

A TEAM leader is featured in a new book charting the recovery of a patient whose life he helped save more than a decade ago.

Dick Ranshaw was working at Lee station in December 1994 when he went to the aid of Philip Watling, who was involved in a road traffic collision.

The then 23-year-old had just got off a bus and was crossing the road when he was struck by a car, causing his head to be thrown against the side of a bus and leaving him severely injured and brain damaged.

Dick, along with other staff who have since left the Service, treated Philip before he was flown by the air ambulance to the Royal London Hospital.

He was treated for five months and underwent extensive rehabilitation, including having to learn to walk and talk again. Dick, who has been with the Service 33 years and is now based at Greenwich, was recently reunited with Philip.

He said: "I remember getting to the scene and seeing Philip lying on the road. He was in a very serious way and



Team Leader Dick Ranshaw is reunited with Philip Watling

Photo by Tim Saunders

was not expected to live. When I got a letter from him all those years later, I was shocked to say the least."

It was a long road to recovery for Philip and to help with the recuperation he began to write a journal.

Thirteen years on and his memories of the accident and his battle back to health are to be published in a book, which mentions Dick and the team.

Philip, now 37, said: "At first I used a tape recorder but later I was introduced to the computer room and started to type out my thoughts. Years later I was reading it to my family and friends and they were laughing so much and said I should write a book.

"It was very helpful for me and was a way to thank all of the people who helped me, as well as get everything straight in my mind. I did die that day and I feel very lucky that I am here today - I hope the book can help and inspire others."

• The book – *Flight of a Lifetime* published by Athena Press – will be available soon.

Cars get 'black boxes'

AEROPLANE-STYLE 'black boxes' have been installed in new fast response cars to provide better data in the event that they are involved in road traffic collisions.

Incident data recorders are being fitted as part of the Service's motor risk strategy, and can take information from various sources, such as road speed, braking, indicators and blue lights, in the vehicle.

Project Manager Jonathan Nevison said: "Incident data recorders provide a number of benefits to the Service, including protection against malicious insurance claims, identification of future driving training needs, and information

that can be fed back into driver-training programmes.

"Other ambulance and emergency services have already been using the equipment successfully, with some reporting a 20 per cent reduction in road traffic collision rates. Currently, accidents involving Service vehicles cost £950,000 a year, but with this new technology in place we believe this figure should be reduced by £200,000."

So far more than 150 fast response cars have been fitted with black boxes as part of a pilot project. It is planned for the scheme to roll out across the whole A&E fleet in the future.



Philip Watling in hospital in December 1994