

DIVING TECHNIQUE

A YOUNG SWISS mathematician has discovered a diving technique he says will allow swimmers to descend deeper than ever before without armor to protect him against terrific water pressure.

Hannes Keller, twenty-six, already has dived 510 feet and was subjected to pressures of an 820-foot dive in a test tank of the French navy.

His technique, which essentially consists of supplying the diver with a mixture of gases at various levels during the descent and ascent, will enable divers to reach 3,000 feet with only self-contained breathing apparatus, he told a news conference.

If carried out in open sea Keller's 820-foot dive would have been a record. About three years ago British divers went down to 600 feet, specialists in the field say and Russian divers are reported to have hit 700 feet. Most skin divers must stop at 200 feet.

With divers able to reach the 3,000-foot level exploration of the continental shelves might be possible, Keller said.

Keller, who is seeking large-scale U.S. Navy support for developing his technique, has described it once for Naval authorities in Washington and he is to make a second presentation.

The most impressive thing about the Keller technique is the speed at which he returns to the surface. Usually divers must ascend slowly to avoid a condition known as "The Bends" — where nitrogen bubbles form in the bloodstream because of rapid decompression.

Keller said he made his simulated 820-foot dive in ten minutes, touched "bottom" for a few seconds and returned to surface pressures in forty-eight minutes. On the other hand, the British divers in the 600-foot descent off Norway are said to have taken twelve hours for the operation.