

= 1945 Homestead hurricane =

The 1945 Homestead hurricane was the most intense tropical cyclone to strike the U.S. state of Florida since 1935 . The ninth tropical storm , third hurricane , and third major hurricane of the season , it developed east @-@ northeast of the Leeward Islands on September 12 . Moving briskly west @-@ northwestward , the storm became a major hurricane on September 13 . The system moved over the Turks and Caicos Islands the following day and then Andros on September 15 . Later that day , the storm peaked as a Category 4 hurricane on the modern @-@ day Saffir ? Simpson hurricane wind scale with winds of 130 mph ( 215 km / h ) . Late on September 15 , the hurricane made landfall on Key Largo and then in southern Miami @-@ Dade County , and across Homestead , FL where much damage was done and winds were clocked at Homestead Army Air Corps Base at 145 mph .

Thereafter , the hurricane began to weaken while moving across Florida , falling to Category 1 intensity only several hours after landfall late on September 15 . Eventually , it curved north @-@ northeastward and approached the east coast of Florida again . Late on September 16 , the storm emerged into the Atlantic near St. Augustine and weakened to a tropical storm early on the following day . The cyclone made another landfall near the Georgia @-@ South Carolina state line later on September 17 . The system continued to weaken and transitioned into an extratropical cyclone near the border of North Carolina and Virginia early on September 18 .

The storm caused significant damage and 22 deaths in the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Bahamas . In Florida , the hardest hit area was Miami @-@ Dade County . Most of the city of Homestead was destroyed , while at the Richmond Naval Air Station , a fire ignited during the storm burned down three hangars worth \$ 3 million ( 1945 USD ) each . Throughout the state , the strong winds destroyed 1 @, @ 632 residences and damaged 5 @, @ 372 homes others . Four people died , including the fire chief of the Richmond station . Homestead Army Air Corps Base , to the east of Homestead was completely destroyed . At the base , hurricane winds of " up to 145 miles per hour tore through the Air Field 's buildings . Enlisted housing facilities , the nurses ' dormitory , and the Base Exchange were all destroyed . The roof was ripped from what would later become building 741 , the " Big Hangar " . The base laundry and fire station were both declared total losses . The few remaining aircraft were tossed about like leaves . "

In the Carolinas , the storm produced heavy rainfall , causing flash flooding , particularly along the Cape Fear River in North Carolina . Overall , the hurricane resulted in 26 fatalities and about \$ 60 million in damage .

= = Meteorological history = =

The hurricane was first observed on September 12 about 235 mi ( 380 km ) east @-@ northeast of Barbuda in the Lesser Antilles . Around that time , the winds were estimated at 75 mph ( 120 km / h ) , and later that day , the Hurricane Hunters recorded peripheral winds of 54 mph ( 87 km / h ) . Moving quickly to the west @-@ northwest , the hurricane quickly intensified while passing north of Puerto Rico , reaching the equivalent of a modern @-@ day major hurricane with winds of 115 mph ( 185 km / h ) . The strength was based on another Hurricane Hunters mission reporting flight @-@ level winds of 120 mph ( 195 km / h ) . After passing north of Hispaniola , the hurricane turned moved toward the Bahamas , approaching or passing over Grand Turk Island at 0530 UTC on September 14 . A station on the island observed a barometric pressure of 977 mbar ( 28 @. @ 9 inHg ) during the passage , and nearby Clarence Town reported winds of 104 mph ( 168 km / h ) . While moving through the Bahamas , the hurricane turned more to the northwest . It was a smaller than average storm , and continued intensifying while moving toward southeastern Florida .

At 1930 UTC on September 15 , the hurricane made landfall on Key Largo , and about a half hour later struck the Florida mainland . The center passed very close to Homestead Air Reserve Base about an hour after landfall , where a central barometric pressure of 951 mbar ( 28 @. @ 1 inHg ) was recorded . The observation suggested a landfall pressure of 949 mbar ( 28 @. @ 0 inHg ) , and based on its small size and peak winds of 130 mph ( 215 km / h ) ; equivalent to a Category 4 on the

current Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale . This estimate was backed up by gust of 138 mph ( 222 km / h ) at Carysfort Reef Light . The hurricane weakened over Florida while curving to the north and north @-@ northeast , although the proximity to water and the passage over the Everglades limited substantial weakening . Hurricane @-@ force winds spread across much of Florida until the storm emerged into the western Atlantic near St. Augustine late on September 16 . At around 0000 UTC the next day , the hurricane weakened to tropical storm status . About 11 hours later , it made another landfall near the border between Georgia and South Carolina with winds of 70 mph ( 120 km / h ) .

After continuing through the southeast United States , the storm became extratropical near the border of North Carolina and Virginia midday on September 18 . Although it initially maintained tropical storm @-@ force winds , the former hurricane weakened below gale @-@ force on September 19 while it was near Philadelphia . The storm continued rapidly to the northeast , moving through New England and along the coast of Maine before turning more to the east . Late on September 19 , the storm moved across Nova Scotia , passing southeast of Newfoundland the next day . It was last observed late on September 20 dissipating to the east of Newfoundland .

= = Preparations = =

Although hurricane warnings were initially issued for the Leeward Islands , the cyclone passed north of the Lesser Antilles . In advance of the storm , aircraft were evacuated from the Naval Air Station in Miami , Florida , where hundreds of planes left vulnerable locations . Residents were advised to heed advisories in Florida , the Bahamas , and northern Cuba . On September 15 , hurricane @-@ force winds were expected to affect areas from Fort Lauderdale , Florida through the Florida Keys , and hurricane warnings were accordingly released for this region . Storm warnings also extended north to Melbourne and Tampa . Military personnel sought shelter at Hialeah Race Track , while residents boarded homes and evacuated from coastal areas to public structures . Boats were utilized to transport people from barrier islands , and small watercraft were secured along the Miami River . However , Grady Norton , the head of the United States Weather Bureau , stated before the storm that Miami would " miss the worst of it " . The American Red Cross reported that 25 @,@ 000 people sought shelter within their services during the storm . Local officials from Cape Hatteras , North Carolina to Brunswick , Georgia ordered evacuations for coastal locations .

= = Impact = =

In the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands , 22 people were killed . The hurricane demolished three @-@ quarters of the structures on Grand Turk Island , while the remaining intact buildings were damaged . The cyclone also produced heavy damage on Long Island , though damages were not reported in Nassau . Peak gusts were estimated near 40 mph ( 65 km / h ) in Nassau . After the storm , The Daily Gleaner initiated a fund to offer aid for residents in the Turks and Caicos Islands .

In south Florida , peak gusts were estimated near 150 mph ( 240 km / h ) at the Army Air Base in Homestead . The strong winds destroyed 1 @,@ 632 residences across the state , while 5 @,@ 372 homes received damages . In Miami , gusts reached 107 mph ( 170 km / h ) , and damages were minimal , mostly snapped power lines , compared to communities in southern Dade County . Nearly 200 people were injured at the Richmond Naval Air Station , when a fire ignited during the storm , affecting three hangars worth \$ 3 million each and destroying 25 blimps , 366 planes , and 150 automobiles . Damages to the Miami area was estimated at \$ 40 million . An additional fire also destroyed a furniture factory and a tile manufacturing plant in the northwestern portion of downtown Miami . One death was reported in the area , the fire chief of Richmond 's fire department , and 26 required hospitalization . Another death was recorded after a schooner ran aground in present @-@ day Bal Harbour , Florida , killing its chief engineer .

Homestead was mostly flooded underwater , with the first floor of city hall and the fire department completely flooded and nearly all its residences destroyed . The historical Horde Hardware building collapsed while a local church was flatted by the winds . In the Florida Keys , hundreds of

residences were damaged . The Florida East Coast Railway station at Goulds collapsed . Crop losses was estimated to be \$ 4 million and most of its avocado harvest was destroyed . Four people died across the state .

Minor reports of damage was reported in Central and Northern Florida , with St. Augustine reporting a 70 mph ( 110 km / h ) wind gust . In Charleston , South Carolina , strong winds caused high waves , but the storm arrived at low tide and produced modest damage . Rainfall peaked at 8 @. @ 0 inches ( 200 mm ) at Belton , South Carolina . In Aiken , South Carolina , heavy precipitation caused damage to unpaved streets . Inland , the system produced heavy rainfall over North Carolina , peaking at 14 @. @ 8 inches ( 380 mm ) in Rockingham , North Carolina in the period covering September 13 through September 18 . This rain led to saturated grounds , allowing new water to spill into streams . Many crop fields and dwellings were flooded near the Cape Fear River as levels rose to record heights . The towns of Moncure , Fayetteville , and Elizabethtown exceeded flood stage levels . Broken dams in Richmond County produced significant flash floods . Few deaths were reported , but economic losses were extensive . In Hopewell , New Jersey , the remnants of the system produced winds of 50 mph ( 80 km / h ) , though major damage was not reported .

= = Aftermath = =

In the aftermath of the storm , more than 1 @, @ 000 Red Cross workers were activated in response to the cyclone . A force of 400 German prisoner of wars and 200 Bahamian laborers participated in the cleanup process .