

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010051

Date/Time: 30 Apr 2010 0650Z

Position: 5308N 00255W (17nm SSE WAL)

Airspace: UAR UN862/Y99 (Class: C)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: B737-800 A319

Operator: CAT CAT

Alt/FL: ↑FL300 FL280

Weather: VMC CLAC NK NR

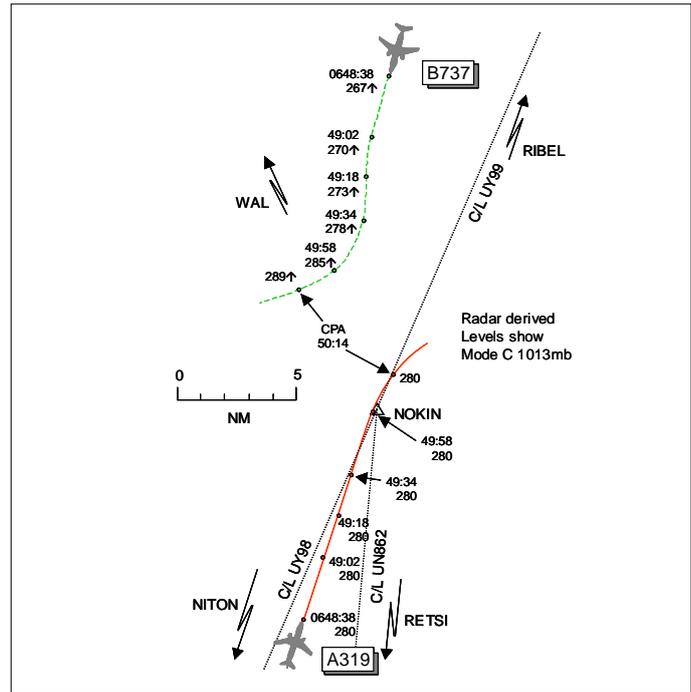
Visibility: 50km NR

Reported Separation:

NR V/5nm H NR

Recorded Separation:

900ft V/5-4nm H



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE B737 PILOT reports enroute to Nantes IFR and in receipt of a RCS from London, squawking 6354 with Modes S and C. Whilst climbing to FL300 at 415kt they were issued with an 'avoiding action' R turn against traffic 10nm ahead which passed, on TCAS, about 5nm away. Although the visibility was 50km clear above cloud in VMC, they did not see the other ac. A TCAS TA was generated during the encounter and he assessed the risk as 'reportable'.

THE A319 PILOT reports 2 months post incident that he remembered the circumstances but did not feel threatened by the situation. He thought that a TCAS TA may have been received during the incident and that the turn given by ATC resolved the confliction.

UKAB Note (1): The A319 company was contacted shortly after the incident. However the request for completing a CA1094 sent by UKAB was addressed to the wrong fleet manager. It was only approximately 7 weeks post incident that this was discovered and the brief statement from the Capt of the A319 was obtained.

THE LAC S5T CONTROLLER reports working fairly hard when he handed over the A319 to Scottish. To create room for more fpss he discarded the A319 fps. When the S'bound B737 flight first called, his Planner told him that he was released to FL300 subject to an ac highlighted on his display. Forgetting the A319 he climbed the B737 and, on realising his error courtesy of STCA, he took avoidance action.

THE PRESTWICK CENTRE S29 RADAR CONTROLLER reports STCA alerted his trainee and himself that the B737 and A319 were in potential conflict at NOKIN. He initiated avoiding action with the A319 whilst LAC S5 turned the B737. Standard separation was not lost.

ATSI reports that the A319 flight departed Bristol International at 0631, destination Glasgow, and called LAC Sector 5 (S5) at 0636:20 in the climb to FL150 routing to TALGA. The Sector was manned by a Planner (P) and Tactical (T) controller and had recently been split from S23 as the traffic levels had built on the combined sectors. S5 was described as reasonably busy with no non-serviceability issues or undue distractions.

The B737 flight departed Leeds Bradford at 0635, destination Nantes, and called Prestwick Centre (PC) Sector 29 (S29), 118.775MHz, at 0643:40 in the climb to FL200 on a heading of 210°. PC S29T was manned by a mentor and trainee: the trainee's ability was described as experienced, having completed approximately 350hr of training. A Planner controller was also present. The sector was described as moderately busy with no non-serviceability issues or undue distractions.

The Standing Agreement for LAC S5 traffic from Bristol via N864/Y98 to PC S29 is 'FL240 level 20nm before REXAM/NOKIN'. The S5T initially climbed the A319 to FL220. The S5P reported that, in order to assist the tactical controller, higher climbs were being obtained for ac. The S5P coordinated FL280 for the A319 with PC S29 at 0637 and, at 0638:10, the S5T instructed the A319 flight to "*continue present heading ... climb flight level two eight zero*". This was read-back correctly by the A319 pilot. The A319 was subsequently instructed to resume its own navigation to NITON and then to NOKIN before being transferred to PC S29 at 0646:40.

The S5T reported that, in order to make room for other strips, after transferring the A319 to S29, the A319 fps was discarded from the strip display. The flight's SSR data block remained visible on the situation display.

The Standing Agreement for PC S29 traffic from Leeds S'bound via N862 is 'Climbing FL270 level KARNO'. Such traffic is released for climb within S29 airspace (upper vertical limit is FL285). At 0646 the S29T climbed the B737 to FL270 and this was read-back correctly. The ac was still on its heading (210°) and was 31nm N of NOKIN.

At 0647 the A319 flight called PC S29 22nm S of NOKIN maintaining FL280 to NOKIN and the crew was instructed to route "*NOKIN RIBEL MARGO*". Approximately 1min later, at 0648:10, the S29T instructed the B737 flight to "*resume own navigation RETSI and contact London Control 133.6*". RETSI is S of NOKIN on N862 and this now placed both ac on reciprocal tracks towards NOKIN 30nm apart. The S29T reported that, as the B737 was close to NOKIN, the next convenient waypoint of RETSI was chosen. The S29T also reported that it was expected that S5 would not climb the B737 above FL270 until it had passed the A319 at FL280.

The B737 called LAC S5 at 0648:40 stating "*...coming up to two seven zero direct RETSI*". The S5T responded by climbing the B737 to FL300 and requesting its desired cruising level. At this time the track history (and Mode S heading information) of the B737 indicated it was heading 210°. The 2 ac were now 23nm apart and subsequent updates of the situation display showed the B737's position indication symbol turning L towards RETSI. The S5P had previously coordinated a higher level for the B737 with S7, which is above S29 levels. Higher climb had been approved by S7 subject to S7's own traffic, which was also climbing. The coordinated climb was written on the B737's fps and the S5P 'pointed-out' the S7 traffic to the S5T on the Tactical's situation display.

The S5P was heard to comment that the S5 controlling team "*...thought [the B737] had come over on a heading*". At 0649:00 the S5T instructed the B737 to "*...turn right fifteen degrees*". The S5T commented that this 15° turn was on top of the assumed heading it was believed the B737 had been transferred on; the 'direct RETSI' report had not been assimilated. Following a correct read-back the S5T updated the turn instruction to "*...make that a hard right heading two five zero degrees*". The S5P then called S29P at 0649:20 stating "*we're going right on [B737 c/s] which is against the [A319 c/s]*", by which time the S29T mentor had taken over the frequency from the trainee and was issuing avoiding action on to a heading of "*east*" to the A319. The A319 was also passed TI. At 0649:30, the S5T instructed the B737 flight to "*...make that two five zero avoiding action ... radar heading two five zero*". At this time the B737 was passing FL275 and its Mode S information indicated that it was heading 189° with the A319 in its 12 o'clock, reciprocal track, range 12nm at FL280. STCA activated on S5 and S29: minimum separation was recorded at 0650:14 as 5.4nm and 900ft – within the required parameters of 5nm or 1000ft.

At 0650:10, as the B737 was passing FL290, the S5T instructed the B737 flight to resume its own navigation to LAMAT. At the same time the S29T mentor instructed the A319 flight to resume its own navigation to RIBEL.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar video recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

Controller Members believed they understood the sequence of events that led to S5T climbing the B737 into conflict with the A319, which caused this Airprox. The LAC S5T had dispensed with the A319's fps after transferring the flight to PC S29. The B737 flight had then called on frequency climbing to the Standing Agreement level of FL270 but released for climb within PC S29 airspace. S5P had previously coordinated further climb for the B737 to a higher level with S7 subject to S7 traffic, then annotated the B737's fps accordingly, and pointed out the S7 traffic to the S5T. This may have induced S5T to climb the B737 straight away, forgetting the A319 at FL280.

Both controllers were alerted to the situation by STCA and issued prompt complementary avoiding action turns to the R. Both aircrews reacted to the instructions given which resulted in no loss of separation. These factors were enough to allow the Board to conclude that any risk of collision had been effectively removed.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The LAC S5T climbed the B737 into conflict with the A319.

Degree of Risk: C.