



HEROES FOR LIFE™
PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

A HIGHLAND SAVE

In July 2018, Kenneth Cooper was on vacation with a friend, doing something he loved: biking around the Spittal of Glen Muick on the Balmoral Estate in the Cairngorms National Park, Scotland, looking for archeological sites.

As Cooper, 77, descended from the glen and approached the visitor center, he suddenly collapsed, falling from his bike. His friend called for help, and Cairngorms National Park Volunteer Rangers Keira Macfarland and Leo Hunt quickly responded.

“He was lying on the ground against an outdoor bench. Keira tried to get a response, but he was white. He was not responsive, he was not breathing, and I turned to get the AED,” said Leo.

Kenneth was experiencing sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Fortunately, a ZOLL® automated external defibrillator was only a few yards away, where it had been installed on the visitor center wall by the Sandpiper Trust, an organization that works to place AEDs in remote locations.

“I was out looking for signs of illegal whiskey stills. I spent all day walking and cycling, looking for these things, and then, Boom! I actually fell next to the defibrillator,” said Kenneth.

“The AED was so helpful; it confirmed that we had the right diagnosis. It gave me a lot of confidence,” Keira said.

Teamwork Results in a Successful Remote-Location Rescue

Ten miles from the nearest town and up a one-lane access road, Kenneth was far from traditional emergency services. While Balmoral staff member Sonja Hastie, called emergency 999, Keira applied the AED to Kenneth. The device recommended a shock, which she administered. After the shock, Keira continued with CPR, and on the next heart analysis the AED advised another shock. By this point, a group of doctors who were hiking the trail had stopped to help and took over Kenneth’s care.



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*– Keira Macfarland
Volunteer Park Ranger*



“One of the doctors found a weak pulse after the second shock, and they moved him to a recovery position. At that point, we could see he was breathing. It was superb,” recalled Leo.

Sonja’s call for emergency transportation was answered in the form of a helicopter, a Scottish Charity Air Ambulance. A mere 15 minutes after his collapse, Kenneth was airlifted to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, where he woke up four days later.

Reconnecting with his Heroes

One month after his SCA and now fitted with an internal defibrillator, Kenneth made the trip back to Glen Muick to meet and thank his rescuers.

“It was good fun,” says Kenneth, although he notes, “There are no adequate words to say to someone who saved your life.” He could not express enough gratitude for the amazing team effort led by Keira and Leo, whose training clearly paid off.



Kenneth Cooper holds a life-saving AED with Volunteer Rangers Keira Macfarland and Leo Hunt.

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– Kenneth Cooper

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Keira was touched by the meeting as well. “It was a special moment. There were a lot of other people there, but for myself and my colleague, it was quite emotional.”

Since his SCA, Kenneth and his family have worked to spread the word on the importance of having AEDs in remote areas like as Glen Muick.

“I would tell anybody, if they get a chance, to support [installing] more defibrillators. I wouldn’t be here without that thing. Support these charities that do good work; give something back to the system that saved your life.”

In recognition of sharing his story and advocacy for AEDs, the ZOLL Heroes for Life Program, will be donating a ZOLL AED to the Sandpiper Trust on Kenneth’s behalf.