

NMCB 74 Dedicates New Camp to Fallen Seabee

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On Dec. 21, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 held a dedication ceremony for their new camp, Camp Krutke, on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. The camp was dedicated in honor of a gunner's mate killed while on deployment with NMCB 74 in March, 2007.

"Today we mark the next chapter of Seabee history here in southern Afghanistan with the dedication of Camp Krutke. GM2 Jared Krutke was a gunner's mate in NMCB 74 when he was killed in March 2007, while performing his duties at the Seabee Armory on board Camp Covington on Guam. I never personally had the privilege of meeting Petty Officer Krutke, but I've been told by those that knew him that he was the best friend you could ask for; a true friend the would give you the shirt of his back to help a shipmate," said Cmdr. Bruce Nevel, NMCB 74's commanding officer.

The camp was built on 21 acres in Helmand Province, and will be the home of all future Seabee battalions deployed to Camp Leatherneck in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Presently it serves as NMCB 74's main body site and operations center, supporting Camp Leatherneck and the battalion's numerous detachments throughout southern Afghanistan.

During his speech, Nevel expressed pleasure with his battalion's accomplishments since turning over with NMCB 5 in mid-Aug. Upon arrival to Camp Leatherneck the battalions were operating from Camp Natasha, one quarter the size of Camp Krutke, and three miles of berm had to be built before it was safe to move a military unit into the expansion area where the new camp was built.

"Seventy four arrived in theater in Aug., 2009, and immediately took over where Five left off. Not long after checking on board, 74 was tasked with expanding Camp Leatherneck, and the 650 acres that we are standing on, that you see all around you, was created by early Oct. Not long afterward, 74 was given the order to relocate from Camp Natasha onto the expansion area. In true Seabee 'Can Do' fashion, Seabees rallied and designed, built and moved from Camp Natasha to Camp Krutke using all hands available, including the Doc, Dent, Chaplain, Admin, Supply, the Armory; literally everybody working in the camp (Natash) contributed to moving to this camp," said Nevel.

The camp, built ahead of the president's planned 30,000-troop surge, will allow the Marine's deployed to southern Afghanistan to more efficiently complete their mission. Forward deployed construction battalion's have historically worked ahead of their Marine Corp and Air Force counterparts, constructing bases and airstrips in hostile environments.

"The Navy-Marine Corp-Seabee relationship goes back many, many years. Every time I'm around Seabees, and I've been around them for 30 years, I continue to learn new things about them, and I continue to be impressed by the 'Can Do' attitude-'Can-Do' spirit of this organization," said Brig. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, Marine Expeditionary

Brigade-Afghanistan's commanding general and dedication ceremony guest speaker. "I am proud of each and every one of you, your contributions here to this fight, your contributions to making life more manageable, and certainly more survivable for the marines, sailors, soldiers and civilians that call Camp Leatherneck home."

Camp Krutke was built from the ground up by the Seabees of NMCB 74, and will remain a primary contributor to Camp Leatherneck and outlying areas as long as military members are deployed to southern Afghanistan. Culminating his speech, Nevel boasted of the camp's quality and place among Seabee camps around the globe.

"I am extremely proud of this camp. It was truly designed and built by all hands in the battalion, and it is definitely the best NCF (Naval Construction Force) contingency camp in the world today. I am also confident that Petty Officer Krutke would be proud of this camp and the manner in which it was built," said Nevel.