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One of the responsibilities of being a director for the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents is coming up with a topic to write about for my "Director's Column." Now if you think about all the former directors and all the articles that have already been written, you will quickly realize that interesting and pertinent subject matter is becoming a relatively thin commodity. But as an elected official representing my fellow superintendents, I persevere; and in life, perseverance usually pays off, even if the unwritten story I have been looking for has been right under my nose all along.

I would like to tell you all an interesting story about an ordinary man. The story is not nearly as interesting as the man behind the story, but I will try. This is a man who has laughed in the face of despair on more than a few occasions. A man who would gladly share his life with anyone who will take the time to listen. A man who is now living out a childhood dream working on a golf course just by driving a tractor and mowing some grass along the way.

His name is Robert Ribbon, born September 20, 1924. Bob quickly fell in love with the game

of golf while growing up in his old neighborhood. He was raised in Chicago across the street from the Mid-City Golf Course (which is now the site of WGN Studios). Bob began caddying there at the age of 13. He continued to caddy all through high school and did so after he graduated until he was drafted that summer of 1943.

He became a Buck-Sergeant as a "tailgunner" in a B-17 bomber and was stationed at Foglia, Italy, with the 15th Airforce Division, 463rd Bomber Group,

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the 772nd Bomb Squadron. He flew seven missions over northern Italy and Austria in a B-17 bomber named "The Magnificent Malfunction." On April 20, 1945, returning from a bombing raid of a railroad yard in Innsbrook, Austria, The Magnificent Malfunction was struck by a 88mm German anti-aircraft shell and crashed. Of the nine-member crew, five survived; Bob was one of them. The five survivors were all captured, however, by German soldiers and sat out the rest of the war in a P.O.W. compound near Innsbrook. They remained there until being rescued by the 3rd Armor

Division on May 4, 1945, a few days before WWII ended.

After being discharged from the service, Bob became a carpenter's apprentice and learned the trade of carpentry, and worked as such until 1953 when he was sworn in as a Chicago police officer. After 27 years on the force, he retired as a Chicago police sergeant on March 1, 1980. During this time, he not only became a successful husband and friend to many but also a father of six children as well. During this time, he continued to play golf, and in 1964 he moved to the then tiny suburb of Bartlett strictly because of a little-known golf course called Bartlett Hills. In September 1982, Bob was hired on as a member of the Bartlett Hills Golf Course maintenance staff where he works to this day, living out his childhood dream and playing some golf along the way.

I know by now you are all asking yourselves, "Kevin, have you flipped your noodle? What does this have to do with a being a superintendent?" To you I say only this. As supervisors of many different people from many different backgrounds and cultures, I urge you all to get to know the people who work for you. You may be surprised and fascinated what you find. You will also discover that in getting to know the people who work for you, and with you, you may better utilize them to the best of their abilities. I would also like to say thank you to Bob for sharing with me your stories and friendship. I know my words alone could never do them justice. 