



Government House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
24 July 2018

AUSTRALIAN HONOURS

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following Australian Honours in connection with the Tham Luang cave rescue operation in Northern Thailand, from 30 June 2018 to 10 July 2018.

AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY DECORATIONS

STAR OF COURAGE (SC)

(For acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril)

Dr Craig Challen
GNANGARA WA 6077

Dr Richard Harris
TOORAK GARDENS SA 5065

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

(For acts of bravery in hazardous circumstances)

Senior Constable Justin John Bateman
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

**Leading Senior Constable Kelly Craig
Boers**
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

**Detective Leading Senior Constable
Benjamin Walter Cox**
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

Chief Petty Officer Troy Matthew Eather
Royal Australian Navy, Specialist Liaison
Officer, Clearance Diving Team

**First Constable Matthew Peter
Fitzgerald**
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

**Acting Station Sergeant Robert Michael
James**
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

**Detective Leading Senior Constable
Christopher John Markcrow**
Australian Federal Police Special
Response Group

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)

For service to the international community through specialist response roles during the Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand in 2018.

Senior Constable Justin John Bateman

**Leading Senior Constable Kelly Craig
Boers**

Dr Craig Challen

**Detective Leading Senior Constable
Benjamin Walter Cox**

Chief Petty Officer Troy Matthew Eather

**First Constable Matthew Peter
Fitzgerald**

Dr Richard Harris

**Acting Station Sergeant Robert Michael
James**

**Detective Leading Senior Constable
Christopher John Markcrow**

By His Excellency's Command

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Fraser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'M'.

Mark Fraser LVO OAM

Official Secretary to the Governor-
General

STAR OF COURAGE (SC)

Between 6 July and 10 July 2018, Dr Craig Challen and Dr Richard Harris were involved in the rescue of 12 young boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave in the Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand.

On 23 June 2018, 12 young boys and their soccer coach became trapped in the 9.6km long Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand. On 25 June, Thai Navy Seal divers entered the complex and began the search for the boys and their coach but were forced back by rising water.

On 27 June, the Prime Minister of Thailand sought international assistance and an Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group arrived on the scene to search for the missing group. They were later joined by an Australian Defence Force Clearance Diver. On 2 July, two members of a British expedition located the boys and their coach.

Dr Harris, an anaesthetist and member of the Australian Medical Assistance Team, and his dive partner, Dr Craig Challen arrived at the scene on 6 July, and the next day they entered the cave system and reached the boys and their coach.

Dr Harris conducted initial medical assessments and was able to provide information to the awaiting authorities regarding the safest extraction methods. The rescue mission was hazardous, with poor or zero visibility, debris and constrictive passageways, variable air quality, and made more difficult with further rainfalls predicted.

The order of evacuation was decided, and on 8 July Dr Harris again entered the cave system, reached the boys and provided medical support for the extraction of the first four boys.

Dr Challen assisted to de-kit the boys of their diving equipment in one section of the evacuation route. The boys were then transferred from harnesses to stretchers and carried to the next section where they were re-kitted and prepared for the next dive.

This procedure was repeated until the boys reached Chamber Three, where they were assessed before being taken to a nearby field hospital.

During the extractions, Dr Challen stayed inside the cave system and Dr Harris remained in Chamber Nine with the coach and boys. The extraction process was repeated on 9 July with Dr Harris and Dr Challen performing the same duties, resulting in four more boys being safely extracted from the cave.

On 10 July, the final four boys and their coach were extracted using the same method.

By his actions, Dr Craig Challen displayed conspicuous courage.

By his actions, Dr Richard Harris displayed conspicuous courage.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Between 30 June and 10 July 2018, members of the Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group and the Australian Defence Force were involved in the search and rescue of 12 young boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave in the Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand.

On 23 June 2018, 12 young boys and their soccer coach became trapped in the 9.6km long Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand. On 25 June, Thai Navy Seal divers entered the complex and began the search for the boys and their coach but were forced back by rising water.

On 27 June, the Prime Minister of Thailand sought international assistance, and on 30 June an Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group arrived at the Tham Luang cave system to assist in the search for the boys and their coach. Multiple cave entries and dives were made by the team between 1 July and 6 July to search for the boys and identify forward base locations, to convey oxygen tanks and supplies, and to lay and maintain cabling and pipes to Chamber Three and beyond.

On 2 July, two members of a British expedition located the boys and their coach and after considerable discussion amongst many agencies an extraction plan was formulated and planned for 8, 9 and 10 July.

On each of these days, the Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group and the Australian Defence Force Clearance Diver took their positions throughout the cave system. They worked together to assist in moving the boys through the chambers until the boys were transported to a safer area. The threat of sudden flooding, movement of debris, and deterioration of air quality posed continuous, potentially fatal hazards to all personnel in the cave system.

On 10 July, the final four boys and their coach were safely extracted.

By his actions, Senior Constable Justin John Bateman displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, Leading Senior Constable Kelly Craig Boers displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, Detective Leading Senior Constable Benjamin Walter Cox displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, Chief Petty Officer Troy Matthew Eather displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, First Constable Matthew Peter Fitzgerald displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, Acting Station Sergeant Robert Michael James displayed considerable bravery.

By his actions, Detective Leading Senior Constable Christopher John Markcrow displayed considerable bravery.