

= Hurricane Emmy =

Hurricane Emmy was the longest lived hurricane of the 1976 Atlantic hurricane season . The fifth tropical cyclone and the third hurricane of the season , Emmy developed from a tropical wave on August 20 to the east of the Lesser Antilles . After changing its direction three times over several days , during which it reached a peak intensity of 105 mph (170 km / h) , it turned to the east and slowly weakened . Emmy passed through the Azores on September 3 , and a day later it was absorbed by approaching Hurricane Frances .

Emmy passed within 135 miles (215 km) of the Lesser Antilles , though only minor effects were experienced . No damage was reported in the Azores , though strong winds from the hurricane caused a Venezuelan air force flight to crash near Lajes Field , killing all 68 aboard .

= Meteorological history =

A tropical wave moved off the coast of Africa between August 15 and August 16 . The wave moved westward at 15 to 20 mph (24 to 32 km / h) , and developed atmospheric convection along the wave axis . It slowly organized , developing a low level circulation , and formed into a tropical depression on August 20 while located about 775 miles (1 250 km) east of Barbados . A reconnaissance aircraft flight into the system on August 21 confirmed the existence of a depression , which reported winds of only 23 mph (37 km / h) with a pressure of 1 012 mbar . The depression slowly strengthened and organized , and after turning to the west northwest , it intensified into Tropical Storm Emmy on August 22 while located 370 miles (600 km) east northeast of Guadeloupe . The tropical wave from which Emmy developed from continued westward through the Caribbean Sea and ultimately developed into Tropical Storm Joanna in the eastern Pacific Ocean .

Tropical Storm Emmy turned more to the northwest , and passed about 135 miles (220 km) northeast of Barbuda on August 23 . The rapid development of an unseasonable frontal low pressure system to the northeast of the storm turned Emmy sharply east northeastward on August 25 . Its eastward movement at such a low latitude for the time of year was unprecedented . The storm steadily intensified and Emmy attained hurricane status later on the 25th while located 270 miles (430 km) north of Barbuda . After moving eastward for about 24 hours , the Westerlies retreated northward , and Emmy turned gradually to the northwest .

A strong ridge over the north Atlantic Ocean turned Emmy sharply eastward on August 29 . The hurricane continued to strengthen , and Emmy attained a peak intensity of 105 mph (170 km / h) shortly after turning to the east while located 500 miles (800 km) northeast of Bermuda . The hurricane maintained its peak intensity for 42 hours while moving eastward at 17 mph (27 km / h) , and slowly weakened after peaking in strength . On September 1 , Emmy turned to the east southeast , and a day later it turned to the northeast as its forward motion decreased . Emmy passed through the Azores on September 3 , and the following day it became extratropical to the north of the islands . The extratropical remnant persisted another six hours before being absorbed by approaching Hurricane Frances .

= Impact and preparations =

Initially , the path of Emmy was uncertain whether it would affect the Lesser Antilles . As a result , officials issued a hurricane watch for the northeastern Leeward Islands . The warning was cancelled when the storm turned more to the north , with the outer fringes of the hurricane slightly impacting Antigua . Several ships experienced rough seas and strong winds from Emmy , though none reported any damage . After Emmy turned to the west for the final time , forecasters at the National Hurricane Center considered the hurricane not a real threat to land , though they indicated it had a remote chance to affect land masses . The hurricane also posed a threat to the island of Bermuda initially , though it remained away from the island . Two days before Emmy passed through the Azores , the National Hurricane Center advised citizens there to closely monitor the progress of the

storm . No damage reports exist from the Azores , though it was likely not severe .

On September 3 , a C-130 Hercules air force flight left Caracas , Venezuela for Spain , with a flight crew of 10 and 58 members of the Central University of Venezuela choir . That night , heavy rainfall from the hurricane forced the plane to land on the Azores island of Terceira Island , Portugal . After attempting twice to land in hurricane force winds , the plane crashed in a hill one mile from the runway of Lajes Field , killing all 68 aboard .