

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/94

Ref: EW/G94/02/01

Category: 1.1

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Lockheed C-130-30 Hercules, KAF 323
No & Type of Engines:	4 Allison T56 turboprop engines
Year of Manufacture:	1983
Date & Time (UTC):	2 February 1994 at 1105 hrs
Location:	London Gatwick Airport
Type of Flight:	Cargo
Persons on Board:	Crew - 6 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to nosewheel steering links, nose landing gear doors and nosewheel tyres
Commander's Licence:	FAA with type rating on the C-130
Commander's Age:	41 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	5,790 hours (all on type) Last 90 days - N/K Last 28 days - N/K
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the handling agent and telephone enquiries by the AAIB

The aircraft, which was engaged on a lightly loaded military flight passing through Gatwick, was being pushed back from its stand in the cargo area. The towbar and tractor had been attached, the ground crew was prepared and engines started. Communication between the ground crew and the pilot of the aircraft was by hand signals given by an aircraft crew member on the ground who was in communication with the pilot, via a ground service headset. This crew member gave the signal which indicated that the pilot was ready to be pushed back and the tug driver responded accordingly. However, when the tug moved, the aircraft did not and the towing attachment lugs on the aircraft nose leg broke off. The forked end of the towbar then slid up the noseleg until it was stopped by the upper torque link, at which point the end fitting of the towbar broke off and the bar damaged the nosewheel doors. The pilot immediately stopped the engines.

The towbar used was specifically for C-130 aircraft only and was constructed to a design in use with another foreign air force.