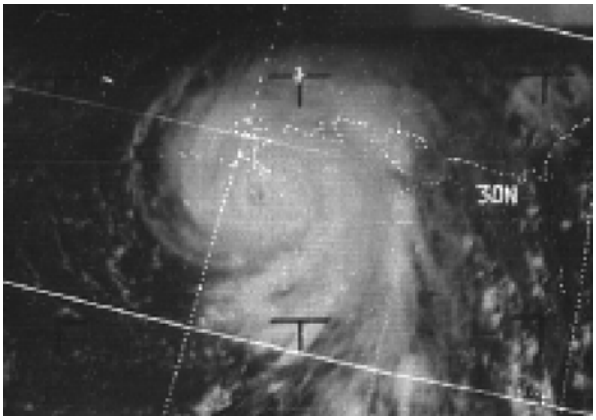
RE-ANALYSIS OF 1969's HURRICANE CAMILLE COMPLETED

Catastrophic hurricane now ranks as second strongest on record

A re-analysis of the database for Hurricane Camille, an extremely intense hurricane that devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast on the night of August 17, 1969, has been completed.

Based upon this reassessment, Hurricane Camille is indicated at landfall on the Mississippi coast to have been a Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale with peak sustained winds of 175 mph and a central pressure of 900 mb. This is the same category as analyzed originally, but the peak sustained winds were reduced from 190 mph and the central pressure lowered from 909 mb. Camille is also reanalyzed to have undergone genesis as a tropical cyclone 18 hours earlier than first indicated on August 14, 1969.

When comparing Camille with the two other known Category 5 hurricanes that have struck the continental United States since 1900, Camille (900 mb and 175 mph) ranks between the 1935 Labor Day hurricane (892 mb and 185 mph) and 1992's Andrew (922 mb and 165 mph) as the strongest hurricanes on record at landfall.



Hurricane Camille on the afternoon of August 17, 1969, from the ESSA-9 polar orbiting satellite.

Revisions to the Camille's database were accomplished by obtaining the original observations collected – mainly by ships, weather stations, coastal radars, Navy/Air Force/Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) Hurricane Hunter aircraft reconnaissance planes, ESSA/NASA satellite imagery – and analyzing Camille based upon our understanding of hurricanes today. (The agency ESSA is now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - NOAA.)

Margie Kieper, Jack Beven, Hugh Willoughby, Chris Landsea, and the NHC Best Track Change Committee all made substantial contributions toward the reanalysis of this devastating hurricane. This research is supported in part by the NOAA Climate Program Office.

NOAA Hurricane Re-analysis Project: http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/data_sub/re_anal.html

Contact: nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov

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