



### Boeing 707 Display Flight - Pilot Captain Darryl Tarr

Ladies and Gentlemen, after reading my previous response I have decided to EDIT this post today (Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012), in order to give a more elaborate, detailed and technical review of my display flight – which will hopefully answer some recent critics and speculations.

### THE FACTS FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

My name is **Darryl Tarr** and I am the pilot of the Air Zimbabwe Boeing 707-330B doing the "Display Flight". Some still believe that I was responsible for a single "one off fly-past", that was unauthorized and illegal. This is NOT the case; my display was authorized, lasted approximately 15 minutes, and consisted of three passes down the runway. The technical details are mentioned in detail below.

From January 1992 till July 1996 I was the Senior Captain (Type Rating Examiner) on the Boeing 707 fleet for Air Zimbabwe. My last flight on the 707 was on the 26th of July 1996 as the following week I started my Boeing 767 type rating conversion course, as Air Zimbabwe were finally retiring the 707 Fleet. I then flew the 767 from the Left Hand Seat until October 1998, which is when I left Air Zimbabwe to join Emirates Airline (Dubai).

There was in-fact TWO airshows held at **Charles Prince Airport** (West of Harare). The first air show was in May 1993 and the second air show was in May 1995. Both airshows were hosted by the Mashonaland Flying Club (MFC) and were called "MFC Air Day 93 and MFC Air Day 95 respectively".

- For MFC Air Day 1993 I was **authorized** to display the Boeing 707 (registration Z-WKS). The display would last for approximately 15-minutes, which would include multiple fly-pasts with various configuration changes and maneuvers.
- For MFC Air Day 1995 I was **authorized** to display the Boeing 707 (registration Z-WKU). The display would last for approximately 15-minutes, which would include multiple fly-pasts with various configuration changes and maneuvers.

For BOTH display flights I operated the Boeing 707 as we had planned, briefed, practiced, and scrutinized. Again to re-emphasize; both 15-minute displays were **100% LEGAL and authorized** and there was no flight safety issues between the Company, Department of Civil Aviation, and my crew. However:

**”Many believe that the flight was unauthorized and that Tarr was fired because of it”**

(A quote taken from this website:)

<http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/325/language/en-CA/Lower-than-a-Snakes-Belly-in-a-Wagon-Rut.aspx>

So where does the speculation and confusion come from. Well unfortunately during the air show in 1993 an Air Zimbabwe Boeing 767-200ER on a Commercial Flight (revenue flight) from Harare to Johannesburg did an UNAUTHORIZED, one off fly-by, with passengers on-board. This fly-by took place in the early hours of the morning prior to the start of the air show. What transpired over the next few weeks is a real can of worms as the Chief Pilot of Air Zimbabwe (co-incidentally the same surname as mine) was suspended for apparently an inappropriate method (according to the Company), by which disciplinary measures were planned for the B767 Crew.

As most of us know all too well the media seldom get the facts 100% correct, and so an article was published in the Tabloids stating that a certain “Captain Tarr” was under suspension over an unauthorized and illegal flight during an air show. The article was very poorly written and opened up a lot of room for speculations and it soon became a little awkward for me and my crew as almost everyone believed that we were the unfortunate ones. Once again the media failed to elaborate on the following FACTS:

1. On the day in question (May 1993) there was in-fact TWO Air Zimbabwe Aircraft involved. A Boeing 707, which was **authorized** to do a 15-minute display, this flight being a non-revenue flight and carrying NO passengers, and a Boeing 767, which did an unauthorized fly-past.
2. The captain under suspension was the Chief Pilot of Air Zimbabwe (Captain XXX Tarr) and NOT Captain Darryl Tarr (who was the pilot of the Boeing 707 – authorized for the display flying).
3. The Chief Pilot is under suspension as the Company found him to be pursuing inappropriate disciplinary methods for the captain of the Boeing 767, which they deem to be of an insubordinate nature.

After numerous attempts to get the media to elaborate and clear our names I eventually gave up. (Actually if the Chief Pilots name was Joe Blogs, then perhaps none of this would have happened). Although it was a very poorly written article they (the tabloids), still believed that it was the public that had speculated and NOT the report itself – go figure.

Anyway someone asked me an interesting question recently and I quote: “Many people believe that you had no idea what you were doing”, and “How did you get away with it”. Actually it’s very easy to get upset when you hear such comments and I did NOT want to dignify the question with a response, but that would be unprofessional of me, so this was my response.

“Believe it or not I can actually still **visualize** all the performance parameters used for the display flight, EPR/N1/Fuel Flow, speeds, pitch attitudes, etc. To elaborate, as the senior TRE on the 707 at that time I spent a lot of hours on the aircraft doing maneuvers such as: MMO/VMO Mach Tuck entry and recovery, Approach to Stall entry and recovery, Engine Shutdowns and Re-light procedures, Fuel Jettison, Alternate Gear and Flap extension, GPWS system alerts (involved flying an approach with the gear up in order to TEST the aural alerts), Rejected Takeoffs (RTO’s) etc. These maneuvers were typically required during a “Certificate of Airworthiness” Air Test, which I was responsible for back then. I was also responsible for all Three-Engine ferry takeoffs that did happen occasionally due to technical reasons, and perhaps the most challenging one was out of Victoria Falls – a captain’s only destination for the 707. I also used to fly the 707 into the most remote parts of the World (Quito, Ecuador / Rio Gallegos, Argentina / Across the Antarctic to Auckland), to name a few, and flying back then was quite different than today mainly due to the fact that the 707 is truly a “Hands-On” airplane, and my technical and pilot involvement was not dissimilar to that of a lower Test Pilot Status (not that I’m implying that I deserve to be on such a level).

So trust me: **"I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT I WAS DOING"**.

Here are some details of the “Display Flight” which consisted of THREE passes down the runway:

- The first pass was down runway 06, slow and low with flaps 40 and the landing gear up. VREF Approach Speed Flaps 40 is 116 knots (slow passes were flown at 125 knots). Radio Altimeter call of 50 feet would result in an initial check and reduction in the rate of descent, and then a Go-Around would be initiated at 30 feet RA (backed up by calls from both F/O and FE). Enhanced visual cues and awareness calls due to rising terrain (runway 06 at CP has a gradient of 1.2%). The Go-Around ROTATION would be deliberately slower than normal (for maximum effect, as the empennage will initially rotate downwards and get lower to the ground – which was accounted for, as we planned for a minimum of 10 feet RA between the lowest point of the aircraft and the ground). During the go-around the flaps remained at 40 and whilst climbing through 100 feet AGL I turned right at a 30-degree bank, and extended the landing gear (for the spectators to see the underside of the aircraft – again for maximum effect).
- After turning 90 degrees to the right and reaching a height of 500’ AGL (speed 125 knots), a left turn onto downwind for runway 24 was commenced.
- Then another left turn, descending, for an approach onto runway 24 for the second pass (in the landing configuration, gear down, flaps 40).
- Then a normal go-around (flaps 25, gear up) and a maximum angle climbing turn to the right. Climbing again to 1,000 feet AGL, cleaning up, and maintaining 250 knots whilst positioning for a very long downwind for 06.
- Then when established on final for runway 06, TOGA thrust applied to accelerate to VMO for the high speed pass at 100 feet AGL.
- Just prior to VMO the thrust levers reduced to maintain 375 knots, then at the start of the flight line the thrust levers were reduced again to 1.2 EPR, and a gentle pitch up to +30 degrees attitude followed by a climb to 5,000 feet AGL (using excess energy alone).
- Three Crew members on-board (Flight Engineer, First Officer, and myself)
- No Passengers (non-revenue flight, or non-commercial flight as some prefer)
- 12,000 KGs of Fuel on Board (2.0 hours endurance)

- High Speed Fly Past (which is not shown here), was at the Barbers Pole of 375 KIAS (due to the density altitude at Harare True Air Speed was approximately 400 Knots)

Do I miss the B707, HELL YEAH, lets just say that as far as older generation aircraft are concerned I think it was the "best ever", a fantastic aircraft that I could do things with that no other aircraft comes close to (although the Piper Super Cub was hard to beat but I am referring to Commercial Jetliners that I have flown).

Would I do the identical display flight again: **In a heartbeat, YES.** I have no regrets at all regarding any of my Boeing 707 displays, although in today's aviation industry (standards and culture) this would NOT be possible anymore. Believe it or not it took a lot of skill, piloting technique, and serious concentration to fly the 707 like this. Was it FUN, well all display pilots know that such thoughts and emotions are the furthest from your mind during the display sequence. It requires 100% focus and concentration and you can only reflect on feelings and emotions when the display is completely over. When I look back now I do get very excited about the 707 that I once flew - it's a CLASSIC! But like all things in life I do respect the fact that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, so hopefully this detailed report will put some of those issues to rest.

"A good airshow pilot has the ability to make easy of the difficult stuff; to make the easy look spectacular; but never attempts the impossible!" (A quote from the renowned British aerobatic pilot – Neil Williams)

Actually growing up in Zimbabwe from an aviation perspective was fantastic. I started flying at a very young age and was a Boeing 737 Captain at the age of 24, and a Boeing 707 Captain at 26. Today I regularly fly to JNB whilst operating the B777-300ER with Emirates (and this routing often takes over Zimbabwe), and do love to do this flight as it's like returning to my back garden, my old playground.

Currently I am a Senior Type Rating Examiner for Emirates Airline on the Boeing 777. Emirates is arguably one of the best airlines in the world today and has a very strict and stringent interview process, and I can honestly say that had I done anything illegal and reckless – I would NOT be where I am today. I have been living in Dubai for more than 13 years having left Air Zimbabwe in 1998.

Capt Darryl Tarr  
Type Rating Examiner B777  
Emirates Airline

### **The Story behind the Boeing 767 Fly-Past**

As told by one of the B767 pilots

Darryl Tarr, a good friend of mine, has often borne the brunt of the confusion that led to an unauthorized flyby by Air Zimbabwe's 767 on that day in 1993. I know because I was part of the B767 crew on that day. Here is the real story behind the B767 flyby.

At the time I was a First Officer on the B767 having flown on the B737 and B707 with Darryl previously. I had in fact been trained on both these aircraft by Darryl and we had flown a great deal together previously having gone through almost identical career paths though a couple of years apart. I was in my mid twenties then and probably had some of the misplaced confidence of youth!

I was waiting for the captain to arrive on flight deck, and having a general discussion with one of the ground engineers about the air show (MFC Air Day) going on at Charles Prince that day. He was going to

go across there once he had dispatched our flight. I commented that Darryl would be doing a flyby in the B707, which would be one of the day's highlights, and he should be in time to get some pictures of this. During this discussion the captain of my flight arrived in the flight deck and joined the discussion. He then asked me to request a routing to JNB via the Charlie Papa NDB at Charles Prince.

During taxi we received our clearance: JNB via the CP to VMV to GWV at 6000ft. This was 1000 AGL. I copied the clearance and thought perhaps we might say something to our passengers. However in those days it was not political correct to suggest to senior captains that they make a PA! I figured flying to the CP at 1000 AGL would not likely be noticed so remained silent.

We got airborne and remained flap 5 as the distance to Charles Prince is relatively short in a B767. In quick succession we were handed from Harare Tower to Approach Radar, and then to Prince Tower. Prince Tower acknowledged the Air Zimbabwe call sign thinking perhaps that we were the B707 scheduled for later as they seldom had any contact with large aircraft. They were, after all, a light aircraft field. The airspace was clear and we proceeded to the airfield.

Prince Tower cleared us for the "Low Approach" so we visually maneuvered onto a long final for runway 06 at Charles Prince configuring to Gear Down and Flap 20 and flew a visual approach path to the threshold at 100 feet, and executed a Go-Around abeam the spectators and climbed to 9000 feet and onwards towards Johannesburg.

Now there can be the howls of derision. Clearly there are many issues but one has to see this in the broader context of flying in Zimbabwe in that era. Air Zimbabwe at the time was not particularly hot on the CRM concepts. FO's largely did what they were told unless it appeared to be downright life threatening. In-fact FO's did not raise their heads too far above the parapet. Personal and professional survival depended on it.

Finally the whole event moved very fast and there simply wasn't the time to get into a discussion about it. We both knew the area, the airfield, the aircraft, and the conditions were excellent. The Captain himself was a very competent pilot and had confidence in my abilities to conduct an approach and go around and that is exactly what was done.

Clearly no modern airline or authority would tolerate this today, but this was the 90's.

Was there a greater risk than a scheduled flight to JNB? Of course, flying any aircraft closer to the ground than necessary carries risk. Any approach is statistically more risky than other flight phases. However, was the maneuver dangerous? No. I have had plenty of time to analyze the events in detail, and the possible outcomes, and know exactly what was involved. I have had many thousands of hours in heavy aircraft since and my conclusion remains unchanged.

I am older and wiser now but don't regret the event for a minute. I am sorry it turned into a political mess afterwards but in fact was never particularly involved in that, for the simple reason that I have explained: FO's did what they were told and were not held responsible. I don't support that stance – that is simply the way it was back then.

Pictures appeared in the papers the next day of both aircraft at the air show. There were complaints from a few passengers but ironically many of them enjoyed the experience. Zimbabwe had far greater issues to deal with and the event was committed to history.

Darryl's appearance at the show was a huge success. It had been planned meticulously and conducted as agreed. The armchair critics are simply not in a position to comment as there is so much they do not know about events on that day. However we are left with some superb pictures of a classic aircraft doing an impressive maneuver that many enjoyed on that day and thereafter.