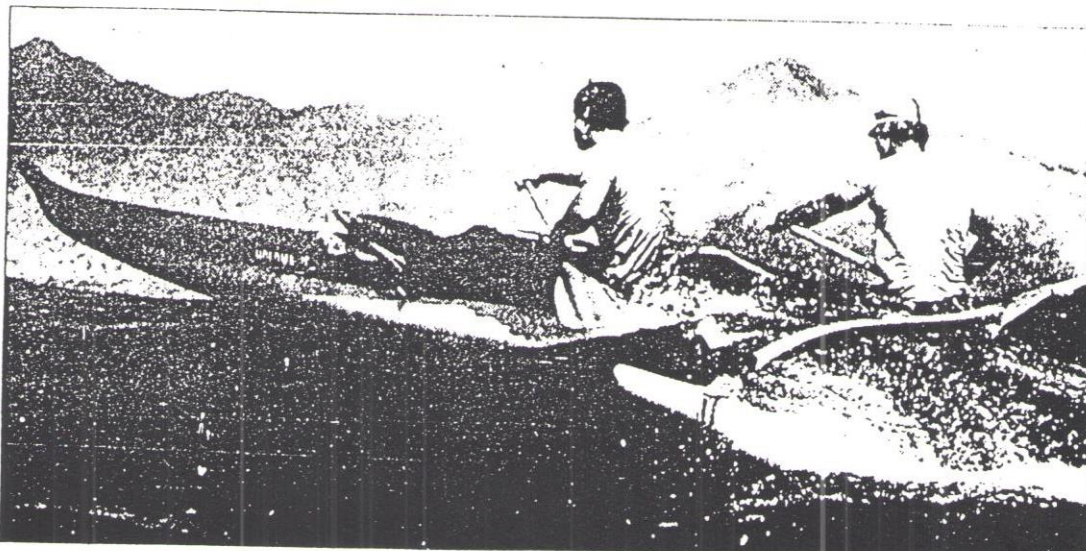




Outrigger Canoe Club's No. 1 crew has a swell time in Kaiwi Channel.

Warren Bolster photo

## Illinois paddlers a surprise



Bow up, the Illinois Brigade surges through the chop.

Warren Bolster photo

### *Finish first in Molokai Hoe race*

By Andy Yamaguchi  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Confusion sidled up next to the sunglasses and Betamovies crammed on Fort DeRussy Beach yesterday for the finish of the men's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

Who was in the lead? Someone said Tahiti. Someone said Illinois.

*Illinois??* Right . . .

On the horizon, sunlight, flashed off paddle blades.

A few minutes later, a red-and-white fiberglass canoe was first to pass under the finish.

*Continued*





Bow up, the Illinois Brigade surges through the chop.

Warren Bolster photo



A textbook crew change: one man jumps in (middle) while another jumps out (right).

Warren Bolster photo



The Brigade's Kurt Doberstein (left) and Mike Fries (right) wear the look of winners

Advertiser photo by Gregory Yamamoto

# Finish first in Molokai Hoe race

By Andy Yamaguchi  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Confusion sidled up next to the sunglasses and Betamovies crammed on Fort DeRussy Beach yesterday for the finish of the men's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

Who was in the lead? Someone said Tahiti. Someone said Illinois.

Illinois?? Right . . . On the horizon, sunlight flashed off paddle blades.

A few minutes later, a red-and-white fiberglass canoe was first to pass under the finish-line banner; it ground to a halt on the sand.

"Wait a minute," announcer Lord Tallyho Blears bleated over the loudspeakers. "It could be Outrigger Canoe Club, we don't know."

"Illinois!" Mike Fries, one of the drenched paddlers in the canoe, yelled in reply. He punched the sky with his right fist. "Illinois!"

Paddling blinked. In the most remarkable occurrence in the 34-year history of the Molokai canoe race, the Illinois Brigade, a nine-man team of world-class canoe paddlers from around the Midwest, won the Bankoh Molokai Hoe yesterday.

They did it despite not assembling as a team, or sitting in an outrigger canoe, or seeing salt water 'n' surf all year until they got here eight days ago.

They were the first team not from Hawaii, Tahiti or California to win the race.

A team from Tahiti, sponsored by that nation's government, led for three-quarters of the 40.8-mile race across Kaiwi Channel. But the Illinois Brigade, drawing on superior conditioning, caught the Tahitians outside the Kahala Hilton.

The lead changed hands four times before the Midwesterners, who had borrowed one of Outrigger's best fiberglass canoes, pulled away to win in 5 hours, 33 minutes, 50 seconds. Tahiti was second in 5:35:21.8 and Off Shore of Newport Beach, Calif., was third in 5:35:49.9.

Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, the pre-race favorite with virtually the same crew that set last year's course record of 5:18:19, finished a surprising seventh. OCC was not even the first Hawaii finisher; Kailua, Kai Opua of Kona and Hanalei were fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively.

All 48 crews that started at Hale O Lono Harbor completed the race.

It was difficult to say which was the bigger stunner, the Illinois Brigade victory or Outrigger's failure to win. Indeed, word was going around before the race that OCC, which had won six of the previous 10

See Illinois on Page D-2



