

In the wake of Ivan

Deidre Rhim

Staff Writer

Hurricane Ivan has wreaked havoc on the Caribbean and Gulf coast regions, first by slamming into Grenada Sept. 9 and then by barreling into the Gulf coast of the United States Sept. 15. The death toll is approximately 112, with 70 deaths reported in the Caribbean and 42 in the United States. Search and rescue efforts are still underway in many coastal cities, and officials expect the death toll to rise.

According to the Associated Press, Ivan is the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

In Grenada, where the Category 4 storm took the lives of 34 people, winds in excess of 155 miles per hour banged and battered poorly constructed buildings and destroyed many of the shanty towns citizens called home.

Cuba was spared a direct hit from Ivan when the storm passed through the strait between Cuba and Mexico. Officials advised cruise ships to stay out to sea, while 15,000 people evacuated the Yucatan Peninsula, according to the International Herald Tribune. Grand Cayman reported no casualties from Ivan; however, there was damage from the strong

winds.

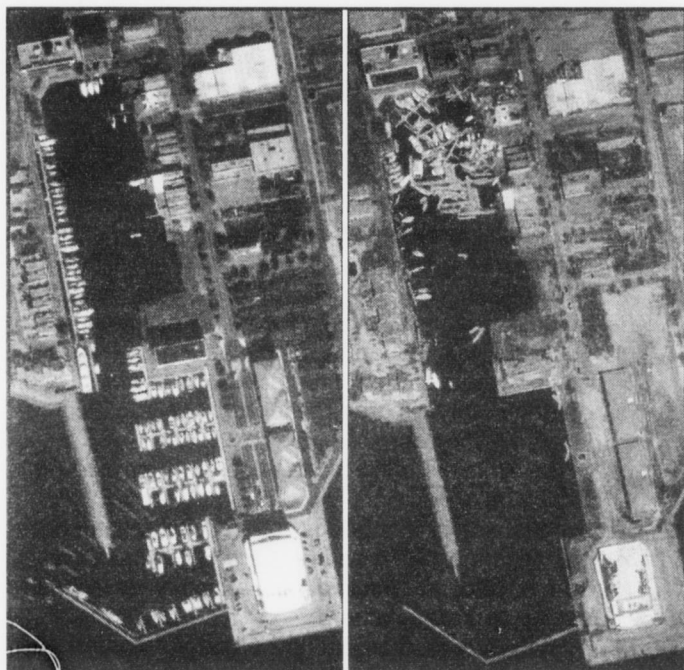
"Winds ripped the apartments like matchsticks," one radio report from Grand Cayman said. "The whole island has taken a battering. Cars and trucks were floating away like toys."

As of Sept. 12, forecasters were expecting Ivan to hit the Florida coast by Sept. 14. However, the storm shifted westward late Sept. 14, sparing some of the Florida coast from the projected direct hit. Three hundred miles of Gulf coastline, however, were still hit directly.

State officials in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama hurried to issue mandatory evacuation plans and curfews for two million residents.

Insurance experts expect damage to be between \$3 and 10 billion, compared with \$11 to 13 billion in damages from Charley and Frances combined. Fallen trees, high winds, and flooding greatly contributed to the devastation experienced from the Caribbean islands to rural areas in the United States like Stokesdale, N.C., where tornados spawned by Ivan destroyed many homes.

In a report issued Sept. 17, Gulf Power in northwest Florida reported "catastrophic" damage, with 90 percent of its customers without electricity. Officials of Alabama Power



Before and after pictures of a marina hit by Ivan. In the after picture (r), hurricane winds have destroyed the docks and piled the boats by the shore.

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World news in brief

Chris Lett

Staff Writer

Martha opts to go to jail early

Disgraced homemaking guru Martha Stewart, who was sentenced in July to five months in prison, has decided to begin serving time before her appeal is heard. Stewart was convicted on counts of obstruction of justice and lying to investigators in the wake of allegations of insider trading. Walter Dellinger, one of Stewart's lawyers, said "delays in the appeals process" prompted Stewart's decision. At a news conference for Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc., Stewart said she hopes to be out of prison in time for the

spring planting season.

Two U.S. hostages dead, Briton awaits fate

Members of the Tawhid and Jihad groups, which are headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi of Jordan, have killed two U.S. hostages. A video of the beheading of first hostage, construction contractor Eugene Armstrong, began being broadcast on the Internet Sept. 18. A video of the beheading of Armstrong's colleague Jack Hensley followed Sept. 21. There has been no word on the fate of British engineer Kenneth Bigley, who was kidnapped along with Armstrong and Hensley from Baghdad.

Cracker Barrel settles discrimination case

On Sept. 9, Cracker Barrel agreed to pay \$8.7 million to settle allegations of unfair treatment of black customers and discrimination towards black employees. Over 40 plaintiffs in 16 states had alleged that blacks were denied service, assigned to segregated seating, subjected to racial slurs, and served food taken from garbage cans. About 12 employees had claimed their workplaces were segregated, and that blacks were usually assigned "back of the house" assignments like cooking or washing dishes.

reported the largest power outage in the state's history: approximately 802,000 outages, which is double the previous record, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Florida residents who had already braved Hurricanes Charley and Frances were once again forced to brace themselves for another hurricane. Some, like resident David Hastings, had seen enough. "I've been here since '71, and I am sick of it," he told a reporter from ABCNews.com.

Other Gulf coast residents

were just thankful to be safe.

In a telephone interview Sept. 19, Theresa Pinnock of Montgomery, Ala., said, "Buffalo (N.Y.) has snow, and Montgomery has hurricanes. I am very thankful that we are okay, and our house is still in one piece" (Pinnock is a relative of this article's writer).

The Red Cross has appealed to the public for more donations and volunteers. According to ABCNews.com, the combined cost of the hurricane season before Ivan was expected to be \$50 million, about \$14 mil-

lion more than was donated to the agency last year. Agency officials say it is still too soon to say how much Ivan might add to the price tag.

Those who want to assist victims of Ivan should contact their local Red Cross, or call 1-800-HELP-NOW. Contributions can also be made online at Redcross.org/donate/donation-form.asp. ☞

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