

# Scuba diver found dead off Salem

QUINCY — The Quincy police dive team last night recovered the body of a 34-year-old scuba diver who apparently ran out of air off Salem yesterday.

Dive team member Tom Lo spotted the body of David Fuller, of Westfield, in 40 feet of water at about 7:10 p.m.

Team chief John Blackadar said Fuller disappeared about 10:30 a.m. after signalling a dive partner that he needed to return to the surface.

Blackadar said Fuller's tank contained about five minutes worth of air when he signalled his partner. Blackadar said the equipment will be analyzed by diving professionals who will prepare a report on the accident.

The Coast Guard searched from the air and at the ocean surface for seven hours before Fuller's body was recovered. The Quincy team relieved at State Police dive team that searched all day.

The Quincy divers had been searching for 10 minutes when Lo made the discovery, Blackadar said.

Blackadar said other searchers may have been looking too far away from the accident scene. He said Fuller's body was found near the vessel he had been diving from.

Fuller was diving near Bakers Island about an eighth of a mile off Salem in an area popular with divers, Blackadar said. Blackadar said he was told Fuller was a new diver.

Coast Guard Lt. Mark Cullinane said Fuller's death remains under investigation.

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## New England News Briefs

### Lack of air may have killed diver

A 37-year-old novice diver, making only his second dive, apparently ran out of air Sunday and died while diving off Bakers Island in Salem Harbor, Coast Guard spokesmen and police said. David R. Fuller, of Southwick, was pulled from a depth of about 40 feet around 7:20 p.m., more than seven hours after fellow divers had reported him missing. John Blackadar, the leader of a dive team from Quincy, said that Fuller had been diving with a buddy when he signaled that he had to surface because his air supply was getting low. Carl McAllister, a master diver from Manchester, Conn., who had been diving near Bakers Island with some friends, said that a preliminary inspection of Fuller's gear by the Coast Guard showed that he was down to 400 pounds of air pressure in his tank. "You start a dive with 3,000 pounds of pressure," McAllister said. "And when you are down to 500 pounds, you surface." McAllister observed that a seasoned diver might be able to make 400 pounds last long enough for a safe ascent, but that novice divers, being less relaxed and thus breathing harder, would probably consume such a marginal air supply very quickly.

## Diver death likely due to inexperience

By JULES CRITTENDEN

A novice diver whose body was found off Salem Sunday apparently panicked when he ran out of air, drowning when he gulped water or exploding his lungs when he held his breath and shot up for air.

David Fuller, 37, of Southwick had only recently been certified as a diver and was making one of his first ocean dives, according to a member of the dive team that found his body.

Fuller and his diving partner were with a group diving for scallops and lobster in 50 to 60 feet of water near Baker's Island, off Salem, at about 10:45 a.m., said John Blackadar, head of the Quincy Police Underwater Recovery Unit.

"The diver indicated to his buddy that he was running low on air and wanted to head back to the boat," Blackadar said. "When the partner turned around again, he (Fuller) was missing."

Divers from the Salem and state police searched the area for several hours before Quincy divers who heard the search on a maritime radio channel arrived. Quincy diver Tommy Lo found the body at 7:10 p.m. when he spotted Fuller's bright neon-green fins through the darkening evening waters.

Blackadar said Fuller's breathing equipment was in working order but his air-tank was empty.

No charges have been filed in the case.

## Diver's body found off Baker Island

Rescuers pulled the body of a diver from North Shore waters off Baker Island near Salem yesterday, authorities said.

The diver was reported missing at 11:56 a.m. after he failed to emerge from a morning recreation expedition.

He was identified as David Fuller, 37, of Southwick.

It was not immediately known what happened on his fatal dive.

Rescuers retrieved the body about 7:30 p.m. after an intense daylong search that started when the man's friends reported him missing, U.S. Coast Guard officials said.

The area off the island is known as a haven for divers in search of lobster, but officials could not say if that is what the man was looking for.