Patriot

Rafael Peralta

Mexican-American

Rafael Peralta

1979 - 2004

Rafael Peralta was born in Mexico in 1979. He immigrated to the United States and joined the United States Marine Corps as soon as he had a green card. He became an American citizen while serving in the Marine Corps.

Peralta served the United States with enthusiasm and Patriotism: On his bedroom walls hung three things - a copy of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights and his boot camp graduation certificate.

Rafael Peralta

1979 - 2004

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On November 15, 2004, 25 year old Sergeant Peralta, deployed to Iraq as a scout team leader assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, along with his team was ordered to clear houses in the Operation Phantom Fury. As a platoon scout, Peralta didn't have to go out with the assault team that day. He volunteered to go.

Rafael Peralta

1979 - 2004

The Marines entered a house and kicked in the doors of two rooms that proved empty. But there was another closed door to an adjoining room. It was unlocked, and Peralta, in the lead, opened it. He was immediately hit with AK-47 fire in his face and upper torso by three insurgents. He fell out of the way into one of the cleared rooms to give his fellow Marines a clear shot at the enemy.

Rafael Peralta

1979 - 2004

During the firefight, a yellow fragmentation grenade flew out of the room, landing near Peralta and several fellow Marines. The uninjured Marines tried to scatter out of the way, but were blocked by a locked door. At that point, barely alive, Peralta grabbed the grenade and cradled it to his body. His body took most of the blast. One Marine was seriously injured, but the rest sustained only minor shrapnel wounds.

Rafael Peralta

1979 - 2004