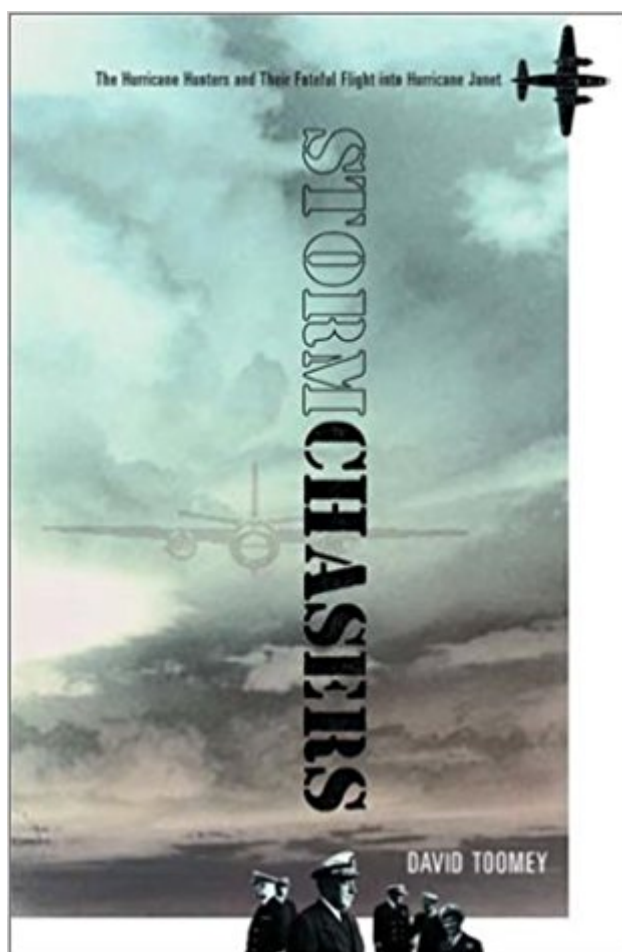


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# Stormchasers: The Hurricane Hunters And Their Fateful Flight Into Hurricane Janet



## Synopsis

In September 1955, Navy Lieutenant Commander Grover B. Windham and a crew of eight flew out of Guantanamo Bay into the eye of Hurricane Janet - a routine weather reconnaissance mission from which they never returned. In the wake of World War II, the Air Force and the Navy discovered new civilian arenas where pilots could test their courage and skill - weather reconnaissance was one of them. Hurricane hunters flew into raging storms to gauge their strength and predict their paths. Without the modern technology of the 21st century they relied on rudimentary radar systems to locate the hurricane's eye and estimated the drift of their aircraft by looking at the windblown waves below. Drawing from Navy documents and interviews with members of the squadron and relatives of the crew, this book reconstructs the ill-fated mission, from preflight checks to the moment of their final transmission.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Toomey is an English professor who also teaches technical writing and coauthored *Amelia Earhart's Daughters*. So he seems like the right man to take on the post-World War II fighter pilots who happily volunteered to fly into hurricanes with occasionally lethal consequences. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Using the 1955 disappearance of a navy weather plane inside a hurricane as his reference point, Toomey roams about the presatellite history of research into the tempests. Knowledge about hurricanes was so rudimentary that determining their cyclonic structure was considered progress.

From that discovery in the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, advances in knowledge and forecasting were modest. By interspersing the history of hurricane research with the preparations of the ill-fated navy crew, Toomey effectively points out how insufficient understanding of meteorological conditions impelled weather planes to fly in such dangerous conditions. Besides the informative technical coverage about hurricane behavior, the twin-engine Neptune plane, and its weather instrumentation, Toomey delivers an understated narrative that ennobles crew members. He doesn't inflate basic information that's known about them, and alludes to their awareness of the perils in their assignment. Toomey's dramatization of scenarios of what might have happened to the crew--a ditching in the storm's eye or midair wing failure--will keep readers rapt. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book contains a lot of history and hard science . Meteorology history as science progressed, aviation and some avionics history and even some computer history as well, all of which I have been interested in for many years. What a shame that this book had to be written surrounding the loss of one of the hurricane hunter planes. It is still a very well written and researched piece, and with the exception of three very short segments is historically accurate . I highly recommend this book to anyone with interest in any of the fields mentioned. Keep in mind that even with our advances in science and technology we still do not completely understand weather.

I personally saw Snowbird 5 return to NAS JAX, Fl. with her starboard engine on fire. The standby aircraft took off never to return. This is not a scientific work, however with the Hurricane season here again the reader can learn a lot about these beautiful storms. Such goodies can be found such as, water can reach minus 40 degrees F if undisturbed . An aircraft can gain or lose 100 ft. of altitude per second. The strong section of the cane is between 12 and 3 o'clock section of the storm. Buy this book, don't let it sit. Sad but not gory. Great book for children , teenagers and older. Great educational work for children.

David Toomey's well researched book has an astounding wealth of information that is both stunning in detail and fascinating in every aspect. This book drew my attention because of my own obsession with hurricanes, having been through several in North Carolina, (to include Fran, Bonnie, and Floyd ). During Floyd we were in the eye of the storm at night and went out and looked up into a clear, silent sky and watched as suddenly a hurricane hunter flew overhead, the only sound at all. David Toomey details the thoughts that went into the changing views of weather as a philosophy and the evolution

into the science of meteorology. This transformation from philosophy to science is interesting. Weather phenomena was thought to be only a local event and the idea that weather traveled from one area to another was not even imagined. The idea of weather patterns was a foreign concept as well. Toomey details this transformation which spans the continents, including battles of very differing ideas. The leap in the quantity of scientific data and reliability of its use from the the 1950's to present time is amazing. This scientific evolution was also a big push in the development of computers, originally called a "calculating clock"(in 1623), then "stepped reckoner" (1673), and then a giant leap to the "Difference Engine" in the 1830's. This subject in and of itself would have been a great subject. Throughout all of this history of meteorology, the key aspect of this book centers on the people that flew into the hurricanes to obtain the data that would revolutionize hurricane forecasting. Their lives are opened and the picture that is viewed is of normal, everyday men. They saw their mission in life and pursued it, even in the face of daunting odds and tremendous danger. David Toomey has written a book that covers the world of hurricanes from the science to the very human and intimate aspects that surround them and has done so in a way that both educates and captivates your attention.

Tells loss of one Hurricane Recon Crew, history of hurricane structure theory throughout the ages and set up of Hurricane Hunters. Interesting and informative reading. Recommended reading.

Very in depth information about hurricanes and efforts to understand them. A very good story of one plane and the crew lost. Somewhat tedious technically.

This book is about the Hurricane Hunters, the crews that fly into hurricanes to take vital measurements like temperature, humidity, wind speed, direction -- all in order to diagnose them so the experts can try to figure out how strong they'll get and where they'll be going. This book focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on Hurricane Janet, which became a very powerful and eventually a deadly hurricane in 1955. It was bad enough that it brought down one of the Hurricane Hunters that flew into it. The outstanding thing about this book is its breadth: it discusses the members of the lost crew, the history of storm research, specifically hurricanes, the kinds of aircraft used to fly into hurricanes, the history of the Hurricane Hunters (which began during World War II). I knew something about the history of the Hurricane Hunters, having read a 1950s book by researcher Ivan Tannehill "The Hurricane Hunters" but Toomey goes farther and discusses things like parachuting from an airplane and ditching at sea. He also spends a number of chapters on the history of storm

research (actually covered a little better in the book "Storm Watchers" by John D. Cox), but I found some new things here too. If there is a drawback, it's the fact that this much breadth comes at the price of everything going too fast: I'd like a little more detail. But for 300 pages, it does the job as well as any. I find it a welcome addition to books about the weather.

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