

**ACCIDENT TO SIKORSKY S-61 G-BEID
30 MILES NE SUMBURGH ON 13 JULY 1988**

MARINE SALVAGE OPERATION

Sikorsky S-61 Helicopter G-BEID was inbound to Sumburgh, Shetland Islands, from a drilling rig with a crew of 2 pilots and 19 passengers. When cruising at 1500 feet in cloud about 30 miles NE of Sumburgh an unusual noise was heard and the starboard engine fire warning light came on. The commander started a descent and shortly afterwards the port engine fire warning also operated and flames were seen in the area of the starboard engine exhaust.

A good landing was made on a relatively calm sea at about 1532 BST. All aboard evacuated into liferafts and were then picked up safely by Coastguard helicopter. There were no casualties. The helicopter was severely damaged by fire whilst floating on the water, the fire continued until it sank in 100 metres of water.

The AAIB initiated a marine salvage operation to search for and recover the cockpit voice recorder and the helicopter wreckage. The search and recovery vessel with an AAIB team on board located the helicopter's position on 16th July by homing onto signals from the underwater location beacon fitted to the cockpit voice recorder.

The recorder and much of the helicopter wreckage has been recovered and will be taken to AAIB Headquarters at RAE Farnborough for detailed examination.

The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an "Inspectors Investigation" into this accident.