Ears up, mouth shut tight as he took in the scent, looking like he could see right through the darkness. Then he would spin around and go through the whole thing all over again. We kept going forward.

I could just begin to make out the concertina wire ahead of us, so I knew we were within about thirty feet of the fence line. Andy was turned around again looking beyond the perimeter over his hindquarters. One hundred percent of his attention was on whoever it was out there. I whispered the command "Down" as loud as I dared to. Andy spun around so he was facing the fence

United States Marine Corps, Sergeant Brian M. Riddle, A Specialized Search Dog Handler with Military Working Dog Platoon, 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, I Marine Headquarters Group, was honored at the JINSA "heroes" ceremony. See story below.

Joint Chiefs Vice Chairman Honors 'True Heroes'

By Claudette Roulo, American Forces Press Service

Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs awards dinner in Washington, D.C., Dec. 3, 2012. At the dinner, six service members received the Grateful Nation Award, and the Sen. Henry M. Jackson Distinguished Service Award was presented to U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

DOD photo by Claudette Roulo



WASHINGTON, Dec. 4, 2012 – The vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented six service members with the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs' Grateful Nation Award yesterday.

The honorees came from each of the five branches of the armed forces and U.S. Special Operations Command.

Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. said the service members are "true heroes, representing the hundreds of thousands of America's sons and daughters who are out there

tonight wearing the cloth of our nation."

"And tonight, somewhere around the world, men and women of that military are redeploying," the admiral said. "They're coming home to people who understand the price of freedom and want to give back to those who have sacrificed so much to preserve it."

The recipients of the Grateful Nation Award are: Army Sgt. 1st Class James T. Osaer, Marine Corps Sgt. Brian Riddle, Navy Petty Officer 2nd

Class Eric J. Strauss, Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Jonathan Tatroe, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Clint T. Campbell, and Army Master Sgt. Paul L. Wiseman of Special Operations Command.

The admiral thanked those who honor the sacrifices made by service members and asked that they continue to do so. "And while you're at it, hire one," he said.

"Help us to make sure our homeless vets have a place to sleep at night, and that our wounded vets have what they

need to succeed in the difficult journey that lies ahead - for them and their caregivers," Winnefeld said.

The Grateful Nation Award, established in 2003, is presented annually to six service members recognized for having distinguished themselves through superior conduct since 9/11. Honorees are chosen by their respective branch of service and come from the enlisted, noncommissioned officer and junior officer ranks.

Fourth Quarter Care Packages

One of the things we do at MWD TSA is to send out care packages to the handlers and their dogs. This being the holiday season, we have been especially busy gathering donations, sorting and packing and getting the resulting boxes into the mail in time for a year end delivery. MWD TSA President Dixie Whitman and her husband, Jerry, had their house full of donations by Thanksgiving and worked hard at getting everything boxed up.

MWD TSA would like to thank everyone who donated products or funding to ship the packages which are filled to the brim with coffee, coffee syrup, Oregon Chai tea, dog toys, dog treats, socks, T Shirts, books, magazines, toe and hand warmers, Wet Wipes, Pet Wipes and all kinds of snacks and goodies.

On the next few pages, you can see many of the items sent in the packages as well as read some of the responses from the handlers.

Below: Donations included Kong toys Oregon Chai Latte Tea and Caribou Coffee.

MWD TSA would like to recognize and thank these wonderful sponsors who generously donated products and books so that we could ship amazing 4th Quarter care packages to our dog handlers:

Kerry Food & Beverage/ DaVinci Gourmet
Caribou Coffee and Customers
Top Dogs Pet Boutique and Customers
Ma and Paw's Bakery and Customers
Lucky Duck Pet Stuff and Customers
Fluffy & Floyd's Pet Supplies and Customers
Leash On Life and Customers
Carl S. Adams
Thorlos Socks
Greenhorn & O'Mara

MWD TSA would like to recognize and thank these groups that provided funding.

American Legion Women's Auxiliaries - Georgia District
Bethany United Methodist Church- Military Missions
The German Shepherd Dog Club of Washington State
Top Dogs Pet Boutique
Petco Foundation



Below: Jerry Whitman displays a care package in the process of being packed. Other photos show the quantity and diversity of the items donated, which include coffee, dog toys, magazines, cards and letter from children, candy and wipes.



Thanks for the care package you guys sent to me and MWD BERT. We appreciate it a whole lots. Enclosed is a pic of me and Bert about to head out on mission. Thanks again for the support and GOD SPEED !!!!!!!

SSgt Gutierrez and MWD BERT-P833



Right: Examples of the cards created for the care packages.

Below: Contributing artists from a school in Colorado. We also received artwork from children in Paterson, NJ.



Below: Some of the many care packages ready to be mailed out.



"Your packages have begun arriving here at Bagram. Thanks for all you and the MWD TSA do for the deployed MWD Teams!"

From all the k-9 guys here, I want to say thank you for the care packages. Everything was great and is already being out to use. Thank you again for all you do. Happy holidays. T.

"I got the care package yesterday and the Coffee is great tasting.

***Thank you.
J.***

"I just received your package last night as well... thank you for all that stuff for Paco and especially the peanut brittle... I took a couple of pics so you will be able to see Paco and that ridiculous thing with the bells on it, when i get them up. LOL It's funny."

B.

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for the package I received!

I found so many items to be of use and I especially fell in love with the personal cards from the children."

C.

Donation in Memory of Doris Vinzant



The German Shepherd Dog Club of Washington State made a generous donation in memory of one of their members, Doris Jean Vinzant. Her request for a memorial was for club members to remember her with a donation to MWDTSA.

Doris passed away peacefully on July 12, 2012.

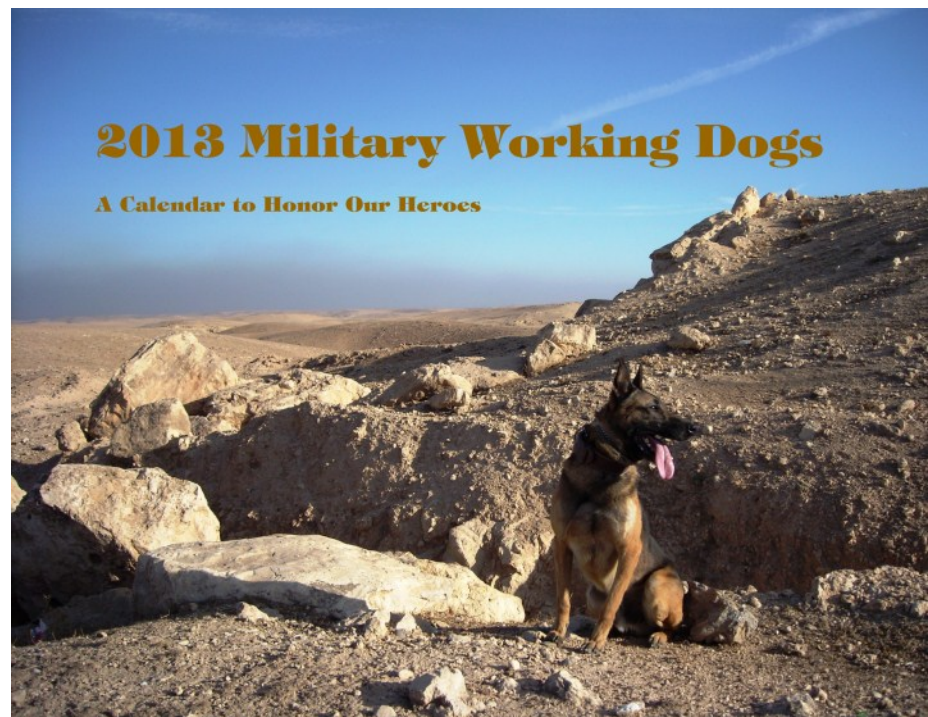
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/dorisvinzantmem.html>

2013 MWDTSA Calendar

Don't forget to order your MWDTSA calendars now. They are selling fast and we don't want to disappoint any supporters who would love to see these gorgeous dogs each and every month of 2013.

The 2013 Military Working Dog calendar is a stunning photographic journey with a multitude of dogs and their handlers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and one historic Coast Guard photo. Each month's cover photo is a superb vignette of our military working dog teams. The calendar is also filled with important doggy dates.

Everything in this calendar was approved by the DOD.

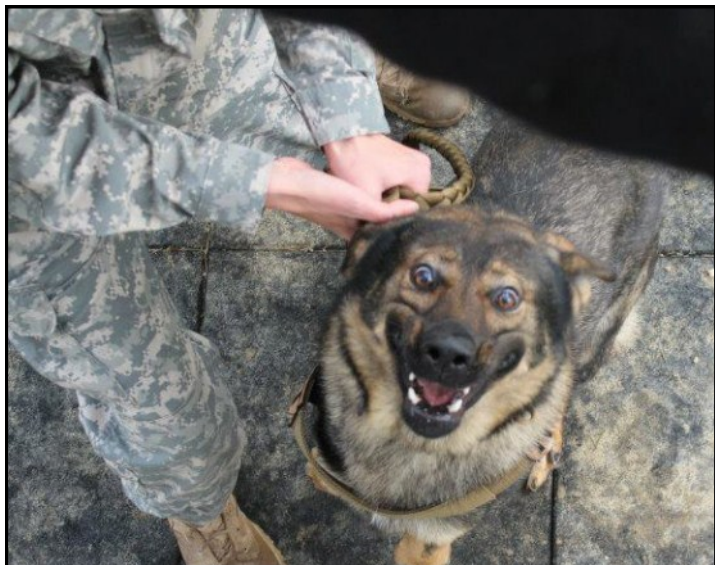


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Support Association, Inc.

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We are on the web!! See our Blog!
www.mwdtsa.org

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient
of GSDCA Special Newsletter

Training — Europe

Please Recycle by Sending to a Friend



Thanks to our friends at an undisclosed location for sharing photos of their recent training session. Both Edo (top) and Dragon (bottom) look focused, very, very focused.

