

Letters From Iraq...

One Superintendents' View From the Front Lines

By ROB ADAMS

Superintendent, Ponds of Battle Creek

The following is part two in a series of communications that chronicles the trials and tribulations of GC Superintendent/Captain Rob Adams as he deploys to the front lines of Iraq. After completing approximately six weeks of stateside training, Rob has received his orders and is on his way to Iraq where he will spend the next year of his life. Rob is the golf course superintendent at the Ponds of Battle Creek in Maplewood, Minnesota.

(Rob is more than willing to share his military experiences with his family, friends and colleagues back home. I was fortunate to receive permission from Rob to reprint all or parts of e-mails that he sends home as I see fit. He is allowing me to edit his communications as well (primarily spelling and punctuation), due to the time constraints placed on him. I hope you appreciate and enjoy his honesty, insight and wry sense of humor as he experiences these life-changing events. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers - Paul Diegnau)

July 16, 2005

Hello all. Well I made it. I am in Iraq at Ar Ramadi. It was a long way to get here but it's worth telling. We left last Saturday night at 1100 p.m. Drove on a bus to Dallas to avoid the hurricane. We then flew from Dallas to Frankfurt Germany. Had a two-hour layover there and then got back on the plane and tried to take off. I say try because halfway down the runway the pilot aborted the take-off. Neat. Never done that before. He said one of the engines wasn't coming up to power. Anyway, flew from Germany to Kuwait. Drove to Camp Bruehling in Kuwait and spent a couple of days there. Flew from there to a base called TQ in Iraq. Spent a day there and then did a combat patrol to Ar Ramadi. Well I made it. I am just getting settled tonight and will be able to get to the computer and phone a little more frequently now and will have more for everyone in the future.

July 24, 2005

Hello all. I am alive and well. Sorry for the sloppy e-mail last week. I was a little tired and didn't really read what I wrote. Anyway I am much more awake now and

getting used to being here. Don't really like it but I am stuck here for a while. The transition from the guys we replaced to our actually doing the job is a little bumpy; too many people running around. It was my first day working on my own. Stress level is a little more than I have at the golf course. They say it takes a while to get used to it but I will. The units are out doing their missions and I track everything they do on the radio and do a lot of the coordination. I am safe in a building away from the action but it still is like the "wild west" over here. As one person put it, the people over here are like stone age but they have cars and guns. Not too much exciting to report but simple things like trying to get broken-down vehicles off the road is a major task. They don't have police or a tow truck you can call up and get it out of the way. Other than that it is hot and dusty.

Food is good though. They feed us a ton. I am going to start working out or I could come back fat. Anyway things are OK and I will continue to write these when I can. Hope everyone at home is well and have a good rest of the summer. Take care, Rob.

August 4, 2005

I am still stuck inside monitoring radios and doing reports and stuff. I wonder if they would go for the virtual office thing if I asked. Maybe I could do it from home. We work 12-hour shifts. I work 930 a.m. to 930 p.m. It gets to be a long day. I

don't mind working those at the golf course if I'm outside and get to go home at night but, oh well. One more thing to whine about - have I said it's hot here yet. Holy crap - feels like a blow dryer on your body. Actually it has cooled off. It only reached 110 today. I put on my long johns. Ok, enough complaining. I have less than a year left now. I haven't had a lot of time to get around the FOB (Forward Operating Base) but we have a couple gyms, a nice dining facility, beautiful desert view (kidding) and all the free blowing sand you can ask for. We do have a little shop that we can get all the necessities at and Internet access and phones. Our Battalion actually runs the Internet café, as they like to call it. We get 30 minutes on the

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Letters from Iraq—

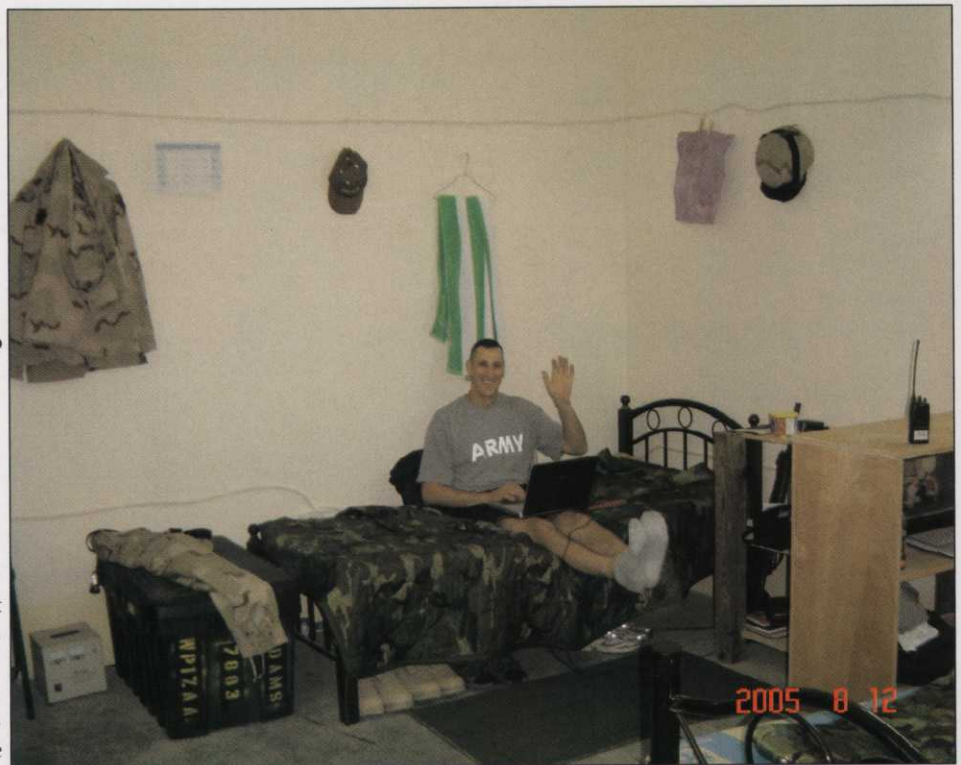
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computers and I am such a slow reader and typist that I read my e-mails and then have like two minutes to try and type something out. . . . Like I have said earlier I can't give too much detail on what our mission is but some stuff you can probably find out on CNN. On a bad note, the Marines have lost 21 guys in two days. It happened way out to the west of us but news travels pretty fast here. Wouldn't want to be a bad guy now because I'm sure the Marines are a little pissed off and are looking for trouble. Just about every stereotype about a Marine is true. They have such a different attitude about this deal. They literally go looking for action. If they drive down a road and somebody shoots at them from a house they shoot back and keep going. If it happens two days in a row from the same house they will destroy the house the next day on their way to the office. The ISF (Iraqi Security Force) is training here also. They have their own little part of the camp. They still live in fear that the insurgents will do something to their families if they find out they are in the Iraqi army but they need to stand up and take back their country. They are very brave in that respect but not very well trained. We are helping them with that. It is hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys here so it is a slow process. Every night units go out looking for bad guys and every night they find some. We are doing a good job but it's not an overnight deal.

August 12, 2005

Hello all, I'm still here. Let me know if this thing is going to end anytime soon. I have totally lost track of time and what's going on.... No, it is odd because time just is not a factor over here. We totally lose track of time and what day of the week it is. Days are the same, 100 plus degrees and sunny. . . . Well that is all I have, it has been pretty slow for us. Which is a good thing. We hear more about what is going on here from people at home than we know from being here. Unfortunately it is mostly negative, but so you all know, we are getting some of the bad guys - dead and alive. The Marines caught like thirty-some the other day and discovered a bomb-making facility, so that will slow them down for a day or two. The elections are coming up in a couple months so it is going to be busy throughout the country. This part of the country last year had a really low turn-out and they are hoping to get a lot more people out to vote this year. We will probably help set up the polling stations or something. We put huge concrete barriers out to protect the people. We also provide a presence so they feel safe. Not to sure what part we will play but we will be busy. The unit that was here before us went out to do some civil affairs stuff and the people they talked to were very proud that they voted. So that is pretty cool.

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"Hello all, I'm still here. Let me know if this thing is going to end anytime soon. I have totally lost track of time and what's going on..."

-- Rob Adams, pictured above in Iraq.

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Letters from Iraq—

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August 20, 2005

Hello all, how goes the battle? Oh wait, that's me. The battle is going fine. Slow day today, which is a good thing. We are starting to do a few more missions. Don't worry; I haven't been out in a while. But with the elections coming up things are starting to get going and some of the people are looking forward to voting. You might have read in the news that the Shia and the Sunnis were fighting together against the bad guys in Ramadi to protect a Shia neighborhood. That doesn't happen a lot. Most of the people over here are tired of the insurgents and Mujadine fighting against us. It messes up their whole day. There isn't a lot of indiscriminant bombing here, like in Baghdad. The majority of the population here are Sunni which is what most of the bad guys are. The Mujadine are the criminals and thugs that just intimidate people. They aren't as organized but they pop up all over and create problems. The weather is starting to cool off slightly. Still hotter than hell but it gets comfortable after 930 at night. Full

moon, so the nights are pretty. Sorry, had a sensitive moment there. Anyway things are moving along and I am one day closer to being home.

September 3, 2005

Pretty busy week. Four of our guys got some cuts and scrapes on them but they are all o.k. and are (RTD) Returned To Duty. I, being the desk jockey that I have now become, get to write up reports and send them to the next higher level. Now I know why people that work at office jobs think the movie Office Space is so funny. "Do you have my report yet" is very common here. Everybody wants to know what's going on right now so you tell them what you know and five minutes later what you told them is totally different than what happened. It's funny because we hear the traffic on the radio not only from my unit but the rest of the units around here. It's the same with everyone. Report one thing and when it is all over what actually happened is not even close. Some funny things do happen though. Some of the insurgents like to shoot rifles at tanks, which doesn't do anything to the tank but makes the people inside the tank rather upset. We can only

shoot back if we can positively identify who is shooting at us, so when the guys in tanks do positively identify the guys, they shoot back. The funny part is they mess with a tank and all the guns on it. The bad guys to tend to run away very fast though. They are usually arrested later for something else. The Iraqi army is starting to do pretty well but they still have problems shooting themselves accidentally. I was able to get out this week. Nice to be able to get away from this place every once and a while. Gives a different perspective. If it weren't so hot and people weren't shooting at one another, Iraq does have some beautiful sites. The Euphrates River is pretty nice and the sunsets are pretty nice over the desert. Anyway, went out took a couple pictures, drove around a bit and came back. Nothing exciting happened. The pictures are from the top of a mansion that is partially built. It is in a great location to watch several roads. We monitor the roads to make sure the bad guys aren't using them to smuggle things into the city.

Anyway, it is/was a beautiful house that is partially built that was taken over

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by the US during the start of the war. We rent it from the guy for some stupid amount of money. He complains all the time but he really wants more money. He owns a farm and raises fish and grows dates. He must have some side business because this house is huge and his farm is tiny. Probably sell weapons to the bad guys. Just kidding.

September 14, 2005

I'm trying to start working out again. Went jogging during the day because it was only ninety something degrees. I figured no problem, run a few miles, then go work out. Well, it is still plenty hot and dry. The run alone just about killed me. I didn't bother working out. They have several gyms, which is nice. I have played ping-pong a few times. Still am doing pretty well with that.

September 24, 2005

Hello all. I am still here, again. Sorry that I missed a week. I was on vacation and just wanted to relax and get away



Table tennis anyone?

from work. I sat on the beach and ran my toes through the sand and admired the view. Then I woke up. Still here and still would rather not be. Things are going ok. Been a slow week for us but a bad week for one unit over here. The bad guys are using bigger explosives. The next three weeks we will be getting ready for the

elections. There will be more troops moving in and we will be getting more of the Iraqi army as well. Right now the more bodies we have the better. Last year the elections here were a bust. Too many people were afraid to vote. This year, more people are aware of the elections and constitution but they still are scared. A lot of the people say they plan on voting but they have no idea what they are voting for. It just has never happened over here. We are a ways away from this area being secure enough for the Iraqi army to take over. The insurgents are still strong over here and are very adept at changing the way they work. Many are still pretty stupid and pay for their mistakes. We tend to arrest the guys driving around with rifles and binoculars in their cars but they still do it anyway. Air Force enjoys sinking boats that drive across the river in the middle of the night. Wonder what they are doing? Anyway I am fine and have settled into a nice routine of working 12 hours reading for two and then sleeping for the rest of the time. I read a lot of magazines.

(Editor's Note: In the next issue, Rob says good-bye to his desk job and becomes a Company Commander, patrolling with his men outside of the FOB.)

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