

Rod's Story

I am a prime example of what the WNAA stands for. It saves lives!
Nearly five years ago on the 28th October 2005, I was involved in a horrific explosion at my one-man motor engineering business in Market Harborough.

I was cleaning up, ready for a week off, and I noticed that the heating oil tank was leaking. I thought if the oil leaks into the river, the Water Board would not be happy. I decided to weld it – Big mistake!

It exploded in my face. The oil set me on fire and the blast nearly blew off my lower left leg. I was taken to Kettering by road, where they said the outlook was not good. They stabilised me and decided to get me to Selly Oak Burns Unit where they could cope with my injuries. I had to get there quick!

The WNAA did this. It only took 12 minutes. If accident victims like me can get to hospital within the Golden Hour, they stand a much better chance of survival. By road, it would have taken 1½ hours and I would not be alive now.

I suffered 51% burns and, aged 53 at the time, the Plastic Surgeon only gave me a 50/50 chance. I was fit and I proved them wrong, with the support of my wife, Susan.

How did I get involved with the WNAA? After 6 weeks in Intensive Care, 10 skin grafts and my leg rebuilt by an Army surgeon, I was back on the Ward. Christmas was coming up and in the village of Ashley, we have a Christmas get-together to raise money for the Church and the village hall. Susan suggested the WNAA that year and everyone agreed. They raised £3000.

I was in hospital for the next two months and from my ward window, I could see Air Ambulances from all counties flying in. I decided to do something to help this wonderful and much needed service. I became a Volunteer Fundraiser.

I wrote a limerick called 'Life Saver':
Our Whirly Bird in the sky
Made sure that our Rod didn't die
It took him to Brum
Where the prospect was glum
The question, as always, is why?

There are lots of reasons why I survived:
Family, friends, but also it has given me the time and the privilege to help raise funds in my area for this self-financing ambulance service. Recently, the WNAA flew its 8000th mission and that is a lot of lives saved. So I ask you to support this service too because you yourself never know what's around the corner.

Rod Martin
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