

PART III

Letters From Iraq...

One Superintendents' View From the Front Lines

By ROB ADAMS

Superintendent, Ponds of Battle Creek

(Note: The following is part three in a series of communications that chronicles the trials and tribulations of GC Superintendent / Captain Rob Adams as he serves his country in Iraq. As revealed in this segment, Rob accepts a Company Commander position at the end of November and leaves his desk job behind. In his new position, Rob is responsible for 95 men as they maintain security on a section of highway in the Ar Ramadi region. 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)

October 1, 2005

Well I made it through the month of September without a scratch. I can't believe it is October already. This is usually my favorite time of the year. The golf course slows down a little and starts to recover from the stress of the summer. The end of the year is in sight. I like the cool, sunny days and all the colors of the trees. I don't think I am going to get a lot of that this year. We had a pretty slow week for my Battalion but not such a good week for another unit over here. They lost five guys in one day. Things are expected to get a little more exciting around here with Ramadan and the elections. We start in a couple weeks preparing the voting sites. Once they are set up we are to move away and let the Iraqi army and the civilians run the show. We are to provide protection from a distance. They want the elections to be free of the U.S. Good luck to them. Anyway I am fine and keep plugging along. I miss being home and seeing all my family and friends. Hopefully some good will come out of this mess and it won't be time wasted. There are a lot of good people over here that would like to live a safe and free life. They just need to stand up and do it though. Well enough for now. Hope all is well at home. Take it easy. Rob

October 9, 2005

Hello all. Another week in the books. It has been pretty slow this week, which is kind of scary, leading into the week of elec-

tions. I hope that it is not the calm before the storm. Things are starting to fall into place and we are working to improve the positions we already have. Life on the FOB (Forward Operating Base) is not bad. I got out and played ping pong the other day. I am still able to play pretty well but the competition is getting better. I may need to start practicing. Your tax dollars hard at work! I only work 12 hours a day so the rest of the time I sleep and read. They opened a new chow hall, which is supposed to be mortar proof. These are the things we get excited about. I'm trying to get a driving range built here but there is still the concern of sniper fire and being hit by mortars while collecting balls. I figure with a little chicken wire and duct tape I can rig a ball retriever up to a tank. There are a few people over here that actually brought their golf clubs and balls. Tee times are pretty wide open. The course has numerous holes from one bomb crater to another. Carts are free with the round and come equipped with some sort of machine gun. Beverage cart girls are hard to find so you need to bring your own water. A common complaint is that the fairways don't get watered enough and the greens are slow. Where have I heard that before? Anyway I still wish I was home working on the course. I'm having green grass withdrawals. I did get a picture off a guy who was doing a patrol in the middle of Ar Ramadi and they jumped over a fence and landed in this guy's beautiful grass back yard. They couldn't believe it either, so they took a picture. One of the guys knew I was a superintendent so they gave me the picture. I have it on my computer and look at it often. Oh the things I miss back home! Well I should get back to staring at the computer screen and listening to radios. Hope all is well on the home front. Take it easy. Rob

October 19, 2005

Hello all. We made it through the elections without too many incidents. The voting went pretty well. In our area we had around 4,000 people vote. Last January they had 67 so it was a big increase. The people are still afraid and the Iraqi government did not give the people a lot of information on where to vote. Several security measures were put in place to protect the people who voted and the workers. Nobody could drive from the night before the election to the morning after because of the threat of a car bomb. So if you lived far away from a polling center you had to walk. The coalition forces put up security around the polling sites at a distance so it didn't seem like we were interfering. The

Iraqi army had security at the polling sites. From what we were told, the polling sites with the best turnout didn't have any coalition forces securing them. I don't really believe that. Half the stuff that gets reported from over here is total B.S. We see stories about protests and riots in Ar Ramadi all the time. Truth is it doesn't happen or is overblown. There hasn't been a riot here since I have been here and we only have had one protest. Not a big deal. A local woman informed on some insurgents and wanted to be detained for her own protection. The Iraqi police took her for her safety. The Iraqis thought we (US Forces) had detained her. She was never here but the people protested at the front gate. Women are still treated poorly here, but if they think we have them they rally like it was their King. Anyway, the Iraqi police were forced to let her go. No telling what happened to her. I just saw a news story about air strikes in Ar Ramadi that killed 70 people. The press said that it was mostly innocent civilians. I read the reports that the soldiers on the ground give. Anytime a Sigact (significant act) occurs we have to write up a report and send it to our higher headquarters. They take the report and send it out to everyone so we all have an idea of what is going on. It's called situational awareness in the Army. But we see reports from all over our area. It is amazing how the stories get distorted. I can't go into detail but the story does not contain all the facts and the reporter said they saw some of the individuals. If they are reporting from that area where this occurred, they are probably working for the insurgents. Not an area where any American would last more than a few minutes. Anyway, don't believe everything you read! I thought before I came over here that some stories seemed distorted but now I know it is true. On the same token, it isn't a bed of roses and the Iraqi army is a ways off before it will be able to stand up on its own. It isn't necessarily the training or the equipment. It is more of a cultural thing. They lack real discipline, which is funny considering that they were under Saddam for so many years. After a few hours on patrol they lose interest and lie down and don't pay attention. It may be just the units around here but I have heard this is a common occurrence. Also time is not as important. If we have to leave for a mission at a certain time the Iraqis may or may not show up when they are supposed to. They argue among themselves constantly. I guess it is just the way they are. As much grief as we give them they are still pretty brave to do what they are

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doing. Some of the people respond better to the Iraqi army, but sometimes they get less respect than U.S. troops. They are trying, and eventually the people will accept them. Anyway, that is enough ranting and raving for today. I am fine... same stuff, different day. It is even cooling off here. It is in the 60s and 70s at night. Someone even said it rained last night. I hope all is well at home. Well enough already. Everyone take care. Rob

November 3, 2005

Hello all. I am still here. Sorry I haven't written in a while, been busy with things around here. We made it through the month of October. It was a bad month for troops throughout Iraq. The Brigade I am with had some casualties as well. November isn't starting out that great either. A Cobra helicopter was shot down in the area, killing the pilots, and a soldier was killed trying to get to the crash site. So things haven't been that great. Anyway, enough depressing news. Halloween was pretty good; we had a little costume party. Not much else going on around here. It doesn't seem like November though. It gets cold at night but there aren't any leaves changing color and there aren't the cold days I am used to. Things are still green in the spots that have water so there is

no difference in the seasons. I like the transition time in the fall at home where you have the warm days and all the colors of the trees. One good thing is I don't have to rake leaves. Well enough talking about leaves. I hope everything is well at home. Everyone take care. Rob

November 13, 2005

Hello all. Still here. Not much going on. There have been a few changes as suspected in the Ramadi area. There are some "special units" acting on "intel" from other "special agencies" and they are rounding up bad guys and breaking apart insurgent cells. They are doing a pretty good job from what we hear so that will help. They are able to take the gloves off a little more than we as conventional soldiers are, so they are more effective at getting the job done. We just have to deal with the aftermath. We did hear some interesting things the other day from an unknown source. Well, we do know who it is, but I can't say. Most people will be able to figure it out. They get information from locals and pay them for this information. Anyway, the majority of the fighters here are Sunni Iraqis from the area. The amount of foreign fighters is down from the start of this thing. The Sunnis are now conducting a true insurgency. They were in power and now they are not and they do not want to lose their existing power. The elections in December will give them some representation in the new government. They will have

a voice although it doesn't always seem like it. The insurgent activity gets less and less as the months go by. They suspect things will die down even more after the elections but the infighting will continue as it has for thousands of years. Some Muslims here still do not like the west and will continue to fight against us even after we are gone.

Another thing we learned was that much of the fighting here and bomb building is about money. The average monthly income for an unmarried male in the area is \$25 dollars. The insurgent cells will pay \$25 dollars per IED they emplace and you get a bonus if it hits the Coalition Forces. So why not take out the moneymen, you ask. Because the amount of money coming in to fund the insurgency is endless. As it was described to us, it is every Muslim's duty to protect his brothers. Certain countries, that will remain nameless, continue to give money to their fellow Muslims but still maintain that they are our close allies. So it doesn't look like anything will change on that end for a while. Anyway, you all probably were aware of this anyway but I thought you might think it was interesting. They shared some other pretty cool stuff with us but sorry can't say.

Anyway, things are going. Still not my favorite place and I don't think I will be vacationing here when it is all over. Nights are cool and the days are pretty nice. It rained once otherwise it is always a beautiful blue sky. The nights are clear and if you like

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which is only fair.

On a positive note the elections were yesterday and they seemed to go very well. Quick, funny story... We watch the election workers or some of them anyway and we secure the ballot boxes. Well, the Iraqi soldiers were watching the election workers at our base and some of the election workers were tampering with the ballot boxes. The Iraqi soldiers caught them and they were going to shoot them on the spot. We had to jump in and ease the situation. It all worked out in the end but we must have taught them well because they are already trying to rig the elections. Anyway things went pretty well here. The Iraqi officials wanted us to stay away and let the local tribes handle security. We did and there were only a few acts of violence mostly aimed at coalition forces doing normal patrols. The turnout was much more than expected and some places did run out of ballots. We are all hoping that the government will quickly organize and decide that they don't need us here. I think it is realistic that they want us gone but they still need the troops and the money we are supporting them with.

The new job is going well. I have a really good bunch of guys and they are good soldiers. My new job takes me outside the wire more, but I feel pretty safe when I am out there. I got to meet a Bedouin sheep herder the other day. He moves his sheep and family around to where ever the grass is good. I have no clue what the hell grass he was talking about and I grow grass. There is dirt, sand, rocks and more sand. If it is green and in the desert, it is probably trash. I also met with a sheik of a local tribe. Pretty arrogant guy and you can tell he is playing both sides of the fence. Most people over here are. They don't want to be associated with the American forces because the insurgents have threatened them but they also know that when the violence ends we will leave. Like I said in an earlier update, a good majority of the insurgents are locals. You can tell from talking to the people that they have all these little fights among themselves. One tribe or family doesn't like the other so they will say that one of them is an insurgent and we go and arrest them and they say the other guy is an insurgent. They probably both are but who knows. This is not one big happy family over here. I think they all need some counseling. I say pull the troops out and bring in Dr Phil! Hope that everyone will have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Take care Rob

January 3, 2006

Hello all as you can see I have changed from weekly update to just update. I just don't get the time as much to sit back and write down all the things that are happening to me and over here. Which is probably what I should be doing more of since I get out and do and see more people. Things have been going pretty well. It has been kind of slow. The December elections went smoothly for us besides the possible voting fraud. I think now the people are just waiting for the results. God only knows what will happen when the people get the results. Things in Ramadi have remained about the same. We still have bad guys hanging around. On a possible positive note numerous sheiks from the area had a meeting the other day to try and get more involved with the police force and army in the area. I say possible because there were also a few insurgent leaders there. The local tribes and sheiks may be trying to get things turned around in the area or they may be trying to start up there own militia. We will find out shortly. I have met the main sheik that organized this meeting and he is probably playing both sides of the fence. Corruption is a part of the society over here. It kind of reminds me of The Godfather. The sheiks are like the mob bosses and they have their thugs out doing their dirty work like selling gas on the black market or smuggling weapons. That's how they make their money. Since most of the people here are poor, if you need something you go to your sheik for help. They give you a little money and in return you do favors like put out IEDs or take a few shots at U.S. forces, hide stuff for them or

report on what US forces do. It all works out pretty nicely for them. For the most part I think the people would like to be left alone. They like us being here because we protect them from insurgent groups, but like many other people feel, if we weren't here would the insurgents still be here? From what I see I would say yes. The people here are easy marks. Whoever has the power will come in and push them around and intimidate them and do what they want when they want. There is no law to government/police/army to stop it from happening. Even when one is established I think it will take a long time to get away from the corruption that is so prevalent here. Like I have said before, all we can do is put them in a position to try and get things worked out for themselves. Hopefully this meeting with the sheiks will get them together and moving in the right direction. Well that is enough rambling for the day. I hope that you all had a good Christmas and a happy new year. I am looking forward to being home in Feb. Hope to see you guys then. For now take care. Rob

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Experience the Andersons formulation advantage on your fairways


The photos below illustrate the difference in particle size and uniformity between the Andersons small and mid-size fairway fertilizer and a competitor's product. Notice no nutrient segregation with Andersons mid-size due to uniform particle sizing versus significant nutrient segregation with competitor.

Andersons 25-3-9 + 2% Fe (150 SGN)



1 lb. of N per 1,000 = 175 lbs./acre = 3.7 particles per sq. in.

Local Competitor 15-5-10 (215 SGN)



1 lb. of N per 1,000 = 290 lbs./acre = 2.0 particles per sq. in.

The matrix shown below demonstrates a dramatic increase in particle coverage (PPSI) by using smaller particle products versus increasing the rate (lbs.) of a larger particle product.

POUNDS/ACRE	Particles Per Square Inch Matrix									
	SGN 20-5-20 Fertilizer with 6% Nutrients					SGN 15-5-10 Fertilizer				
	80	100	125	150	175	215	240	300	300	300
100	15.0	7.7	3.9	2.3	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.3		
125	18.7	9.6	4.9	2.8	1.8	1.0	0.7	0.4		
150	22.5	11.5	5.9	3.4	2.1	1.2	0.8	0.4		
175	26.2	13.4	6.9	4.0	2.5	1.4	1.0	0.5		
200	30.0	15.4	7.9	4.5	2.9	1.5	1.1	0.6		
225	33.7	17.3	8.8	5.1	3.2	1.7	1.2	0.6		
250	37.5	19.2	9.8	5.7	3.6	1.9	1.4	0.7		
300	45.0	23.0	11.8	6.8	4.3	2.3	1.7	0.9		


Avg. SG (g/ml) = 1.8

The illustration below shows the effect of using a non-uniform fertilizer product. Note the severe skewing and banding of different nutrients.


Uniform Particle Distribution
Spreadability: Particle Flight

Varying particle sizes and density cause irregular ballistic behavior resulting in inconsistent delivery of product.

Non-uniform




Uniform Blend



"Get the Andersons small or midsize particle advantage"

- Andersons small and mid-size fertilizer blends provide a uniform application of nutrients across the entire spreader swath.
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