



Thomas Howard Kistler
Polk County Fire District #1
Date of Death: March 19, 2003

Captain Kistler was the front seat passenger in an engine company. The engine was enroute to a hazardous materials drill without siren or emergency lights. As a car approached from the opposite direction on a narrow road, the right rear wheels of the engine left the paved surface of the road and dropped into a ditch.

The driver was unable to steer the engine out of the ditch and traveled a total of approximately 165 feet before crashing into a tree. The apparatus struck the tree directly in front of Captain Kistler's seated position. The driver and a passenger from the rear of the cab were unhurt and began to assess the injuries to Captain Kistler. He was found to be breathing but unresponsive and was trapped in the cab. After approximately 1-1/2 hours, Captain Kistler was removed from the cab and pronounced dead at the scene. The extrication was made more difficult by the tree, equipment malfunctions, and the structure of the apparatus cab.

