

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London SW1

29 December 2018

THE QUEEN has been graciously pleased, to approve the following awards of The George Medal and The Queen's Gallantry Medal and for publication in the London Gazette of the names of those shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for Bravery:

GEORGE MEDAL

G.M.

Richard STANTON, M.B.E.

Thai Cave Rescue 26 June – 11 July 2018

Richard Stanton arrived in Thailand on 26 June at the request of the Thai authorities to help attempt the rescue of 12 junior footballers and their coach, who had been lost in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave complex in Chiang Rai Province since 23 June. Over the next three weeks he played a critical leading role in both the planning and execution of the rescue mission. His first significant contribution, on 28 June, was his reconnaissance dive upstream with John Volanthen through three completely flooded sections of passage to what later was designated as chamber 3. Here they assisted four Thai rescue workers who had been cut off by the rising water levels, which continued to rise.

Further exploration on 29 and 30 June had to be abandoned at chamber 3 as a result of strong water currents and poor visibility of around a metre. On 1 July, Volanthen and Stanton were able to travel 800 metres beyond chamber 3 to lay out guidelines; previous efforts by Thai Navy Seals had reached only 250 metres beyond chamber 3. The terrain was uneven and there were numerous blockages and obstructions to navigate. On 2 July, having reached 1500 metres beyond chamber 3, they surfaced to find the football team marooned on a ledge above the water.

Over the following days, Stanton participated in a number of dives to take supplies to the boys. Each trip was carried out in exceedingly difficult physical conditions, with a high degree of personal risk. The level of risk in reaching this far into the cave complex was underlined by the death on 6 July of a Thai Navy Seal, himself a professional diver, who was helping to supply oxygen to the children. Stanton then helped to lead formulation of a plan to rescue the team through diving. The Thai authorities preferred a non-diving option, but taking action was made more urgent as a result of forecast monsoon rains which might prevent any rescue effort or cause the boys to drown before a rescue could be attempted. As a result, a British-led plan was put into action between 8-10 July.

He was a leading member of thirteen divers and a group of Navy Seals who coordinated the rescue operation, bringing out the sedated boys one by one through to chamber 3 where an American medical team took over. The difficulty of the operation was heightened by the youth and physical condition of the children which required them to be sedated and immobilised, and then guided out by their diver through a route of multiple obstacles. Each journey took seven hours through the cave system and divers had to be taught to medically re-sedate the boys during the operation. The entire operation was carried out under the threat of monsoon rains and towards the end of the rescue, water levels began to rise, forcing a rapid exit by rescuers. In an operation of unprecedented complexity, all 13 of the trapped people were successfully rescued.

John VOLANTHEN

Thai Cave Rescue 26 June – 11 July 2018

John Volanthen arrived in Thailand on 26 June at the request of the Thai authorities to help attempt the rescue of 12 junior footballers and their coach, who had been lost in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave complex in Chiang Rai Province since 23 June. His first significant contribution, on 28 June, was his reconnaissance dive upstream with John Volanthen through three completely flooded sections of passage to what later was designated as chamber 3. Here they assisted four Thai rescue workers who had been cut off by the rising water levels, which continued to rise.

Further exploration on 29 and 30 June had to be abandoned at chamber 3 as a result of strong water currents and poor visibility of around a metre. On 1 July, Volanthen and Stanton were able to travel 800 metres beyond chamber 3 to lay out guidelines; previous efforts by Thai Navy Seals had reached only 250 metres beyond chamber 3. The terrain was uneven and there were numerous blockages and obstructions to navigate. On 2 July, having reached 1500 metres beyond chamber 3, they surfaced to find the football team marooned on a ledge above the water.

Over the following days, Volanthen participated in a number of dives to take supplies to the boys. Each trip was carried out in exceedingly difficult physical conditions, with a high degree of personal risk. The level of risk in reaching this far into the cave complex was underlined by the death on 6 July of a Thai Navy Seal, himself a professional diver, who was helping to supply oxygen to the children. Volanthen then helped to lead formulation of a plan to rescue the team through diving. The Thai authorities preferred a non-diving option, but finalising a plan was made more urgent as a result of forecast monsoon rains which might prevent any rescue effort or cause the boys to drown before a rescue could be attempted. As a result, a British-led plan was put into action between 8-10 July.

He was a leading member of thirteen divers and a group of Navy Seals who coordinated the rescue operation, bringing out the sedated boys one by one through to chamber 3 where an American medical team took over. The difficulty of the operation was heightened by the youth and physical condition of the children which required them to be sedated and immobilised, and then guided out by their diver through a route of multiple obstacles. Each journey took seven hours through the cave system and divers had to be taught to medically re-sedate the boys during the operation. The entire operation was carried out under the threat of monsoon rains and towards the end of the rescue, water levels began to rise, forcing a rapid exit by rescuers. In an operation of unprecedented complexity, all 13 of the trapped people were successfully rescued, in addition to the four divers he rescued on 28 June.