

North Shore lifeguard rescues surfer

By **Curtis Lum**
Advertiser Staff Writer

A North Shore lifeguard battled rough surf to rescue a 26-year-old surfer who got into trouble yesterday afternoon.

The surfer, a University of Hawai'i student, had taken a longboard off Mokule'ia and was about a half-mile offshore when he realized he couldn't get back to shore, said city Ocean Safety dispatcher Mike Lum. The man waved frantically to friends, who asked a man on shore for help.

The Fire Department and lifeguards dispatched rescuers about 5:35 p.m. Lifeguard Kimo Gaspar jumped on his rescue board and paddled out to the man, Lum said.

Gaspar stayed with the surfer until the Fire Department's Air One helicopter could lower a basket to pick up the man. The surfer was brought to shore at 6:17 p.m. and was not injured.

Ocean Safety Capt. Bodo Van Der Leeden said the waves bordered on the high-surf range, which he said posed a hazard to surfers and rescuers.

"It was overcast and getting pretty gray and dark, and you don't want the lifeguards or even the fire rescue guys out there in those kind of conditions," Van Der Leeden said. "(The surfer) really shouldn't have been going surfing there."

But he said the man made the right choice by not attempting to surf back to shore. He added that when the surf is up on the North Shore, it's always easier to paddle out than it is to come in.

"On the way in (Gaspar) got pounded by a pretty big set and the board washed away from him for a while and he had to swim after it," Van Der

Leeden said. "But Kimo Gaspar is an excellent water man and a very good big-wave surfer with a lot of lifeguarding experience."

Gaspar was not injured.

Earlier in the day, a man was taken to Kahuku Hospital after he swallowed water while struggling to return to shore at the Log Cabins surf spot near the Banzai Pipeline.

The man was swimming with another man and got caught in the rip current, Lum said. The two made it to shore about 4:20 p.m., but one of the men began vomiting and was taken to the hospital as a precaution.