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Authors' note: We supplemented our research for the book with a variety of online press reports and videos noted here. However, we found errors and inconsistencies in the press as rescue plans were constantly evolving given ever-changing conditions in the cave. In the case of discrepancies, we relied on Thai journalist and co-author Pathana Sornhiran's translations and on-site reporting as well as consultations with cave divers Chris Jewell and Jason Mallinson, who personally rescued the boys.

## Much of the cave rescue and timeline was recounted on these websites:

Meet the boys and their rescuers: https://infographics.channelnewsasia.com/interactive/thaicaverescueheroes/index.html

Relive the amazing rescue operation: https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/topic/Thailand-cave-rescue

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-13/thai-cave-rescue-tham-luang-extreme-challenges/9985286

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/12/world/asia/thailand-cave-rescue-seals.html

*Out of the Dark*—Behind-the-scenes Australian documentary: https://boingboing.net/2018/07/23/an-hour-long-documentary-on-th.html

"20/20 One Way Out: Thailand Cave Rescue": https://abc.go.com/shows/2020/episode-guide/2018-07/27-072718-one-way-out-thailand-cave-rescue *"Tham Luang Cave Rescue: Against the Elements"* (with English subtitles): <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\_kiX0uUDNI</u>

"Cave Rescue Q&A": https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44799779

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44695232

ABC news interview with Titan: https://abcnews.go.com/international/boy-rescued-thai-soccer-team-happy-home/story?id=56682013

Watch the moment the boys are discovered alive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rc0ztpAqu0

Thai boys' press conference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62TWYuFn6xM

The boys' Buddhist ceremonies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2EjupeY8-Y

Interview with the boys weeks after the rescue: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw0\_5UIFwHA



## More about the Cave Rescue

Most of the facts for the back matter in the book came from Pathana Sornhiran's reporting and the general sources listed above. Additional sources are specifically noted as needed below:

It was Saturday, June 23, 2018, when eleven-year-old Chanin Vibulrungruang, eleven teammates (ages twelve to seventeen), and their twenty-five-year-old coach entered the Tham Luang Nang Non Caves in the northern province of Chiang Rai, Thailand. They intended to explore for only an hour or so. By nightfall, they had not come home. Songpul Kanthawong (age thirteen), a teammate who hadn't had his bike and so was unable to join the trip, told the frantic parents about the caves.

https://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/1502274/wild-boar-we-were-just-going-there-for-anhour

https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/10/brother-ekk-thai-coach-who-put-players-first-rightto-the-end

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/27/world/asia/thailand-cave-soccer-search.html

When Coach Ek realized his team was trapped, he advised the boys to save the batteries in their flashlights ("torches") and led them in prayer and meditation he had learned apprenticing as a Buddhist monk. They spent the next ten days perched on a high ledge deep inside the cave.



On July 2, British cave divers John Volanthen and Rick Stanton, considered among the best in the world, found the boys alive. They were laying guidelines when they came to an air pocket. They surfaced and Stanton smelled the boys before he saw them. There they were, crawling down the sloping ledge toward them.

Now how to get them out? Drilling down into the mountain would take too long; teaching the weakened boys to scuba dive through the treacherous passageways seemed impossible. Some suggested waiting until the rainy season was over in November. That would leave the boys in the caves for four months! In the end, the decreasing level of oxygen in the cave triggered a decision. If it went down to 12 percent, the boys could experience vomiting, loss of consciousness, convulsions, and cardiac arrest.

Sunday, July 8, was declared D-Day. At ten a.m. local time, a team of international divers entered the cave to rescue four boys. The first boy emerged at 5:40 p.m., the second at 5:50 p.m., the third at 7:40 p.m., and the fourth at 7:50 p.m. Ambulances rushed them to helicopters, where they were airlifted to the Chiang Rai Prachanukroh Hospital, thirty-seven miles away. Authorities did not release the names of the four boys, and parents were not yet allowed to visit them. Doctors kept them in quarantine until they made sure the boys had not contracted any infectious diseases from contaminated water or bat droppings inside the cave.

#### Source:

#### https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/thai-cave-rescue-operation-live-blog-10509946

The rescue of the second group of boys would have to wait until morning. The divers were too exhausted to conduct more than one rescue each day.

#### Sources:

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/world/asia/thai-cave-rescue.html

**Diver Chris Jewell** 

On Monday, July 9, four more boys were successfully evacuated in nine hours. Once again, their names were not released.

Titan was evacuated on Tuesday, July 10, with his coach and three remaining teammates. Dr. Harris, and finally four SEALs, including an army doctor, followed. In the end, forty Thai and fifty international divers had been deployed.

#### Sources:

https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/thai-cave-rescue-4-more-boys-evacuated-operationguicker-than-10513488

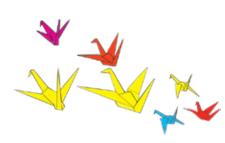
https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/thailand-cave-rescue-thai-boys-day-3-live-blog-10515144?cid=h3\_referral\_inarticlelinks\_24082018\_cna

https://www.businessinsider.com/thai-boys-cave-rescue-first-boys-out-2018-7

https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/thai-cave-rescue-divers-named-2019-australians-of-theyear-20190125-p50tqm.html As rescue operations wound down, there was one last moment of peril. The main pump in the cave malfunctioned and the water level surged, forcing final personnel in the cave to scramble for their lives. All survived.

#### Source:

https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/inside-thai-cave-tham-luang-navy-seals-recountrescue-10521826



In the hospital, the boys recovered for about a week, waving to their parents behind glass windows. A few had suffered minor lung and ear infections, but all emerged healthy for their eagerly awaited news conference on July 18.

After a short time at home, eleven of the boys entered the Buddhist monkhood, living in a temple for nine days to train as novices to honor the memory of Saman Kunan. (Adul did not participate because he is Christian.) Their coach, who had already served as a novice for ten years, was ordained as a monk.

#### Source: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44933744

Today, the boys are back home, going to school and playing soccer. "This experience has made me more patient, stronger, and less easily discouraged," said Titan. Like many of his teammates, Titan now hopes to grow up to be a professional soccer player.

**Sources:** Pathana's translation of boys' press conference: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62TWYuFn6xM</u>

https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/18/thai-cave-rescue-footballers-and-coach-describe-ordeal



**Source:** Pathana's translation of Thai boys' introductions at press conference: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62TWYuFn6xM</u> AP Photo/Vincent Thian

Boys-upper row from left to right: Nickname/Full name: Night/Peerapat Sompiangjai; Nick/Pipat Bodhi; Note/ Prajak Sutham; Mick/Panumas Sangdee; Tie/Nattavut Takhamsong; Pong/Somphong Jaiwong. Boys-front row from left to right: Coach Ek/Ekapol Chanthawong (standing); Tee/ Pornchai Kamluang; Adul/ Adul Sam-on; Titan/Chanin Vibulrungruang; Mark/Monkol Boonpeam; Biw/Ekarat Wongsookchan; Dom/Duangpech Promthep. Note: Thai names can be spelled in different ways when translated into English.

## **Fascinating Facts**



• Four boys missed their birthdays while in the cave: Nick and Night (June 23), Note (July 1), and Dom (July 3).

#### Sources:

http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-07/thai-cave-rescue-boys-write-to-their-parents-with-love2cfood/9953510

https://infographics.channelnewsasia.com/interactive/thaicaverescueheroes/index.html

https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/08/asia/thai-cave-rescue-who-are-boys-intl/index.html

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5973807/Thai-cave-boy-treated-new-phone-birthday-cakebed-day-home.html

• A couple of the boys, including Titan, had cell phones with them, but there was no reception in the cave.

#### Sources:

https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/08/asia/thai-cave-rescue-who-are-boys-intl/index.html https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/12/world/asia/thailand-cave-rescue-seals.html https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5973807/Thai-cave-boy-treated-new-phone-birthday-cakebed-day-home.html

• Coach Ek was orphaned at an early age, losing both his parents and brother to disease. He trained as a monk but left the monastery to care for his ill grandmother.

#### Sources:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-12/thai-cave-rescue-boys-and-coach-profiled/9980632 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-accident-cave-coach/coach-of-rescued-thai-soccerteam-a-country-boy-longing-for-citizenship-idUSKBN1K21H8

• The Wild Boars owe their lives in part to two "Wet Mules"—that's the name of rescuers Dr. Richard Harris and Craig Challen's expert dive group in Australia.

#### Source:

http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-11/thai-cave-rescue-australian-diver-group-wet-mules-members-helped/9981378

• Divers tested masks and wet suits on local schoolchildren in a pool.

#### Source:

https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/11/asia/thai-cave-rescue-full-story-intl/index.html

• Contrary to many news reports, diver Chris Jewell said that the plastic stretchers called Skeds were not used in the underwater sections of the cave rescue. And in the end, one diver (not two as originally planned) accompanied each boy out of the cave to avoid bottlenecks.

#### Sources:

Author interview with diver Chris Jewell

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44695232

• Rescue assistance came from countries around the world, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

## The Wild Boars

The Wild Boars (*Moo Pa* in Thai) got their name in honor of founder Kamol Chanthapoon's family's pig and cattle ranch in 2016. The players (ages eleven to seventeen) go to different schools; no one is turned away from the team, including several boys who are known as "stateless" (not recognized as citizens of any country). Those boys come from neighboring countries near the infamous "Golden Triangle"—a region known for drug smuggling bordering Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.



The boys devote themselves to soccer, and their hard work has paid off. They won a regional tournament in May 2018. Head coach Nopparat Kanthawong hopes to train the boys to play for professional teams.

#### Sources:

https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-thai-soccer-team-20180711-story.html

https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/12/thai-cave-rescue-coach-and-stateless-boys-may-bemade-citizens

### **Stateless No More**

Three of the boys (Pornchai Kamluang, Adul Sam-on, and Monkol Boonpeam) and their coach, Ekapol Chanthawong, were among the estimated 480,000 people regarded as "stateless" ethnic minorities who live around the borders of Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and China. As such, the boys and their coach had few rights in Thailand. They could go to school but could not open bank accounts, get a job, obtain a passport, buy land, marry, or vote legally. On August 8, 2018, the three Wild Boars and their coach were granted Thai citizenship. Now they are free to pursue their dreams and try to be all they want to be.

#### Sources:

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45114355

https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/12/thai-cave-rescue-coach-and-stateless-boys-may-be-made-citizens

https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/09/asia/thai-cave-boys-citizenship-intl/index.html

## Legend of the Tham Luang Nang Non Caves

Many believe that spirits inhabit the caves of Thailand. According to Thai folklore, the spirit of Jao Mae Nang Non (a princess who fell in love with a stableboy) lingers in the cave; she died there mourning her true love after her father killed him. Legend says that water flowing in the cave is her blood and the surrounding mountain is her sleeping body. A shrine to the princess appears near the mouth of the cave. Some suggest it was Coach (and former monk) Ek's prayers to Buddha that stilled the restless spirit and led to the boys' successful escape.

#### Sources:

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http://www.newmandala.org/myth-politics-thailands-cave-rescue-operation/



## Timeline: June to July 2018

Saturday, June 23: Boys enter the cave and become trapped by monsoon rains flooding the tunnels. Parents report them missing. The boys' bicycles are found.

Sunday, June 24: Frantic relatives and local officials gather outside the cave.

Monday, June 25: Thai Navy SEALs begin searching the tunnels.

Tuesday, June 26: Divers reach the T-junction, but rising waters force them to turn back.

Wednesday, June 27: International cave-diving experts join the rescue operation.

Thursday, June 28: Operations are suspended because of floods filling the cave. Drilling begins to try to drain water. Drones look for vents in the mountaintop.

Friday, June 29: Thailand prime minister Prayut Chan-o-cha visits the cave to boost morale and pledge the country's support.

Saturday, June 30: Rains stop and divers swim deeper into the tunnels.

Sunday, July 1: Rescuers set up a relatively dry staging area called Chamber 3. Hundreds of air tanks and other supplies are delivered there.

Monday, July 2: A miracle! Two British cave divers discover the boys alive late Monday evening.

Tuesday, July 3: Divers deliver food, water, blankets, and medicine to the boys as rescuers weigh different plans to get the boys out.

Wednesday, July 4: Divers deliver additional food supplies.

Thursday, July 5: Divers continue to thread guide ropes through the cave and station replacement air tanks along the route. Pumps continue to drain water from the caves.

Friday, July 6: Tragedy strikes. Former elite Navy SEAL diver Saman Kunan dies. Decreasing oxygen levels in the cave and worsening forecasts trigger the decision to get the boys out.

Saturday, July 7: Discussions continue about best possible evacuation strategies. Divers practice rescue techniques in a swimming pool.

Sunday, July 8: D-Day! Expert divers spend eleven hours rescuing the first four boys.

Monday, July 9: Four more boys are rescued.

Tuesday, July 10: The last four boys, including Titan, and their coach are saved!



# Interview with British Divers Chris Jewell and Jason Mallinson

Chris Jewell and Jason Mallinson are part of the "awesome foursome" of divers from the British Cave Rescue Council charged with guiding the sedated boys through the underwater tunnels in the caves. Chris and Jason each conveyed one boy out of the cave each day, as did their fellow divers John Volanthen and Rick Stanton. (Jason also helped evacuate the coach on the final day.) A team of divers

from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, and Thailand provided additional support. I talked with Chris and Jason to understand the special dangers of their mission.

Susan Hood: Had you ever experienced a rescue situation like this before?

Chris Jewell: The situation in the Thai caves was unprecedented. Nothing like this has ever happened before in terms of the distance we had to travel with each of the boys and difficult cave conditions—constricted passages with almost zero visibility in the water. While we are used to getting ourselves through caves like this, bringing another person through this cave was difficult and extremely risky. We never thought we'd have a one hundred percent success rate.

SH: When you first met the boys, did any of them seem worried about making the trip out of the cave?

CJ: No. None of them showed any signs of stress or anxiety. They did everything correctly to help us. They were incredibly brave.

SH: Both you and Jason faced terrifying situations shepherding the last boys out.

CJ: Yes. I was guiding the second-to-last boy out when I lost my grip on the guideline and couldn't find it again. I spent about four minutes in the pitch black searching for it. Finally, I found an electrical cable, but it led me the wrong way, back into the cave. I waited there with the boy until Dr. Harris and Jason came along and helped me find the guide rope again.

Jason Mallinson: The final boy to leave was much smaller than we had expected, and consequently the fullface mask that we had brought for him did not fit his face. It was too big. We spent quite a while trying this mask and a smaller one, which was not as robust. Nevertheless, time was pressing, the rains were getting stronger, and we had to make the critical decision to get him out at that moment, rather than wait another day (or in fact never be able to get back to him). We decided on the smaller mask and took each dive section at a much slower pace. There was little, if any, visibility due to the muddy water. It was a nervous time. I kept his face very close and just below mine, and so if we hit the walls or roof, which was inevitable (due to the poor visibility), my head always hit first, thus protecting his. Despite this, the recovery dive went well. I was relieved to deliver the healthy boy to the medical team about three hours later.

SH: How did you feel when the last boy made it out alive?

CJ: When the last of the boys came out of the water it was a great relief. However, we didn't celebrate until the last of the rescue workers had exited the cave. The rescue was a tremendous international effort where the whole world came together to make this possible. We feel proud to have played our part in this team.

Authors' note: For weeks, the Thai government did not release information about the order in which the boys were rescued. Later reports say it was the team's decision to save members of this last group in this order: Coach Ek, Tee, Titan, Pong, and finally Mark.

## Saman Kunan—A Real-Life Superhero



AP Photo/Vincent Thian

While in the hospital, the boys wept to learn of thirty-eight-year-old Saman Kunan, a former elite Thai Navy SEAL who died around one a.m. on Friday, July 6, 2018, in his effort to rescue them. One of Titan's relatives drew this portrait of him; the boys and their families wrote messages of condolence around it. Titan's family wrote, "Sam is our hero for our family forever. We will not forget." The king of Thailand ordered full honors for Saman's funeral and bestowed upon him the title of lieutenant commander.

#### Sources:

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"Missing Thai Boys Found Alive in Cave after Nine Days," *South China Morning Post*, July 4, 2018, video, <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rc0ztpAqu0</u>.

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Shibani Mahtani and Panaporn Wutwanich, "A miracle, a Science, or What': How the World Came Together to Save 12 Boys Trapped in a Thai Cave," *Washington Post*, July 10, 2018, <u>https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/thai-authorities-prepare-to-rescue-remaining-four-boys-and-their-coach-from-a-flood-ed-cave-as-the-eight-freed-boys-start-laughing-joking-with-doctors/2018/07/10/1af52f52-83b5-11e8-9e06-4db52ac42e05\_story.html.</u>

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