**PART IV**

**Letters From Iraq...**

**One Superintendent’s View From the Front Lines**

**By ROB ADAMS**

Superintendent, Ponds of Battle Creek

(Continued from Part III)

The following is part four in a series of communications that chronicles the trials and tribulations of Golf Course Superintendent / Captain Rob Adams as he serves his country in Iraq. As revealed in this segment, Rob comes home on leave to spend quality time with family and friends. He returns to Iraq and continues to share his thoughts and experiences regarding the local Iraqi people, the Iraqi Army and Police force and the insurgency. Rob is the golf course superintendent at the Ponds of Battle Creek in Maplewood, Minnesota.

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to talk to will just keep their mouth shut and wait to see who will be next in charge. All they want to do is raise sheep. I am totally convinced that the reason that a lot of the people here have not evolved out of the Stone Age (except for satellite TV hooked up in the mud hut) is that they have nothing to lose when the next guy steps up into power. They have nothing that the leaders would want except for their loyalty, which they easily get by threatening them (a concept that has been employed here for centuries). Anyway, enough preaching; you probably have your own opinion about this place and the war. I think everyone is in agreement that it could have been done a little better. Around here the insurgents are targeting the new police recruits. We are having pretty good success hiring police here and shipping them off for training. The bad guys have been targeting the police stations with suicide bombs. My company does a lot of the force protection around these places. If we build a bigger wall they build bigger bombs. The police are doing a pretty good job hanging in there. The Iraq army guys that I work with are coming along pretty well. They do a pretty good job and are starting to act like real soldiers. The problem is that the upper echelon guys are old school and slow to change. They are very short sighted and can't plan a trip to the bathroom. That is true literally, but that is another story. All right, I think I have written enough. I think you guys can figure it out the rest. I will give you the “Iraq for Dummies” scorecard: Insurgents bad, Iraqis scared, Iraqi army getting better and police being blown up a lot.

April 16, 2006

Happy Easter everyone. Hopefully this will be the last major holiday I spend outside the U.S. Sorry I haven't written in a while but things have been pretty busy around here. My guys are all still doing well and not much has changed with the missions we do. As we get closer to getting out of here, things will get even busier for us. Since the new set of Marines has taken over, it has gotten a little dicey for them. They are going into places that haven't really been visited too much by us. They are doing a good job but it is at a price. You have probably seen or heard about it in the news. Once again, to correct the news; the Government Center in Ar Ramadi hasn't been overthrown. It just gets attacked every once in a while or maybe a few times a week. It is all a blur to me. It is pretty well defended and the insurgents take a few inaccurate shots and run away. They are pretty good at video taping themselves during attacks. They must edit the piece out where they get chased out of town by a helicopter or F18 Hornet. We have not seen too much of the sect killings that they have in Baghdad. We did have one incident but not too much otherwise. You think we have race relation problems in the United States? Say the wrong thing over here and wham-oh, it's off to see Allah! We are still working with the Iraqi army and they are doing pretty well. They haven't shot each other in a few weeks. They do, however, have a problem with the dogs in the neighborhoods. Apparently the Sunni/Shia thing must happen with dogs also because the Sunni dogs don't like the Shia soldiers and the dogs usually lose that one. The dogs leave the U.S. guys alone pretty much. They understand "come one step closer and it's going to be a bad day for you" must be universal dog language or something. The people here haven't changed. Having a new government probably will not affect them much. They will still be led by those that intimidate them. Being Sunni, they will resent anything that government puts in place. That is if they can get one in place. The propaganda operation by the insurgents is pretty good. Most of the people are uneducated and will believe anything they hear. In our area the Coalition Forces are rumored to be responsible for blowing up a doctor's clinic that we planned, financed and hired local contractors to build. It was about 90% complete before we decided to blow it up. Well, that is what some of the locals have been told. We didn't in case anyone is wondering. Otherwise we keep trucking along. Everyday gone is one day closer to home. I can't wait. Until then, everyone be safe and take care.

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Hello all. All is well in Iraq. Well that isn’t really true but it sounds good. Another month has gone bye and there isn’t a whole lot to say. After a while here it gets to be like the movie Ground Hog Day. You wake up and do the same thing everyday with the exception that sometimes people shoot at you and sometimes they try to blow you up. It changes things up a little and keeps everyone on their toes. We have been pretty steady with our regular missions and have increased with some of the building and fortifying missions. I don’t know if I ever explained that or not but my company does a few things. We patrol a large section of highway and then we also have heavy engineer equipment like bulldozers and loaders. I have guys that run the equipment and they are kept extremely busy. Every time the bad guys blow something up we go and repair it as best as we can. We also do a lot of force protection things like put up barriers or build fighting positions. Anything we can do to keep the soldiers safe from bullets and bombs. We also do missions to interact with the local people. Sometimes we go by ourselves and sometimes we take some Iraqi soldiers with us. I can’t say all the stuff we do but some-

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people can be. Last month a high-ranking Iraqi officer was caught stealing air conditioners from the huts and buildings that the Iraqi soldiers live in. Apparently he was bringing them to Baghdad and selling them. Now there is a guy that you want leading troops. Like I said before in one of the updates... the younger guys do pretty well leading troops while the older guys that have seen all the corruption just fall in line and continue the chain. It is really the norm over here. Hopefully someday they will get tired of it all and figure it out for themselves or they may be watching some of the politicians in the US and figure out if they can do it so can we. Well I guess I did have some stuff to say. I am really looking forward to getting home and living the American dream. We have it so good at home. Unless you have been in a place like this it is impossible to know how good we have it. Well I may do one more of these things before I leave just to sum things up. I appreciate all the support from home. I hope to see you all when I get back. Take it easy.

-- Rob

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