



Fayetteville, NC
The Navy Cross

Luis Fonseca

HA Luis Fonseca, from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade's Task Force Tarawa, was awarded the Navy Cross for bravery during the battle of Al-Nasiriyah, Iraq, on March 23, 2003.

On that day, Fonseca was a hospitalman apprentice on his first combat deployment with the U.S. Marines. His unit, Company A, 1st Platoon, was attached to the 2nd MEB's 1st Battalion, Company C, 1st Platoon, which was tasked with capturing and holding the northernmost of Al-Nasiriyah's three main bridges.

As the unit's corpsman, Fonseca was aboard an amphibious assault vehicle, or amtrack, reserved for evacuating battle casualties quickly to the rear.

"I was supposed to stay back," away from the fighting, Fonseca said in a telephone interview from Al Asad, Iraq, where he was on his third deployment (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iraq) in three years.

The Marines took the northern bridge at about 11:30 a.m., and almost immediately started taking rocket-propelled grenade and mortar fire, Fonseca said. Within moments, a call came over the radio reporting that an amtrack had received a direct hit with an RPG, wounding five Marines.

Grabbing his bag of medical supplies, Fonseca jumped from his track and raced to assess the condition of wounded Marines who had been pulled from the smoking vehicle and laid out on the ground by their comrades.

Without concern for his own safety, Fonseca calmly and methodically stabilized two casualties with lower limb amputations. He continued to treat and care for others who were wounded and awaiting evacuation until his vehicle was immobilized by enemy direct and indirect fire. Under enemy fire, he directed the movement of four wounded Marines and personally carried one critically wounded Marine over open ground to another location. All five Marines survived.

Fonseca was awarded the Navy Cross August 2004 at Camp Lejeune, N.C.



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