MARINE

The incident occurred on April 17, 1996, during Joint Exercise 'Arctic Care' 95' in Kotzebue, Alaska, just above the arctic circle. 'We would take Air Force and Navy doctors and dentists out into Eskimo villages,' said Kreft, the operations chief.

The day of the crash, Kreft was in a restaurant almost a mile away. 'An Eskimo came in and said,' There was an airplane crash out There was an airplane crash out there, We ran out. There was ice and deep snow. I was not the first out there. All the Marines and out there. All the Marines and Army guys beat me out there. The engine was laying in a pool of gasoline and it was boiling. The pilot was upside down and they all thought the pilot was dead.
"They yelled, 'Get back. The plane is going to blow up." I could see, that even though the had most of his face ripped off, his heart was still beating."

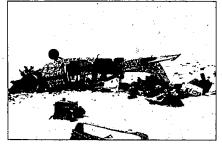
sed, into event mogni fie had myss
sed his face ripped off, his heart was
still beating.

The civilian pilot broke both his
arms, legs and back. He was delivering groceries and bingo cards.
He crushed shortly after takeoff
during a whitteout condition.
Kreft uses both the term Eskimos
and the more politically correct
limits interchangeably. They don't
have a preference, he said.

I was like an area expert up
there. Kreft said. He retired in
1998. He worked in Alaska off and
on for two years.

A COLONEL ACTS

After an investigation and time lost with personnel retirements and transfers, combined with stops and starts, the final paperwork which got screwed up in the shuffle was finally completed six years after the



The wreckage of a Cessna 207 that crashed a mile offshore of Kotzebue, Alaska, in 1996. Master Sergeant Kenneth Kreft was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for risking his life to save the pilot.

for risking his life to save the pilot.

lifesaxing episode, Kreft said.
Retired Col. John Church finalized
and validated the paper work,
which took a year after he heard
Cathy Kreft's story about her husband. Church presented the Navy
and Marine Corps Medal July 20 to
Kreft at Selfridge Air Force Base.
In a July 22 telephone interview,
Church was incredulous. "I ean't
believe he wasn't recognized for
this heroic deed," he said.
The pilot's seat had been partially
orn loose from its mounts and was
actually pinning the pilot in place.
Realizing time was crucial, Kreft
ordered another Marine to get necessary transportation while
instructing others on the quickest
and most efficient method of
removing the obstacles that prevented the extrication.

While guiding the rescue process,
the continuously provided works of
encouragement as he accompanied
the pilot to the hospital.
About a year after the crash,

About a year after the crash,

Kreft saw Nelson in a restaurant. He remembered nothing, including the crash. "I said, 'Hey, Jonathan. How are you doing? I was one of the guys who pulled you out," Kreft said.

HIGHEST AWARD

"It's the highest award you can get during peace time," said Cathy Kreft, 40. Cathy later Joined the Marine reserves and was a chief warrant officer.

"We were married for six years before she joined," Ken said. 'She asked me so many questions! said, 'Just join."

"The Krefts have resided in Farmington Hills for 22 years and have a son, Ken, 28, a house painter in Boston.

They own Ken Kreft Development & Construction Co. in Farmington.

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Kreft learned Inuit culture

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER

Kenneth Kreft, a Farmington Hills resident who served in the Marines, knows the Alaskan Inuit culture well. Kreft said they aren't bothered being called Eskimos though others prefer the Inuit reference, which is more accurate and politically correct. "The Marines were in the arctic specifically to establish a military rapport with the Inuits, Kreft said. Villages are made up of a few hundred to a few thousand people. "We burfed an Eskimo one time, Kreft said. "When somebody dies, it's a weekly party with lots of food." The older men build the easket, the younger men dig the hole and the women cook.

"They have no fresh vegetables or fruit," Kreft said. "You see nothing

green."
Kreft calls them "great people, very

Kreft caits them great propose, or friendly.

"When you arrive in an Eskimo village, you're there, 'Kreft said. "There are no cars, no hotels, nothing, If you don't know where to go, you'll freeze to death." His friendships insured both introductions to the elders and places to

ductions to the elders and places to sleep.
"Every village has a clinicatur by village people," Kreft said.
While minus 80 degrees feels "really" cold, minus 40 degrees fields to him.
"We worked outside, stayed outside, be said. "It's a dry cold."
Late May to early August the sun is up all the time and it doesn't get dark, he said.

said.

The people don't have running water in their houses. "Nobody has running water," Kreft said. "The schools have

running water. Nobody has flush tollets. Nobody has washing machines and their clothes are dirty. It's a whole other world, another culture.

There's public showers because white people want them, he said. "It will cost you two bucks to take a shower in a shower house which is connected to the school in some villages," Kreft said. "We would go into the schools to shower.

When the weather warms Inuits go to the river to hathe. "Nine months out of the year, they don't take showers. Most clothes are animal hides and skins." Suicides are somewhat common and accepted, Kreft said. "People are very callous of suicide."

He recalled a kid standing on a bridge preparing to jump to his death on ice.

preparing to jump to his death on ice. Kreft was with some school teachers. They told him kids do this all the time. They didn't want me to get involved,

Kreft said.
He blames suicides partially on TV.
Their views of the mainland are based
on TV. "They can see what they don't
have," he said. "They want what we

have.

The young Inuits who know everyone in their villages think residents in the mainland states know everybody, including movie stars.

They are dry, there is no alcohol, Kreft said. "Kids will sniff a lot of gaso-

Kreft said. 'Kids will sniff a lot of gaso-line. I would put on my uniform and talk to the kids about choices. We'd go from village to village. One year we brought a female Marine so girls could see they could join the Marines.' In one ommunity, all loaded guns hung outside homes. 'If you bring them inside, the condensation would rust them out.' Kreft said. 'Outside they stay frozen. Can you imagine that in this community?'

VETO

FROM PAGE AT

half million and that's unacceptable. We hope the full Legislature will take action to override the actions of this

action to override the actions of this governor.
Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates said she was 'terribly distressed' by the announcement, '1'ts outrageous' Bates said, estimating that budget cuts for Farmington Hills would be about \$180,000 to \$200,000.
'As mayor of the largest city in Oakland County, I'm looking forward to a time when the person in the gov-

ernor's office is less hostile to local government and much more interested in a style of leadership that relies on ecoperation, honest discussion and honorable negotiation to resolve differences and to better serve our community constituents, 'she said, According to Bates, her office has already been in contact with state senators and representatives who she said 'have pledged to help us.'

When Congress goes back to session in the middle of August, Bates and, 'there will be a whole lot of people there,' lobbying against these reductions.

She also mentioned possible bills ernor's office is less hostile to local

that might be introduced to reinstate

"We're not going to be quite about this," she said. "This last hit from the governor's office cannot stand - it just

Engler is acting prematurely,

Lamboff said.
He referenced a letter sent Friday
by Gilda Jacobs, Democratic Floor
Leader for the House of
Representatives, to local officials. She
described Engler's actions as "absurd"
and blackmaic and blackmaic included very difficult negotiations with the Governor
to bulance next year's budget without

cutting revenue sharing, I was shocked and angry at his actions," Jacobs wrote. "The Governor's veto is politics at its worst. What ever the merits of the ballot proposals, local governments can't control the state's

voters.

*Instead of threatening public safety by cutting funds for police officers
and firefighters, she stated, *the
Governor abould make his case
against the proposals with the voters.

The Governor claims that his veto
was necessary because of the potential impact of three proposal that voters will decide in November.

None of them would affect revenue

sharing. As a matter of fact, the third proposal would actually save the state money by shifting resources from prisons to treatment programs." risons to treatment programs." Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell

Farmington Mayor Jim Mitcheu also reacted.

The state seems to want to try to balance its budget by taking away revenue sharing. Mitchell said. It's hard to deal with the thought process states go through. We've established our budget.'

He pointed out that the city took cuts in revenue sharing over several years.

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