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Sikorsky VS-44A “Excambian”

- 1. Wikipedia (Sikorsky VS-44A) On January 3, 1969 she was extensively damaged by rocks while taxiing at Charlotte Amalie, US Virgin Islands. Damaged beyond economic repair, it was beached in March 1972 and converted into a hot dog stand. NO, IT WAS NEVER CONVERTED TO A HOT DOG STAND. Each year Charlie Blair would think about putting it back in to service. His relationship with that aircraft was such that he would never allow its final days to include any statements like “I’ll take two with mustard but hold the onions”. I will send a correction to Wikipedia.**
- 2. Jack Broughton’s book “Rupert Red Two” Chapter 16 “And Then...” page 343 ... I was back in the States on other projects when I heard that, with Charlie flying, the four engine clipper had gone down between St. Thomas and St. Croix. The results killed a few and injured a few. Charlie was among the few that were rescued. Wrong, even though he did not specify which 4 engine aircraft, none of the 4 engine aircraft were involved in such an event. I would believe that he is making reference to the VS-44A N41881. The “Excambian” did in deed have an incident landing in St. Thomas on January 10, 1969 which ended its service. No one died or got injured but some got their feet wet. See more on N41881.**



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2. continued

Jack Broughton makes comments regarding poor maintenance and Capt. Blair's position on such. I also have made comments regarding policies and procedures and feel that he was accurate about his continued employment under such conditions. I would have to question some specific aircraft discrepancies as stated but was not there at that time.