

INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna Citation CJ2, D-ISJP	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Williams FJ44-3A-24 turbofan engines	
Year of Manufacture:	2001	
Date & Time (UTC):	27 March 2015 at 1440 hrs	
Location:	Warton Aerodrome, Preston, Lancashire	
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	None	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	51 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	12,000 hours (of which 5,500 were on type) Last 90 days - 80 hours Last 28 days - 40 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot, information supplied by the aircraft operator, ATC reports and a Defence Air Safety Occurrence Report	

Synopsis

The flight crew were positioning for a visual approach to Runway 28 at Blackpool Airport (EGNH) but lined up with Runway 25 at Warton Aerodrome (EGNO), 5.5 nm to the south-east. The aircraft descended to an altitude of 1,000 ft amsl, levelled and flew overhead the runway at Warton, before being repositioned for a landing on Runway 28 at Blackpool. There were several opportunities to identify and correct the misunderstanding.

History of the flight

The aircraft was on a positioning flight from Bournemouth to Blackpool, with only the two flight crew on board. The weather conditions in the Blackpool area were clear: the actual meteorological reports from Warton and Blackpool both indicated visibility of more than 10 km, surface winds from the south-west at 8 kt, with a few clouds above 3,000 ft. The co-pilot, who was pilot flying (PF), carried out an approach briefing in which he advised the commander of the location of Warton Aerodrome, nearby, and the risk of confusing it with Blackpool.

The aircraft approached the Blackpool area from the south at FL50. At 1441 hrs, the crew made first contact with Blackpool ATC and were advised to 'STANDBY'. A minute later the following transmissions took place:

TIME	STATION	TRANSMISSION
1442	ATC	DELTA INDIA SIERRA JULIET PAPA BLACKPOOL APPROACH INFORMATION X RAY CURRENT QNH ONE ZERO ONE NINE PROCEDURAL SERVICE NEXT CALL APPROACHING THE BRAVO PAPA LIMA
	Aircraft	YES COPY
	ATC	DELTA JULIET PAPA PROCEDURAL SERVICE NEXT CALL APPROACHING THE BRAVO PAPA LIMA
	Aircraft	ER YES OF COURSE

The aircraft started a right turn, initially towards the 'BPL', an NDB located at the airfield. However, the turn continued until the aircraft was on an easterly track (Figure 1), heading directly towards the POL VOR (33 nm east of BPL). At 1443 hrs, Blackpool ATC requested the range of the aircraft from the BPL, the reply was "THIRTY EIGHT MILES INBOUND PAPA OSCAR LIMA". This was acknowledged by ATC.



Figure 1

Radar track of approach to Blackpool Airport (altitudes amsl)

At 1444 hrs, the commander contacted ATC, reported the field in sight and requested a visual approach - the aircraft was 3.3 nm south of Blackpool and 4.5 nm west-south-west of Warton. The aircraft was cleared to continue towards the BPL and to report when approaching the beacon. The commander replied "THAT WILL BE FINE".

At 1446 hrs, Warton ATC contacted Blackpool ATC by telephone to advise them of the position of D-ISJP, south-east of Warton, heading east. The controllers agreed that the aircraft had probably misidentified the airport. Warton ATC offered to accept the aircraft for radar vectoring, if required. The Blackpool controller replied that he would take up the offer if the need arose. Blackpool ATC then contacted D-ISJP to query its position. The commander confirmed that the aircraft was south-east of Warton and reported that he was visual with both airfields. The co-pilot, in his report, noted that he had advised the commander that he was not visual with either airfield.

Blackpool ATC co-ordinated with Warton ATC for the aircraft to turn towards Blackpool and then cleared D-ISJP for a visual approach to Runway 28, to report on final approach not below an altitude of 2,000 ft. The clearance was acknowledged. The controller also cautioned the crew about the location of Warton Aerodrome, 6 nm to the south-east of Blackpool. There was no reply from the aircraft.

The commander then disconnected the autopilot, took control and flew the aircraft manually. The aircraft turned left and tracked to the west, towards Blackpool. At 1449 hrs, Blackpool ATC asked D-ISJP to report when established on final approach. The commander replied, reporting that they were on final approach for Runway 28 at 12.5 nm. The following transmissions then took place:

TIME	STATION	TRANSMISSION
1449	ATC	DELTA JULIET PAPA ROGER CONTINUE APPROACH AND ER NEXT REPORT ON A FIVE MILE FINAL
	Aircraft	NEXT REPORT FIVE MILE FINAL DELTA JULIET PAPA
	ATC	DELTA JULIET PAPA INITIALLY MAINTAIN NOT BELOW ALTITUDE ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FEET
	Aircraft	AND INITIALLY NOT ABOVE ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FEET DELTA JULIET PAPA

The aircraft then turned 30° to the left, directly towards Runway 25 at Warton and the commander handed control back to the co-pilot. At 1451 hrs, with the aircraft 2.5 nm to the east of Warton, Blackpool ATC requested its range. The commander reported they were at 7 miles. Meanwhile, an Embraer 145 was backtracking Runway 25 at Warton. The next transmissions were:

1452	ATC	DELTA JULIET PAPA ROGER CONTINUE APPROACH YOU ARE NUMBER TWO AND A NUMBER ONE IS A CHEROKEE ON A TOUCH AND GO AHEAD IF YOU CAN TAKE MINIMUM CLEAN SPEED FOR THE REST OF THE APPROACH PLEASE
	Aircraft	YO WE HAVE THE TRAFFIC ON THE FIELD

Warton ATC telephoned Blackpool ATC to advise them that D-ISJP was 1.5 nm from Runway 25 at Warton, descending on final approach. Blackpool ATC contacted D-ISJP and asked for confirmation that the crew were still in visual contact with Warton. The commander responded that they were over Warton. A clearance to land on Runway 28 at Blackpool was issued and acknowledged.

The co-pilot, having realised that they were lined up with the wrong runway, carried out a go-around, during which the commander initiated a turn to the left. The co-pilot resumed control and, in response to a query from Blackpool ATC, advised that visual contact with Blackpool had been lost. Blackpool ATC instructed the aircraft to turn right on to a track of 280° and to climb to 2,000 ft. The crew then completed a visual approach and landed on Runway 28 at Blackpool.

Recorded data

Radar information was available from three radar heads. The radar at St Annes, which is located less than 1 nm to the south-east of Blackpool Airport, provided a complete record of the approach and landing (Figure 1). Ground based recordings of RTF communications between ATC and the aircraft, and telephone conversations between controllers at Blackpool and Warton airfields, were also available.

Flight crew information

The commander had recorded a total of 12,000 flying hours, of which 5,500 were on type. The co-pilot had a total of 250 flying hours, of which 50 hours were on type. This flight was a line training sector, with the commander responsible for making the radio transmissions. Both pilots provided reports to the investigation.

Airport information

Runways

The main runway at Blackpool Airport is Runway 28/10. It is 1,869 m in length, 46 m wide and is equipped with approach lighting. The main runway at Warton is Runway 25/07. It is 2,422 m in length, 46 m wide and is also equipped with approach lighting. There have been several instances of misidentification of the two airfields by inbound aircraft.

Air Traffic Control

Warton Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ) is a circle of 2.5 nm radius, centred on the main runway, with an upper limit of 2,000 ft. It is notified as permanently active. Permission to enter the ATZ must be obtained from Warton ATC, when available, or from Blackpool ATC. Otherwise, traffic must remain clear. Additionally, there is a Military Aerodrome Traffic Zone (MATZ) of non-standard dimensions at Warton. Warton air traffic services operate on weekdays only: at the time of the incident radar services were operational. MATZ crossing for traffic inbound to Blackpool is co-ordinated by Blackpool ATC. Blackpool ATC operates a procedural service and radar is not available. At the time of the incident, the Blackpool combined approach/tower radio frequency was busy, with several traffic movements in the vicinity of the airport.

Analysis

The co-pilot was under training and there was also a large experience gradient between the two pilots. The co-pilot identified there was a potential for misidentification of the two airfields in his approach briefing but, even so, the aircraft made an approach to the wrong airfield. At a late stage, the co-pilot recognised the error and initiated a go-around.

Warton ATC were notified of the aircraft by Blackpool ATC when it was co-ordinated through the western section of the MATZ. The confusion started to arise on the first radio contact between the aircraft and Blackpool ATC. The aircraft was cleared to the BPL but the commander did not read back the clearance. The controller repeated the clearance but again it was not read back. Blackpool ATC then requested the range of the aircraft from the BPL but the response was read back with reference to POL, a VOR located 33 nm to the east of Blackpool Airport. The incorrect readback was not corrected and, unknown to the controller, the aircraft turned east, directly towards POL. This suggested that the crew believed they had been cleared towards POL.

The commander reported the field in sight and was asked to continue towards the BPL. His readback did not include the instruction to continue towards the BPL, an omission that was not challenged. Thus, a second opportunity to resolve the misunderstanding was missed and the aircraft continued tracking in the direction of the POL.

Two minutes later, Warton ATC, who had radar contact with the aircraft, became concerned about its position and contacted Blackpool ATC. Warton ATC offered to provide a radar service for the aircraft but Blackpool ATC did not use this option. Thus, a further opportunity to resolve the situation was missed.

When the commander confirmed he was visual with both airfields, Blackpool ATC issued a clearance for a visual approach. The controller again cautioned the crew about the position of Warton, to the south-east of Blackpool. The commander then disconnected the autopilot, took control and flew the aircraft manually.

The aircraft turned to the left and initially tracked towards Blackpool but then turned further left towards Warton. Blackpool ATC contacted the aircraft, asking for its range and advised the crew of traffic at Blackpool, on a touch-and-go. At the same time, an aircraft was backtracking Runway 25 at Warton, which may have confirmed to the crew that they were looking at the correct runway.

Warton telephoned Blackpool once more, to inform them that D-ISJP had misidentified the airfield. The co-pilot, meanwhile, realised that the aircraft was at the wrong airfield and carried out a go-around. He also, temporarily, took over the radio transmissions and responded to an enquiry from Blackpool ATC. The aircraft was then re-directed towards Blackpool and the situation was resolved.

Conclusions

The recorded radio transmissions from this incident demonstrate how a lack of standard radio telephony discipline can contribute to developing a misunderstanding. It arose first,

perhaps, because there is some similarity between the sound of “BRAVO PAPA LIMA” and “PAPA OSCAR LIMA”, but, once begun, it was exacerbated by incomplete readbacks and the reduced situational awareness of the crew. Both ATC units were aware that the aircraft was going in the wrong direction but accepted the commander’s assurances.