

[Page 49 - Eddie Barrington: Early Diving Years](#)ISSUE : [Issue 59](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1992/1/1

Eddie Barrington: Early Diving Years Scuba diver Eddie Barrington has been involved in salvage work and treasure searches, rescues, and the search for bodies. He worked in hopes of saving the Arrow when she struck and spewed oil into Chedabucto Bay, and with his crew found the 18th-century treasure ship Auguste at Dingwall Harbour. But for a start, we talked to him here about his early diving years. First wreck I dove on, I was 12 years old. First one I started to remove scrap brass and copper, that stuff--when I was 16. I had my own vehicle, a van that I bought with the proceeds. (How did you start in diving?) Well, there was a friend of ours that had a cottage next to ours in Ingonish, who did some diving. And a chum of mine and myself used to go along with him. Of course, like all kids, we snorkeled and so on. But this chap came along. The first season, I guess he and his pal, they used to come and we'd help lug their gear to the dive site and so on. Then they'd allow us to use the reserve in their air tanks when they were finished their dive. (What does that mean, "the reserve"?) Well, there were 300 pounds (left) in the tank. In those days the cylinders were charged to about 2500. So it gave us about 7 or 8 minutes of air. In shallow water, splashing around a little bit. Of course, once we started doing that, we were hooked. Then the second season, this chap also bought a tank for his wife, but she didn't dive at all. So we got to share the tank. We'd take equal time each with the second tank. So from then on, we just started acquiring our own equipment. The first regulator I had, we bought at the scrapyard here. The naval base was closing down at Point Edward, and that was the storage for all the Navy diving unit. So a lot of the stuff that was there just simply went to the scrapyard, and we picked up two or three regulators each for a dollar, dollar and a half apiece. (What's a regulator?) Well, the tank regulator that regulates the air flow from the tank to the diver. Feeds it to you at ambient pressure. So we got that. And then a diving suit at the time was about 45-50 dollars. I just bought one a couple weeks ago that was \$1100 today. (When you started--we're talking about what year?) Well-- say 1956, '57, '58. I started when I was 12, and by the time I was 14 I had all my own equipment. So after we swam around and looked at the perch and the seaweed and a few underwater structures and some lobsters and codfish and whatnot, then we started diving on wrecks. We found a wreck just north of Ingonish, was the first one. We of course didn't know anything about it at the time, but I've since researched it. It was a ship called the Averill that went (down) there in 1886. A hundred and two years ago, now, she was wrecked. She had a cargo of steel rails on her, that we found. So we knew where this was. And then I got involved with some of the older divers that had been already out scrapping brass and so on, and realized that there was some value to it. One thing that struck in my mind: We just went out with a small rowboat. We carried it down from the highway to the shore and launched