

Peter Blanchard

The People & Places Behind Peter's Story:

L2 transport from LincolnHealth Miles Campus Hospital to Maine Medical Center

CommSpec Jason Sanford

Pilot Andrew John

Nurse Barrett Strout

Paramedic Adam Cafro

82-year-old Peter Blanchard started spending summers in Round Pound in 1962, and he expected the summer of 2022 to be no different. Family had gathered at the house to celebrate his wife Sudie's 75th birthday and they were all having "a grand old time" until Peter started to experience intense abdominal pain.

He was taken by ambulance to LincolnHealth Miles Campus Hospital in Damariscotta where the doctors discovered a small bowel obstruction with necrosis. "Peter was already septic and going downhill fast. I thought I was going to be a widow," said Sudie. The doctors performed an emergency colectomy, wrapped Peter in temporary dressings, and called for a LifeFlight helicopter to transport him to Maine Medical Center; he was on the edge of cardiac arrest from multi-organ failure and needed a flying ICU to get him to Portland.

At 82, a colectomy is a major surgery and Sudie remembers the doctors telling her the prognosis was uncertain. Sudie, who is a hospital chaplain, said her strong faith and support from friends and strangers buoyed her spirits. She was particularly touched when she ran into a LifeFlight crew in the hospital cafeteria, including paramedic Adam Cafro, who had transported her husband a few days before. "They were so kind and friendly," she recalls. Peter spent 23 long days in the hospital, taking incremental steps back to good health.

"I think the reason I made it is that all the pieces came together at the right time, including the helicopter," reflected Peter. He laments that he has no memory of the ride because flying in a helicopter is on his bucket list, but he's grateful, nonetheless. Peter and Sudie are now looking forward to celebrating their 50th anniversary together and spending another glorious summer on the coast of Maine.

