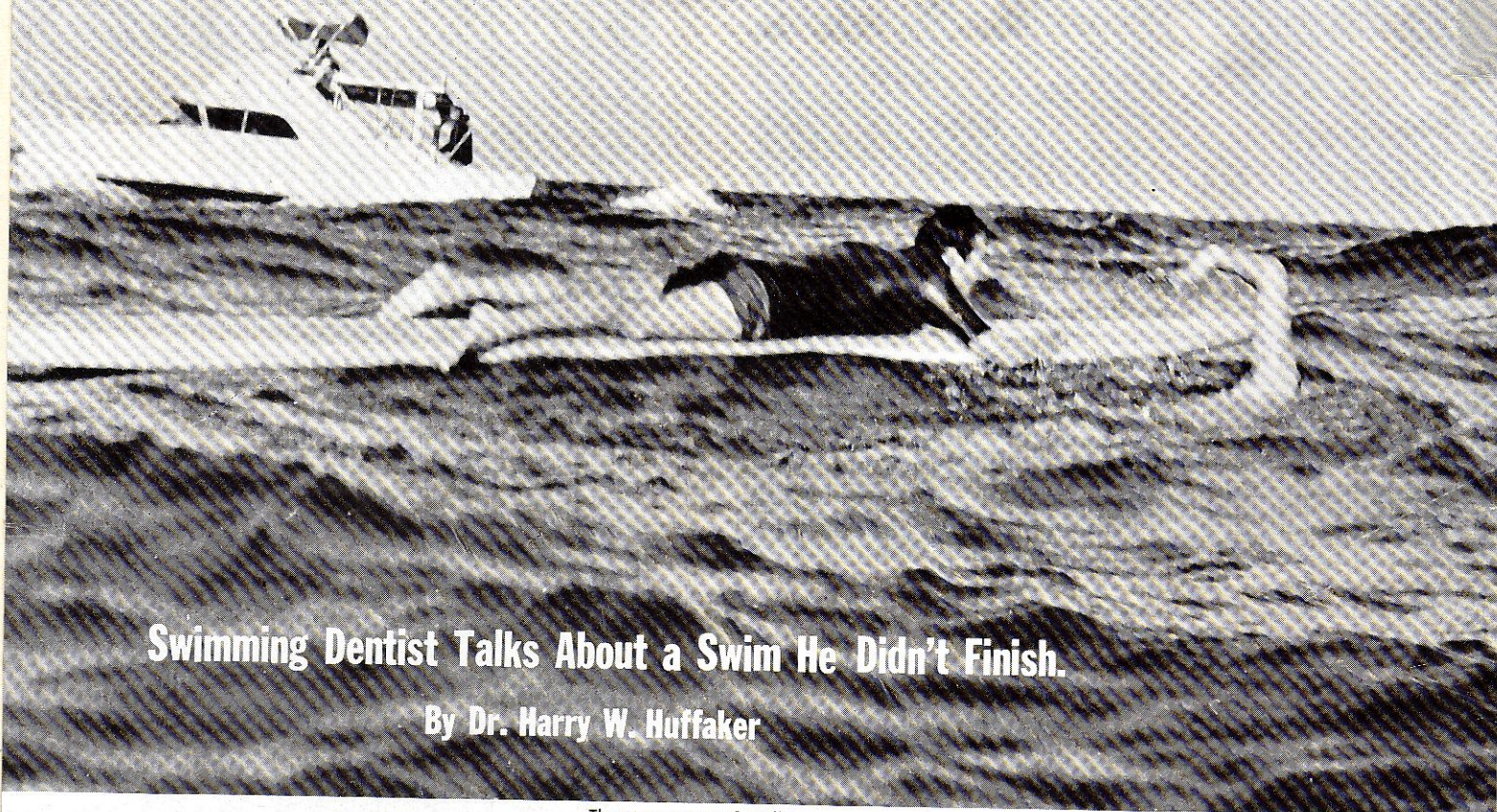


## SOMEHOW THE WORD 'FAILURE' SEEMS INAPPROPRIATE



### Swimming Dentist Talks About a Swim He Didn't Finish.

By Dr. Harry W. Huffaker

The strong arm of Huffaker goes up and up.

THANKS TO THE media, just about everyone in Hawaii knows I recently attempted to swim across the Alenuihaha Channel, the body of water that separates Maui and Hawaii. I didn't make it.

Words are hard to come by at a time like this. Very few words could accurately describe my feelings about this defeat or my motivations for wishing to make another attempt. Somehow the word "failure" seems inappropriate. This is not a matter that is all black or all white and, in some respects, the swim might be considered something of a success.

I've received many clippings from family and friends on the Mainland, in Mexico and in Europe. The clippings are the AP news item about the swim and invariably the headline reads something like: *SWIMMER GIVES UP*.

This phrase impels me to air a grievance voiced by many swimmers. That is the use by the press of the terms "failed" and "gave up." This terminology is only correct when the swimmer (or trainer) decides that, because of muscular fatigue, mental fatigue or cold exhaustion, no further progress is possible.

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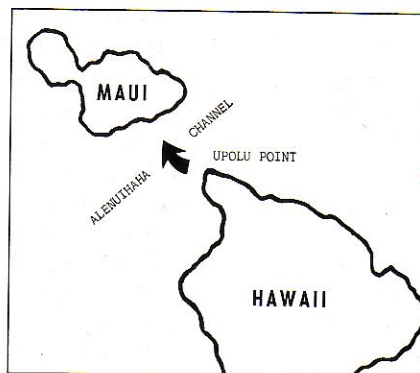
"Abandoning a swim" through adverse conditions is very different. This is good sound common sense and the best swimmers have no hesitation in doing it. In such cases I suggest one of these words: dropped, withdrew, halted, suspended, discontinued, terminated. But not "gave up."

There's no denying I did not achieve my goal of reaching Maui. That's a fact. But one is not motivated to indulge in long distance swimming solely to establish precedents or set records. There are the associated emotions and experiences that make it the truly enjoyable sport it is.

This cannot be written about or

verbalized. It must be lived. It is only with the team of friends who endured the battle with me that I feel able to communicate. One must actually meet people like Pierre Bowman of Hawaii and savor the taste of his wife's Mauna Kea mutton before the whole thing really begins to sink in. We enjoyed the privilege of spending a most enjoyable evening in their plantation home in the remote Kohala region of the Big Island. On a number of pre-swim trips to the islands of Maui and Hawaii I was able to observe and feel the intense and unspoiled beauty that still exists in so many parts of these lovely islands.

All of us had been waiting on a day to day basis since January 15 for word from the Big Island that conditions were favorable for the attempt. The days passed into weeks and the weeks into months. After experiencing so much frustration in getting the swim under way, we finally decided if we didn't have suitable conditions by the end of April we'd postpone the prospect until September when weather conditions are more predictable and stable. Judging from the gusty trades and small craft warnings that were in



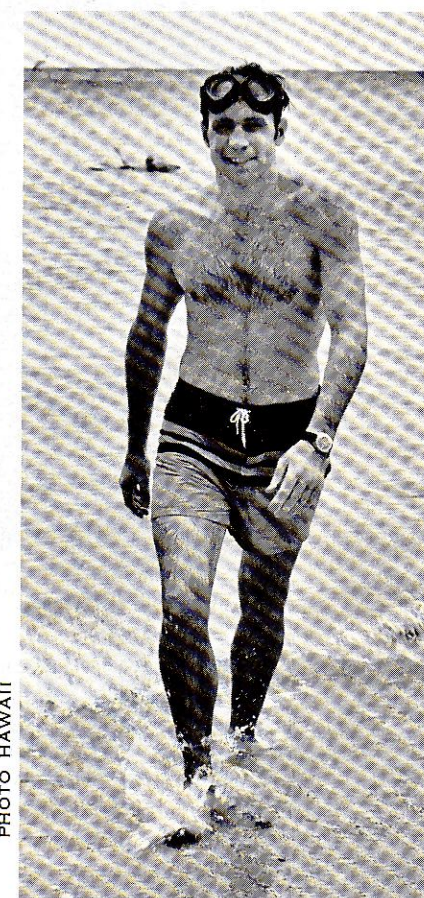
effect persistently during April, it seemed like a mere formality to wait out the last week of the month before officially scrubbing the mission. Training tapered off drastically and everyone associated with the swim began to relax.

Then at 6 a.m. on Friday, April 24, I was routed out of bed by a phone call. It was from Zander Budge reporting that conditions in the channel were fairly good. Almost immediately the heartbeat increased both in frequency and intensity and stomach cramps began.

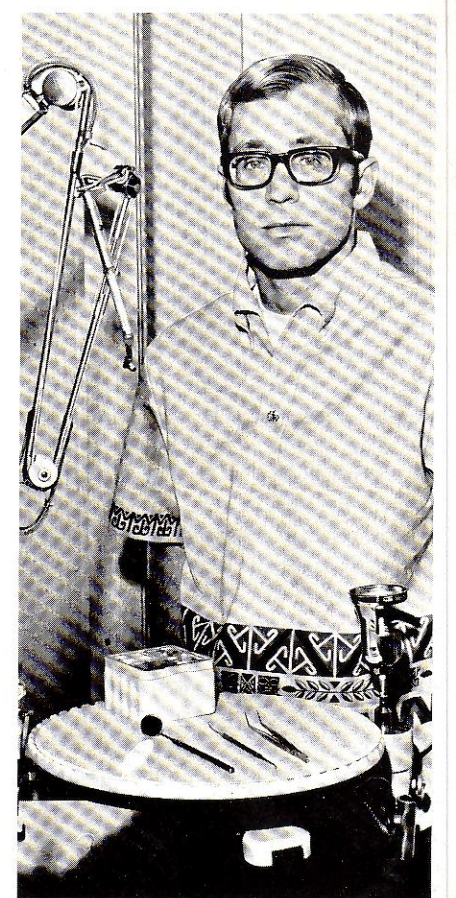
First order of business was to contact John Marshall whose responsibility was to round up the team and make travel arrangements as well as seeing to the other associated tasks which are numerous. John had been away from work most the week due to a strep throat. It was an effort for him even to talk on the phone. In spite of this, he fulfilled his duties. Because of John's illness, he decided not to make the trip because he felt he'd be a useless passenger just taking up space on the boat.

In addition to John, two others could not be reached, another was unable to free himself from a previous commitment and still another had suffered a leg injury on the rocks at Makapuu while body surfing. In spite of these obstacles, a highly skilled crew was assembled.

After cancelling my dental patients for the afternoon and the following Saturday morning, I was on the 2:05 flight to Hawaii. Accompanying me were Roy Damron and Dick Faun. Dr. Bob Smith, Bruce Ames, Ron Hawthorth from the sponsoring Outrigger Canoe Club were to come later on the 6:10 flight. Mrs. Budge met us at the air-



HUFFAKER THE SWIMMER



HUFFAKER THE DENTIST

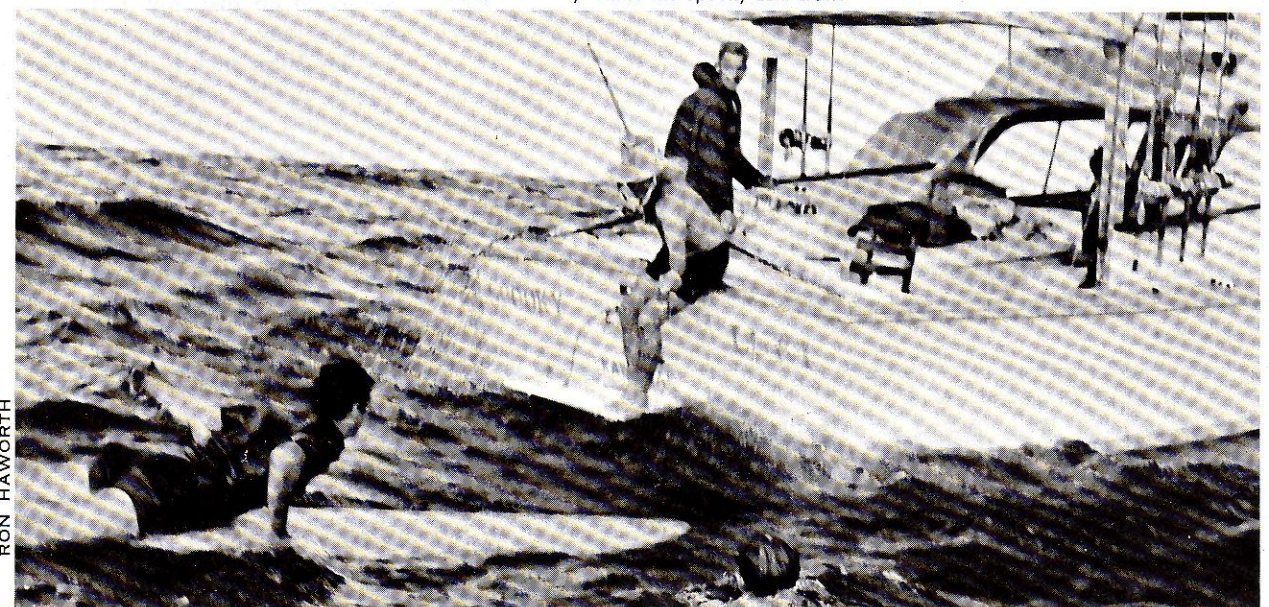
port and drove us to the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel to meet Pierre Bowman who was enjoying a set of tennis after work.

Following a rather late supper at Pierre's home, I was able to get about two hours of sleep before departing at 11:30 for Upolu Point. Pierre and I scrambled over the rocks in the darkness to reach the starting point. A note of humor was added and the tense situation momentarily lightened when Dick Faun of KGMB accidental-

ly stepped into a water hole that was waist deep.

We waited nearly an hour on the rock from which I would make my plunge into the water about six feet below. Nobody knew quite what to say and the hour seemed like a week. Finally we spotted the lights of the *Spooky Luki* approaching. During the hour we waited the wind suddenly shifted from a desirable southerly breeze to northeast tradewinds of about 10 to 15 knots and waves began to

John and Harry talk to the Spooky Luki crew.



RON HAWORTH