

John Volanthen

World Record-Holding British Cave Diver Who Played a Key Role in the 2018 Tham Luang Thailand Cave Rescue

John Volanthen is a world record-holding British cave diver who has been involved in cave exploration and rescue for more than two decades. He began caving at the age of 14 and has been at the forefront of cave exploration since. In 2018, he played a key role in the Tham Luang Thailand cave rescue and was named one of TIME magazine's "Heroes of the Year." The courageous mission was chronicled in the National Geographic documentary *The Rescue*, as well as the book *Thirteen Lessons That Saved Thirteen Lives: The Thai Cave Rescue* and the critically acclaimed Hollywood film, *Thirteen Lives*, in which Volanthen is played by Colin Farrell.

Volanthen has been involved in exploring and mapping caves throughout the world, often with dive partner Rick Stanton. Volanthen and Stanton attended the Tham Luang incident in Thailand, where the duo were able to locate the missing children — something not even special forces were able to do. They then planned and executed their successful rescue, leading the team two-and-a-half kilometers through the flooded caves. A video of Volanthen and Stanton making initial contact with the team has since gone viral globally. Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#), Volanthen takes his audiences on an unforgettable journey deep into the Tham Luang caves of Thailand as he shares lessons that are key to performing in high-pressure situations and reveals how those principles can be applied by any organization working toward its goals.

In 2004, Volanthen and Stanton set a British record for greatest depth achieved in a British cave, cave diving 76 meters (249 feet) at Wookey Hole in Somerset. Additionally, in 2011, Volanthen, set a world record for longest cave penetration dive, over 10 kilometers in the Pozo Azul cave system in northern Spain, involving a multi-day operation.

Volanthen has designed and built diving equipment for 20 years, adapting units commercially available, and building other equipment to meet the unique requirements of individual caves. Problem solving and 'out of the box' thinking have been pivotal to his success.

In addition to Tham Luang, John has been involved in a number of other search, rescue, and recovery incidents around the world and has been awarded the George Medal for bravery. He is one of only two people to have been awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold medals by the Royal Humane society for his efforts.