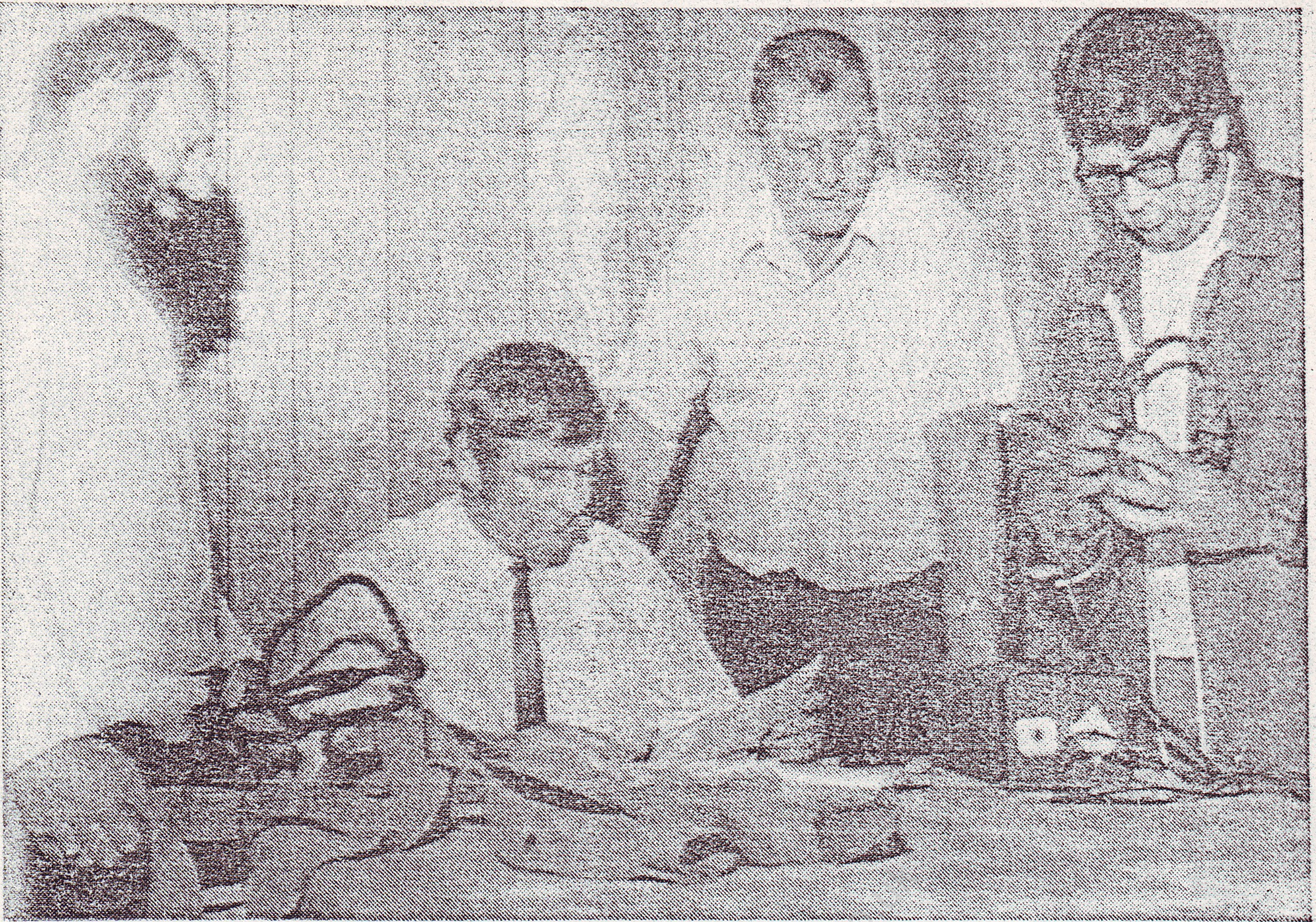


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FIRST DIVER to go down a 26-inch shaft into a mysterious chamber below the bedrock, 235 feet from the surface of Oak Island, Phil Irwin, left, is shown with the harness used to lower him. Discussing the feat with him

are Larry DeLong, seated, President of Atlantic Divers Ltd., Brooklyn, Queens County, Ted Foster and Alan Harrington, all skillful divers. (Shortliffe)

Dives 235 feet beneath Oak Island, cavern 'could extend to Money Pit'

By IVAN SHORTLIFFE
Staff Reporter

BROOKLYN — Phil Irwin, a diver with Atlantic Divers Ltd., has revealed in an interview that he was lowered three times into a vast chamber, or cavern, about 235 feet below the surface of Oak Island.

He described the experience

as not unlike being suspended from an aircraft as he emerged from a shaft below the bedrock, but said that he could not see any walls, only a ghostly ceiling having eight or 10, 40-foot or more V-shaped gouges extending upward.

The cavern was so big, he said, that it could extend to the area on the island known as the Money Pit.

Reflection from his light on the ceiling in certain spots resembled a fluorescent light, he told this newspaper. He said he could not see bottom, but later stood on it and felt about for any objects which

bedrock to about 225 feet, is claimed by the divers to be a great accomplishment in itself.

Manoeuvring the oxygen tube and communication wires down to such a depth was labeled "tricky business."

The first dive was made Aug. 7 when Mr. Irwin was in the shaft for one hour and 40 minutes. Two more trips were made Aug. 14. The third was Aug. 26.

The divers had been sworn to secrecy until the story broke in this newspaper Nov. 23.

There was no sign at all of any form of marine life, the

ocean where it was thought the entrance to a flooding tunnel was located.

The divers said that they had been amazed when Mr. Blankenship stopped the rushing water.

The drilling had passed through a two and one-half foot flooding tunnel at the 212-foot level, beach rocks having been used in its construction.

Replying to a question, Mr. Irwin said there was no way these rocks could have been placed in the bedrock other than by man.

The divers said they had no theories as to what the Oak Island mystery is all about.

pany; vice-president Ted Foster; secretary, Alan Harrington; Bentley DeLong; Garnet Winchester; and David Forbes.

Careful precautions and hours of work preceded the actual decent in the shaft, Mr. DeLong said, adding that they were more concerned with protecting the diver than discovering treasure.

Putting a man down the shaft, protected down to 180 feet by a 26-inch metal pipe, then through a hole through

which could in any way dispute statements made by Dan Blankenship, project manager for Triton Alliance Ltd., which is running the treasure hunt.

In the course of the first dive, Mr. Irwin radioed to Mr. DeLong that at about 180 feet water was rushing in so fast that it was sweeping the diving mask off his face.

The divers all said that Mr. Blankenship told them that he could stop the rushing water by bulldozing soil into

spotted a human hand at the 212-foot level, he said.