

Man Impaled by Steel Pipe Saved by Rescue Team

The night of July 11, 1999 started out like any other for Partizansk, Russia, native Evgeny Skorenko. The 45-year-old machinist was driving home to his wife and two sons when, as he explains it, “All of a sudden, another car darted into my lane . . . I think he was trying to avoid a pothole. He was coming straight at me and his lights were blinding.” Evgeny was forced to swerve off the road to avoid the speeding vehicle. “The next thing I remember is the crash. Then a young couple came up to the window asking if I needed an ambulance. I said I did, so they ran off to phone for one at a nearby clothing factory.”

Still dazed from the impact, Evgeny tried to get out of his car, but couldn't seem to move. Looking down he discovered the horrifying reason why—his automobile had collided with an improvised guide rail made from a huge, discarded mining drill and the sharp steel spike had pierced his car impaling him to his seat. “I saw the metal boring pipe where it went into my stomach—thank God it missed my spine—and I noticed that my intestines were spilling out of the wound and onto the floor in front of me, so I leaned down and gathered them into a pile as best I could,” he explains matter-of-factly. “Then I waited for help to arrive.” What Evgeny didn't know at the time was that the metal pipe had literally skewered the car like a piece of meat, passing through the front and exiting behind him to stick out nearly two meters at the rear of the vehicle.

The police arrived on the scene first, followed by an ambulance crew. “The doctor gave me an injection and I started fading in and out of consciousness then, but I do remember people talking about how they would get me out of the car, discussing what equipment could be used to cut the metal shaft and how to go about it without making my pain and suffering even worse,” he explains.

Realizing that extracting Evgeny from his car would require more specialized rescue equipment, the dispatcher called the Partizansk Military Mountain Rescue Team to the scene. Highly skilled in the most difficult rescue and recovery operations—the team is routinely sent to rescue miners

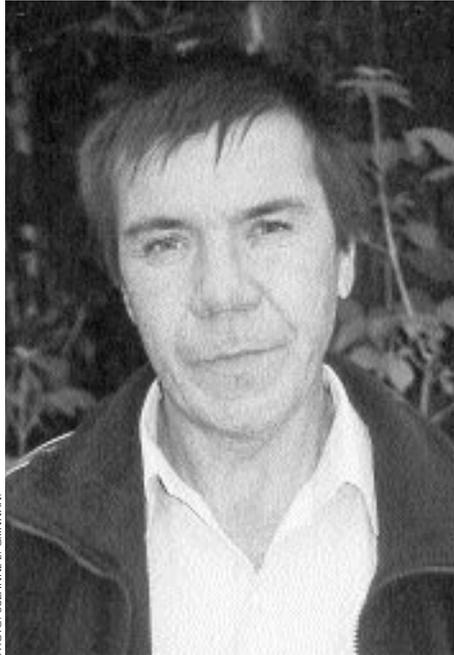


PHOTO: SUZANNE E. GRINNAN

Thanks to the concerted efforts of highly-skilled paramedics and emergency rescue specialists, Evgeny Skorenko survived a devastating automobile accident three years ago.

trapped by an explosion or people stuck in a collapsed building—the crew on duty responded immediately. Working like a finely-tuned instrument, the three-man crew quickly assessed Evgeny's situation and started the task of extricating him from the wreckage, while the ambulance team administered first aid.

With an intravenous drip of analgesics helping him bear the pain and the ambulance crew tending to him, Evgeny steered himself for the worst part—when the Rescue Team had to cut the pipe. “It was very bad then because, as they were cutting the metal, there was inevitably a lot of motion and jarring and I was suffering quite a bit even though the ambulance doctor gave me injections of Novocain to make it less torturous for me,” he acknowledges.

Finally, after two agonizing hours, the rescue workers freed Evgeny and prepared him for transport to the hospital. He spent more than two months in intensive care as the surgeons worked to heal his injuries

When first-responders are called to the scene of an accident, they must be prepared to deal with countless potentially deadly situations. Whether for ambulance crews, rescue teams, or military medical units, AIHA's network of 16 partnership Emergency Medical Services Training Centers (EMSTCs) play a critical role in upgrading the urgent care skills necessary to effectively manage critical situations in the NIS and CEE. This is the story of a Russian man who survived a devastating automobile accident because of the skilled care he received; the story of the rescue team who helped save him is on the other side.

and, three years later, says he feels fine. An avid gardener, he is healthy and limber enough to plant and harvest potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, and eggplant, among other things.

“Thankfully, I don't remember much about the accident,” he states, explaining that he thinks this is his mind's way of coping with the trauma. What he does remember, however, is how the first-responders pulled together to get him out of the car and save his life. “I used to work in a nearby mine, so I knew that these specialized rescue teams existed. What I hadn't realized was that they could be called upon to help in so many other emergency situations. And, I can't thank them—and the others who responded—enough for saving my life.

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