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# Local Seabee killed in Guam

By **Eric Litke**  
*Sheboygan Press staff*

A U.S. Navy Seabee from Sheboygan died Wednesday at a Navy base in Guam after being shot by a member of his own unit who is now in custody, the Navy said Friday.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jared Krutke, 24, was killed at Camp Covington on the U.S. territory in the Western Pacific, according to Navy spokeswoman Kyra Hawn. He leaves behind a wife and 18-month-old daughter.

While the Navy would not say if the shooting was accidental or intentional, Hawn said the shooter, a 23-year-old man, is in custody in Guam while the Naval Criminal Investigative Service looks into the incident. A second Seabee critically wounded in the shooting, a 20-year-old man, is now in stable condition and expected to recover, Hawn said.

The shootings occurred at 5:20 p.m. Wednesday, Central time — 8:20 a.m. Thursday in Guam — near the unit armory where Krutke worked, Hawn said.

In a written release, the Navy said it is committed to "thoroughly investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident and pursuing subsequent disciplinary action and legal charges as deemed appropriate."

For now, details are scarce even for family members, who say Krutke's death has yet to hit home.

"It doesn't exactly feel like he's gone because he's been on deployment," said his wife, Nicole Krutke, 22, who hasn't seen her husband since October, when he left his Gulfport, Miss., base for Guam.

Nicole Krutke, who is living in an off-base apartment in Gulfport, said in a telephone interview Friday that she was relieved when he was deployed to Guam because many in his unit were sent to Iraq. Then came the Wednesday night phone call.

"I was shocked," she said. "I didn't quite understand how it could be possible. ... Everyone thinks of Guam as a tropical paradise, not a war zone."



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Petty officer 2nd Class Jared Krutke is pictured with his wife, Nicole, and daughter, now 18 months old, the day he was deployed to Guam in October. The U.S. Navy said Friday that Krutke was killed on base by another member of his unit. Photo courtesy of Nicole Krutke

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Nicole said she met Krutke while both were attending Sheboygan County Christian High School, which he graduated from in 2001 just prior to joining the Navy. The two were married in December 2002.

Krutke's mother, Jackie Walston of Sheboygan, said her son was following in the footsteps of his father, uncle and grandfather, who all served in the Army or Navy.

"He just knew that's what he wanted to do," she said.

The Sheboygan pastor who officiated the Krutke's wedding said Friday that the soldier was "just a very kind and gentle guy."

He was "one of these guys where you meet him and (because of) his gladness and his joy, you almost at first wonder if it's real. It's so out there," said Jon MacDonald, pastor of student ministries at Evangelical Free Church. "Life was simple for him. It was, 'Do the right thing,'"

MacDonald said Krutke will be remembered in memorial services at his church in Guam on Sunday and at the Guam base on Monday. He will be buried in Sheboygan County.

Krutke was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 as a gunner's mate and was responsible for maintaining the inventory and upkeep of weapons at the unit's armory, Hawn said. The unit is part of the construction battalion of the Navy, responsible for building base facilities and conducting defensive operations.

Walston said her son was "a very caring, loving man that would do anything for anybody" — character traits she said his friends spoke of frequently while calling her Thursday and Friday — but one aspect of his character stood out above the rest.

"He put God first in his life," she said. "The comfort that I'm getting now is knowing that I'll see him again."

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




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