

Bud Nugust wrote about a story he had heard while in Canada concerning a 1967 UFO Incident. After receiving a few very interesting letters lately, as well as my sending in many about the Diving Ops from the past, my mind was jarred about a story being told about just such an incident. I believe it was being told to me by none other than Fred Cox and John Cole. For some strange reason, it never came up again. I thought at the time, that they might simply be trying to fish this Yank into something similar to the old “Three Man Lift”. Is there any such Report still out there, collecting cobwebs someplace?

Andre Desrochers responded that the event occurred before I joined the Unit, but it did happen. An UFO was spotted by people on the Nova Scotia South Shore, who say it crashed on the water near Shag Harbour NS. A Dive Team from the Unit was sent there, but were allegedly told not to comment – so it was reported that nothing was found. I asked some of the Divers who went there about it, but never did receive any answer. Even a local member of the RCMP reported seeing this UFO – very interesting indeed.

Chuck Rolfe emailed Bud to Google *1967 Nova Scotia UFO, Diving Operation*, where he could get all the information about this event, a short summary follows.

On 4 October 1967, at 11:20 PM, many Nova Scotians in the vicinity of Shag Harbour, N.S. saw something strange flying through the sky, with a set of four flashing lights. This approximately 60 Ft long object was seen to descend steeply to land on top of the water, about 900 Ft from the shore, before submerging beneath the surface. Three Mounties of the nearby RCMP Detachment, seeing it on the surface before sinking, sped down to the shoreline to launch a boat to the scene, together with other fishermen’s boats, for a rescue attempt of any survivors. Upon arrival at the crash scene, all that was found was a mysterious yellow foam floating on the surface, which smelled like burnt sulphur, so the search was called off at 3:00 AM. Upon checking with the Rescue Co-ordination Center in Halifax and NORAD Radar, it was ascertained there were no reports of missing aircraft. Canadian Navy Mobile Team Divers from HMCS GRANBY were then called in to do an extensive underwater search for a period of several days around the area of Shag Harbour, but reported that nothing was found. It was reported that at the time of this mysterious event, the height of the Cold War, a Russian Submarine had been in the area.

In 1993, 26 years after the fact, the case was re-opened once more by two Investigators from MUFON(Mutual UFO Network – an international Non-profit Civilian UFO Research Organization)who stated they interviewed many individuals and witnesses of this UFO event, as well as Navy Divers from HMCS GRANBY who were involved, and they discovered some startling information, as the following report states: The object that dove into the waters off Shag Harbour had been tracked, and it had actually travelled underwater for a distance of about 25 miles, to a place called Government Point. In the 1960’s, the U.S. had maintained a small but technically advanced Military Base at Government Point(CFS SHELBURNE), managing a Magnetic Anomaly Detection system(MAD grid)for the purpose of detecting and tracking Submarines in the North Atlantic. The U.S. Military had most definitely detected the object on its sensitive tracking equipment. Naval Vessels were dispatched and positioned over the unidentified object, where it had stopped. After 3 days of no movement, and not knowing exactly what it was, the Military picked up another object moving in, and to the amazement of all those involved, joined the first object on the ocean floor. The speculation at the time, was that the second UFO(I guess officially now an Underwater Flying Object)was there to render aid to the first object. Not fully comprehending what they were dealing with, the Navy vessels held their position over the UFO’s. The Detection Base

however, located a Russian Submarine that had entered Canadian waters to the North, so several vessels had to be pulled off target to sail North to investigate. Under the cover of this new activity on the surface, both UFO's made their move, accelerating underwater toward the Gulf of Maine. The remaining Navy vessels pursued them toward the United States, but the objects continued to distance themselves from their trackers. To the astonishment of the pursuers, both of the objects broke to the surface and shot skyward, to vanish within seconds. According to the two researchers, while these observations were well corroborated by many credible eyewitnesses, these accounts were given "Off the Record" by Military, ex-Military and civilian personnel who fear harassment, ridicule, or loss of Pension. So, as the saying goes, "only the names have been changed to protect the innocent." Clearly, a series of very extraordinary, and still unexplained UFO encounters, involving the Navys' of two countries and NORAD, occurred at Shag Harbour, N.S. on October 4, 1967, and in the following week in the deep waters off the Coast of Maine.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I WOULD TAKE A LARGE GRAIN OF SALT TO BELIEVE THE REPORT BY THE TWO MUFON INVESTIGATORS. UFO ORGANIZATIONS LIKE TO EMBELISH THEIR STORIES IN ORDER TO GET THE CIVILIAN POPULATION INTO A DITHER AND TO GARNER FAVOUR FOR THEIR ORGANIZATION!!! BESIDES, FLYING INTO THE WATER, STAYING UNDERWATER FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN TAKING OFF TO FLY ONCE MORE – THESE TWO GUYS MUST HAVE BEEN HALLUCINATING!

Chuck Wilson wrote to Bud Nuquist that he can google "UFO Shag Harbour", where the story is well documented, with a lot of information about it. The Team of Divers from HMCS GRANBY who went to enjoy all the rough waters, and great seafood from the village of Shag Harbour, consisted of P.O.1 Jim Balmforth, P.O.2 Leo Goneau, Leading Seamen Butch Bouchard, Rick Woods, Ralph Romans and myself, Chuck Wilson. We proceeded out to the dive site onboard the Canadian Coast Guard vessel 101, conducted dives in the general area, locating nothing. After 3 days of diving, two more Divers were sent to assist, Leading Seamen Archie Rose and Joe Paquin, as I recollect. The Coast Guard vessel had to return to harbour, so a local fishing vessel was then utilized by us for a further week of searching, all to no avail as we could not find the source of any foamy stuff on the surface. Nothing on the bottom but sand, rocks and sea creatures like Wolf Eels and lobsters. The media were reporting that the Divers were surfacing and bringing back on board with them some items, then returning back into the water. Unfortunately, they did not understand that we were returning to the boat in order to change empty tanks for full ones, before going back into the water to continue the search. In those days, we could only charge the air tanks to 2200 PSI. When we surfaced, there was another vessel tied up alongside that was full of media photographers and reporters, all clamouring to get our story, and evidence that we were bringing something up from the alleged UFO. After the week was up, the Dive Team returned to HMC GRANBY in Halifax Harbour. The RCMP and locals continued the search after our departure. There were reports that the Navy Divers were interviewed, and some stories abound on what was there in the water, but I for one, was never interviewed by any reporter or investigator from MUFON. Also the tale went around that all Divers involved in the search for this supposed UFO, were dying of some unrelated disease, shortly after returning to their Unit at HMCS GRANBY. The Curly Fenn that MUFON investigators stated they interviewed later on in 1993, would have been the late CPO Guy Fenn, the Operations Chief, and I can only speculate that he was interviewed back at HMCS GRANBY, some 26 years after the event took place!!

Sam Semple then wrote, Willie, you know its funny. Those guys in Shag Harbour who have been promoting the alien thing for the past 47 years, recently wrote a book, where they indicated they had interviewed our RCN Diver, Curly Fenn, and stated that he had been in charge of your team of Navy Divers at the scene!! Thanks for clearing up that he wasn't part of the team.

Roy Busby wrote, in a humorous vein, “Curly Vemb” worked for me for a while during the late 1950’s in YMT 8 Diving Tender. He was a character! To my recollection, he was originally a Norwegian of mixed blood, who was known as the “Mayor of Africville”, which distinction he earned by apparently being the only resident of that coloured community who had a steady job. There may be some Divers of that era who would remember being taken to Africville for some pretty wild parties with him.

Red Larsen commented, a very interesting story. My only comments are, could “Curly Fenn” possibly have been Rick “Curly” Vemb, who used to be in the Unit in the 1960’s era, and was a bit of a “colourful” character, who might have led these MUFON investigator guys on for a bit! Just suggesting.

Chuck Wilson responded that, as a confirmation to Red Larsen’s email, that Curly Vemb was a Diver at HMCS GRANBY, and was well known in the circle of Divers as a colorful individual who enjoyed taking the “mickey” out of any unsuspecting person. There were many that worked with him at one time or another, and I cannot recall when he left the Diving Unit. Guy “Curly” Fenn was on HMCS GRANBY during the UFO incursion into the waters off Shag Harbour in 1967, when I participated in the search.

Tom Essery sent greetings to all. He said that after reading some of the recent and varied recollections of the 1967 Shag Harbour UFO search, it’s time to set the record straight, or at least to relate a first-hand account of the affair, and to separate some of the fiction from fact. First, yes there was a Diving Officer present – it was me. As the OIC of HMCS GRANBY’s Mobile Team, I led the search operations over a 4 day period in October 1967. It’s also time to bring Jim Balmforth into the story, as he was the Team’s Senior Petty Officer and, if he chooses, he can either back me up, correct my memory, or add further details. For starters, the Wikipedia entry concerning the incident is fairly accurate, as far as it goes. As for Chuck Wilson’s account, I yield to his memory of the Divers comprising the rest of the Team, but I have no recollection of any advanced Team from HMCS GRANBY operating with a Coast Guard vessel prior to the Mobile Team’s arrival on scene on a Saturday morning the 7th October, who were 3 or 4 days late arriving, after the initial sighting of the UFO on 4 October. This was the result of a combination of delays while orders were passed down the chain of command, and a temporary misunderstanding(dare I say, misbelief, considering the circumstances late on a Friday evening)of our orders from MARCOM HQ. Of course, by this time the datum, such as it might have been, was quite cold, but we pressed on regardless. To help with the search, we enlisted the services of a local lobster fisherman, with his boat as a dive platform. He was eager to be a part of the search, as the lobster season in that area was about to open, and he hoped that while we were looking for alien objects, we would give him information for his own use later on. Needless to say, following the event, and although we found no UFO’s of any sort, we were quite helpful to our boat’s Captain! He was considered to be a local hero, and became part of the Shag Harbour folklore. As I’ve related earlier to Bud Nuquist, it was a most interesting adventure, with many hilarious situations binding it all together, combined with some long, often deep and challenging diving, with strong tidal currents, plus the ever-present media watching our every move. Incidentally, there most certainly was no one named Curly Fenn present. I could go on, but to do the whole story complete justice, would take much longer, and is best told at our Reunions over a beverage or two!

James F. “Bomber” Balmforth stated that it was quite interesting reading all the various comments going around about the Shag Harbour UFO incident. I was in charge of the Mobile Team for the first few days and, yes, we scoured the bottom of Shag harbour, and did not find anything resembling an UFO, or parts thereof. I had been thinking about the so-called “yellow” foam that had been reported on the surface in the initial reports by the local fishermen, and in my estimation it might have simply been white foam which is found naturally on the surface when the waves are agitated by rough water, and was then

illuminated by the fishermen's lights late that night. Chuck Wilson corroborates in his statement that the water was rough when we arrived. At no time was I ever interviewed by anyone about our activities. Don't know who Curly Fenn is. There was a Curly Vemb in the Diving Unit, and a Guy Fenn. I knew Guy "Bill" Fenn from the 1950's, and he never had the nickname "Curly". Only Rick Vemb was called "Curly". I was with the Unit's Mobile Dive Team off and on for a number of years, and the Team members changed fairly often. I find my memory at age 80, is not as sharp as it once was! A large grain of salt should be taken when all the rumours start in these incidents.

Chuck Rolfe wrote to Tom Essery: I want to thank you for providing us with all the helpful information. Would I be correct that you were in charge of the overall activities of the event, and that Jim Balmforth was directing all the Divers activities underwater from the lobster fisherman's boat? As you are well aware, the guys enjoy seeing stories about their time in the mob, and this is one that will pique their interest. I like to get stories from both coasts, since guys from one side of Canada do not always hear about the exploits from the Unit on the other, especially after retiring. I believe it is time to also inform you how indebted we are to yourself, for sticking with the Western CNDA Chapter when it was going through its doldrums over the past few years. If it wasn't for your energy, and time spent in keeping it minimally operational, I dare say we wouldn't have any representation of the West Coast Divers in CNDA. Kudo's to both Tim Flath and yourself!!

Tom Essery responded to Chuck Rolfe: Regarding your question, the answer would have to be "Yes and No". Yes, as OIC of the Team, I was in overall charge, but we were a small Team with what turned out to be a large task, given the time allowed. Apart from initial liaison with the RCMP, interviewing supposed eye-witnesses, contracting the lobster fisherman, submitting daily reports to HMCS GRANBY back in Halifax, and dealing with the media(a CBC TV camera crew were on scene in a separate boat for the first day, but did not stay long), we had a CTV reporter and cameraman with us on a boat for most of the job. They didn't interfere with our operations, but their presence did lead to a couple of interesting and humorous exchanges. I was aboard this boat, along with everyone else. As I mentioned, we were a small Team faced with a huge area to search, so we all took our turns in the water. It involved many dives in varying depths, often strong tidal currents, and careful attention to the repetitive Dive Tables. Based on sketchy information provided to us, by now several days old, there was no clear idea as to the suspected size, shape, or distance off-shore that the "lights" had entered the water, and with no strong evidence as to whether they were attached, or separate. We concentrated on the most probable drift areas, based on the currents flow. Our initial tasking instructions from MARCOM/GRANBY were to conduct a quick search of the suspected impact area, but as time progressed, and national attention was increasingly drawn to the supposed sighting, we were directed to stay on scene for a more thorough coverage. At the same time, we ourselves were becoming more and more intrigued by the possibility of something actually being there, and were thus enjoying the challenge faced by the diving conditions. In the end, I think we were all a bit disappointed(and perhaps somewhat relieved) that no UFO was found. However, we did manage to provide our boat's captain with some seafood for a later meal. That's it in a nutshell. I've left out a lot of Divers' "salty bits" that contributed to the adventure, but even at this length, the story beats a couple of so-called documentary sci-fi conspiracy theory nonsense that I've seen on TV over the years, based on the Shag Harbour sighting. Thank you for your kind words regarding my Canadian Naval Divers Association contributions. Much credit to new and younger blood in the Chapter out here, providing fresh leadership, energy and ideas for membership growth and activity. I'm hopeful we are pointed in the right direction, and will be ready to host the next CNDA Reunion in September 2015 in Victoria, British Columbia

Lt. Jason Delaney. Canadian DND Directorate of History and Heritage wrote: Gentlemen, this is a fantastic version of the story about the RCN Diving Operation for the Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia UFO Incident in 1967. As I mentioned to Chuck Rolfe in another Email, I investigated this event for inclusion in Volume III of the Official History of the Royal Canadian Navy, and this is the best, complete version of the UFO incident I have seen yet. I remember the UFO hunters talking about stuff the Divers were bringing up, leading the readers to think that there was a cover-up, and to think the boys were only bringing up some sea treats made me laugh! It was very noticeable in the MUFON investigator's write-up of their story, that to them it was something very secretive that was being kept from them. A blatant misinterpretation of the facts! One thing that I did notice however, is that the Station located at Shelburne, Nova Scotia is said to be a MAD grid. It is not. CFS SHELBURNE utilizes SOSUS(Sound Surveillance System), an underwater hydrophone array for listening. This story definitely adds some colour, and perhaps "reality" to the incident.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I PERSONALLY DECIDED TO NOT CORRECT THE MUFON INVESTIGATOR'S TALE ABOUT THE "MAD" GRID SAID TO BE AT CFS SHELBURNE(IT WAS ACTUALLY "SOSUS"), AS THIS WOULD POINT OUT TO THE READERS HOW UNTRUTHFUL THEIR REPORT IS, TOGETHER WITH ALL THE OTHER INCONSISTENCIES THEY HAVE REPORTED!

The local newspaper headlined on 9 October 1967 was **UFO Search Called off** and reads as follows: SHAG HARBOUR – not a trace - not a clue - not a bit of anything. With that comment, Canadian Forces Maritime Command announced last night they were calling off an intensive undersea search for the mysterious unidentified flying object that disappeared into the ocean here Wednesday night. An Armed Forces spokesman said the decision to terminate the search was made after a seven-man Navy Diving Team had spent 3 days scouring the bottom of Shag Harbour without finding any trace of the UFO. The area searched, pinpointed as the spot where the 60-foot-long row of lights disappeared, was "thoroughly covered", the spokesman said. The object was seen by at least 12 residents, including an RCMP Corporal. All tide conditions and visibility were favourable for the hunt, conducted by Divers in teams of two. Even areas where the tide might have taken a buoyant object were checked out. However, the Divers were reported to be "completely exhausted" by the ordeal of three straight days in the water. Maritime Command said there seemed no use pressing them further. The search started Friday, prompted by the mysterious sighting Wednesday night, shortly after 11 P.M. Local residents reported seeing a row of lights, apparently on the circumference of an object about 60 feet across, glide out of the dark sky into the ocean about a half mile offshore. Several reported seeing a white light bobbing on the spot for some time afterwards, as did RCMP called in to investigate. By the time search boats reached the spot, the light was gone and the only thing found was a large patch of strange yellow foam or froth. In calling off the search last night, the Armed Forces spokesman admitted that neither Command Headquarters nor the Diving parties ever had any idea what it was they were searching for.