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Émile Gagnan

Émile Gagnan (November 1900 – 1979) was a French engineer and, in 1943, co-inventor with French Navy diver Jacques-Yves Cousteau of the Aqua-Lung, the diving regulator (a.k.a. demand-valve) used for the first Scuba equipment. The demand-valve, or regulator, was designed for regulating gas in gas-generator engines, but was found to be excellent for regulating air-supply under varied pressure conditions. This allowed people to explore the ocean more easily, even though the original purpose was different.^[1]

Gagnan was born in the French province of Burgundy in November 1900, and graduated from technical school in the early 1920s. He was employed as an engineer specializing in high-pressure pneumatic design by the large gas-supply firm Air Liquide. The first production ‘Scaphandre Autonome’ - or ‘Aqualung’ was released in France in 1946 under the identification code "CG45" ("C" for Cousteau, "G" for Gagnan and "45" for 1945, year of the patent).

A year later, in 1947, Émile Gagnan and his family emigrated to Montreal, Canada and he transferred to the employ of Canadian Liquid Air Ltd.^[2] There he set up a lab and proceeded to engineer, design, prototype and patent a very large number of SCUBA and undersea technology firsts, including the direct ancestors of virtually every type of Scuba regulator in common use today.^[3]

References

1. "Jacques Cousteau Centennial: What He Did, Why He Matters" (<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/06/100611-jacques-cousteau-100th-anniversary-birthday-legacy-google/>). *news.nationalgeographic.com*. Retrieved 2016-03-02.
2. Canadian Liquid Air Ltd. (<http://www.airliquide.ca/>)
3. "Emile Gagnan and Jacques Cousteau: Aqua-lung" (<https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/emile-gagnan-and-jacques-cousteau/>). *Lemelson-MIT Program*. Retrieved 2018-04-09.

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