

# Boeing 767-204, G-BRIF

**AAIB Bulletin No: 2/99 Ref: EW/G98/08/29      Category: 1.1**

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Boeing 767-204, G-BRIF

**No & Type of Engines:** 2 General Electric CF6-80A turbofan engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1989

**Date & Time (UTC):** 18 August at 1998 at 2242 hrs

**Location:** Newcastle Airport

**Type of Flight:** Public Transport

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 9 - Passengers - 255

**Injuries:** Crew - None - Passengers - None

**Nature of Damage:** Minor to main landing gear tyre

**Commander's Licence:** Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 49 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** Last 90 days - 226 hours  
Last 28 days - 34 hours

**First Officer's Flying Experience:** 7,451 hours (of which 3,029 were on B757/767)  
Last 90 days - 227 hours  
Last 28 days - 53 hours

**Information Source:** Internal company report and further inquiries by the AAIB

## History of the flight

The crew reported for duty at 1700 hrs at Newcastle Airport for a round trip flight to Palma, Majorca. The outbound flight departed at 1855 hrs and was uneventful. At Palma the commander experienced some difficulty with releasing the parking brake and he asked the first officer for his

assistance. The return flight was operated by the commander and was uneventful until the landing at Newcastle.

Arriving at Newcastle the crew self positioned to the ILS and then, at the request of the commander, a visual approach to Runway 25 was carried out. The commander disconnected the autopilot at 1,500 feet on the approach, and the aircraft touched down in the normal place on the runway. The touchdown was described as 'firm'. After the main wheels touched down the aircraft tracked to the right of the centreline and both sets of wheels left the paved surface. The commander called for the first officer to use the rudder to correct the direction of the aircraft. The first officer applied left rudder and the aircraft regained the paved surface after travelling a distance of 265 metres on the grass. The nose wheel touched down 100 metres before the aircraft regained the runway.

The first officer slowed the aircraft to normal taxi speed and then the commander took control again. The senior cabin crew member entered the flight deck to see if there was a problem and was informed that everything was 'normal'. The commander taxied the aircraft to the parking area and the passengers disembarked.

The commander asked the first officer to advise ATC that the aircraft had left the runway at some point, which he then did. The crew later became aware of the distance travelled off the runway when they were taken out to inspect the wheel marks made by the aircraft on the grass. Subsequent to the incident one of the runway edge lights was found to be broken and one tyre on the aircraft was changed.

It was dark at the time of the incident and the weather was; visibility 30 km, surface wind 260°/3 kt, scattered cloud at 3,000 feet, temperature 12 °C, QNH 1020, the runway surface was dry.

### **Medical aspects**

The commander had renewed his medical on 3 March 1998 and this remained valid until 30 September 1998. After the incident the commander reported that he had awoken the previous morning with a strange feeling in his left foot. He suggested that the difficulty he experienced at Newcastle may have been caused by his left foot being under the rudder pedal, thereby rendering his efforts to keep the aircraft straight ineffectual. The commander took medical advice and was subsequently admitted to hospital for neurological examination. He remains unfit for flying duties at present.

## **Discussion**

The commander had suffered a medical problem which led to a subtle incapacitation at a critical phase of flight. It seems likely that the commander experienced a gradual deterioration of his health such that he was not himself aware of the extent of his problem. It therefore remained for someone else to detect and report the problem. There were some indications of a deterioration of the commander's health before the incident. Another first officer employed by the operator had earlier expressed his concern regarding the commander's motor skills to a manager. This manager conducted some confidential inquiries with third parties, who knew the commander well, and then decided that no further action was required.

The first officer had been crewed with the commander for three days before the incident and had noticed that he was walking with a limp. He had observed this problem on previous occasions and did not consider it to be any worse this time.

The aircraft left the runway before the first officer applied any corrective action. The visibility was clear and the wind was light so it was possible that action could have been taken more quickly. The operator has subsequently issued a notice to crews to remind them of the company policy of following through on the controls when operating in the non-handling role.