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# British Cave Rescue Council

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Gallantry Medals and Honours following the Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand in June/July 2018

The British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) is delighted to learn of the following awards in the New Year's Honours list.

Rick Stanton MBE	George Medal
John Volanthen	George Medal
Chris Jewell	Queen's Gallantry Medal
Jason Mallinson	Queen's Gallantry Medal
Josh Bratchley	Member of the Order of the British Empire
Connor Roe	Member of the Order of the British Empire
Vernon Unsworth	Member of the Order of the British Empire

All were members of a BCRC cave diving rescue team who went to North Thailand in June 2018 to assist in the search for twelve boys and their football coach who were missing beyond floods in the Tham Luang cave.

In a hazardous operation over several days members of the BCRC team made repeated dives far into the cave in very difficult and challenging conditions. The boys were found alive by two of the team marooned on a ledge in a chamber about 2300 metres from the cave entrance. Supplies were dived through to the boys whilst various rescue options were considered. It was eventually concluded by the Thai authorities that diving the boys out was their only hope of survival. With Australian and other cave divers the BCRC team devised a rescue plan which was then implemented over a three day period with the last of the boys being dived out to safety on 10 July some eighteen days after entering the cave.

This search and rescue was an extraordinary and unprecedented operation. There has been nothing quite like it before. The BCRC is proud of the critical role its team played in the operation. It is full of admiration for the courage and dedication of the individuals involved and pleased that their contributions have received well deserved national recognition.

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### British Cave Rescue Council – explanatory note.

The British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) is the national representative and co-ordinating body for underground search and rescue. Searches and rescues underground in the British Isles are carried out by the Council's fifteen member teams who each provide cover for a particular geographical area. The Council is not itself an operational body. However, on rare occasions like the Tham Luang incident a specialist team of experts has to be drawn together from around the network, sent abroad and supported there. The Council does then form a special operational unit to run and support the operation.

All involved with the BCRC from national officers to the newest recruit on a team is an unpaid volunteer. All are experienced cavers whose sport is cave exploration. The cave rescue service is supported by the other national caving organisations such as the British Caving Association and the Cave Diving Group and it relies on successive generations of cavers volunteering to serve on its teams and help to raise funds. In effect, the caving world provides its own specialist rescue service but also one willing and capable to go to the assistance of anybody in trouble underground either at home, or when needed, abroad. For more information please see [www.caverescue.org.uk](http://www.caverescue.org.uk).

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Questions on this press release or for further information on the BCRC or cave rescue may be addressed to the following BCRC officers:

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Vice chairman : Bill Whitehouse MBE. 01298.871661 or 07836.593677

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