

Lockheed L1011 Tristar, G-BBAJ, 15 March 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/96 Ref: EW/G96/03/05 Category: 1.1

Aircraft Type and Registration: Lockheed L1011 Tristar, G-BBAJ

No & Type of Engines: 3 Rolls-Royce RB211 turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: 1974

Date & Time (UTC): 15 March 1996 at 1945 hrs

Location: Stand 60, London Gatwick Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport

Persons on Board: Crew - N/K Passengers - N/K

Injuries: Crew - 1 Serious Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Nil

Commander's Licence: N/A

Commander's Age: N/A

Commander's Flying Experience: N/A

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the commander, reports from the operating company and enquiries by the AAIB

Following an uneventful flight from Bahrain, G-BBAJ was parked at Stand 60 and the passengers had almost all disembarked. The first officer moved out from aircraft door 1 left onto the Superstairs. He was then seen to fall over the forward edge of the hand rail between the Superstairs and the aircraft. As he fell, he grabbed the rail with his right hand and a nearby cabin staff member ran towards him and caught his wrist; unfortunately, just as the cabin staff reached him, the first officer lost his grip and fell to the ground.

Shortly after the accident, the Superstairs were inspected and found to be correctly located with no debris on the stairs or platform. The guide rails were approximately two inches from the aircraft fuselage and the locking mechanisms were engaged on both sides of the Stairs. The Superstairs were then examined and confirmed as fully serviceable.

There were no reports of anyone seeing the movements of the first officer before the cabin staff member saw him falling over the rail. On his release from hospital, the first officer was able to give an account of the accident. He recalled that the commander had left the aircraft to make an external inspection and that the first officer had moved out onto the Superstairs to check if the crew

transport had arrived; at the time he was carrying a checklist. He could see no-one else on the steps but there was a lot of vehicle and personnel movement around the side of G-BBAJ. Not being able to see any sign of the crew coach, he moved further out onto the stairs to the area where the side rail is lower. He was suddenly aware of a coach moving and he stooped down slightly and bent forward to follow its movement. As he did so he felt a rocking motion on the Superstairs, as if someone was walking up them; then, he was aware of the floor surface dropping slightly. He described the result as walking down stairs and finding an extra step at the bottom. As the movement of the Superstairs stopped, he found himself jerked forward and he toppled over the rail. He was aware of scrabbling for a handhold and of someone touching the back of his right hand before he fell to the ground.