

Typhoon Owen developed from a disturbance which tracked south of Guam during 20 September 1979. Two days later, satellite imagery (Fig. 3-19-1) showed that the system was organizing at the same time that aircraft reconnaissance data indicated a definite surface circulation with a 1000 mb central pressure. This prompted JTWC to issue a tropical depression warning on the system at 220000Z.

During the 2 days prior to and 1 day after 22 September, the system moved on a generally westward track at 5 to 8 kt (9 to 15 km/hr). This speed and direction was in good agreement with climatological tracks. Also, the 500 mb analysis showed a strong subtropical ridge which indicated westward steering. Based on this information, JTWC forecast westward movement for the first 8 warnings. However, Owen unexpectedly turned sharply to the north and began moving at speeds of 15 kt (28 km/hr).

Post-analysis revealed a possible reason for this movement. Figure 3-19-2 shows

the 221200Z analyses at 500 mb and 200 mb superimposed. An upper-level trough is evident on the 200 mb analysis just west of the cyclone. Southerly winds of 50 kt (26 m/sec) were observed on the eastern periphery of the trough. Considerable vertical shear existed in the layer from 500 mb to 200 mb. It appears that the steering and depth of this upper-level trough rather than 500 mb steering was the dominant feature in Owen's movement. Under its influence, Owen tracked generally northward throughout his lifetime, although undergoing major changes in speed. He slowed to a barely perceptible 1-kt (2 km/hr) movement just northeast of Okinawa (at the latitude of the subtropical ridge axis) and then dramatically accelerated to 24 kt (44 km/hr) 36 hours later under vertically consistent westerly steering. At this time, Owen made landfall near Osaka, Japan and began weakening in intensity while still accelerating to 47 kt (87 km/hr). Eventually, he transitioned into an extratropical system but not before reaching a maximum intensity of 110 kt (57 m/sec) (Fig. 3-19-3) on 26 September.

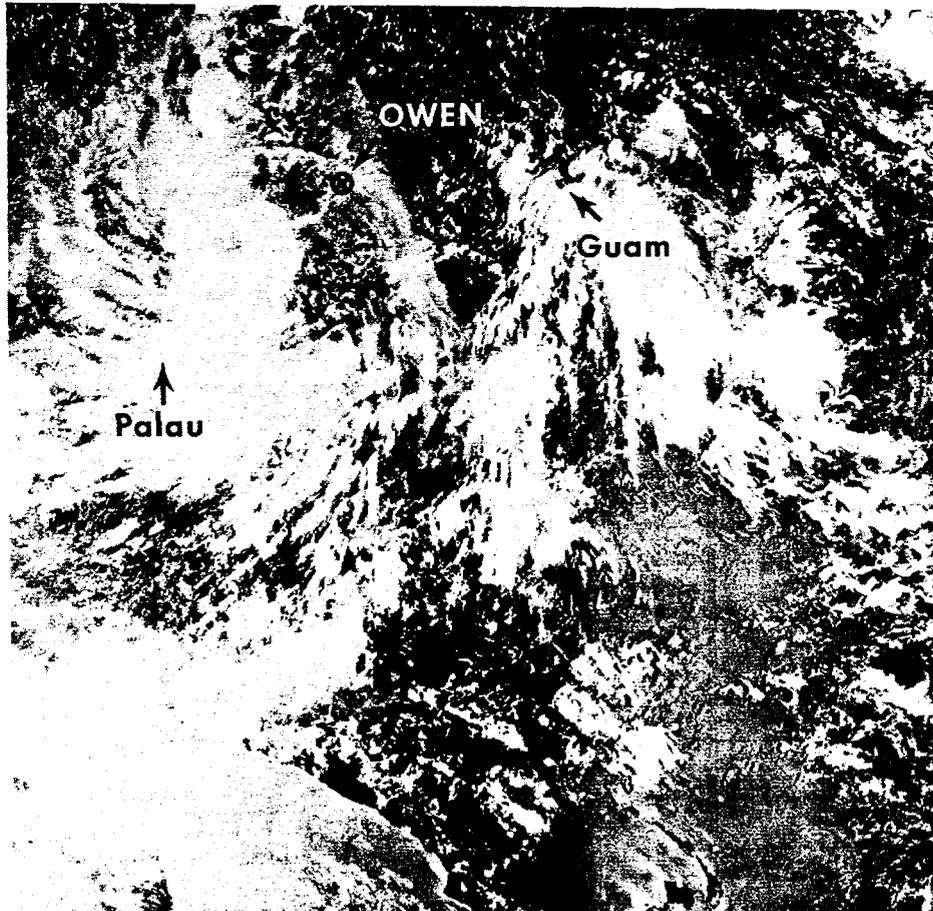


FIGURE 3-19-1. Typhoon Owen as a tropical disturbance, 21 September 1979, 2326Z. (DMSI imagery)

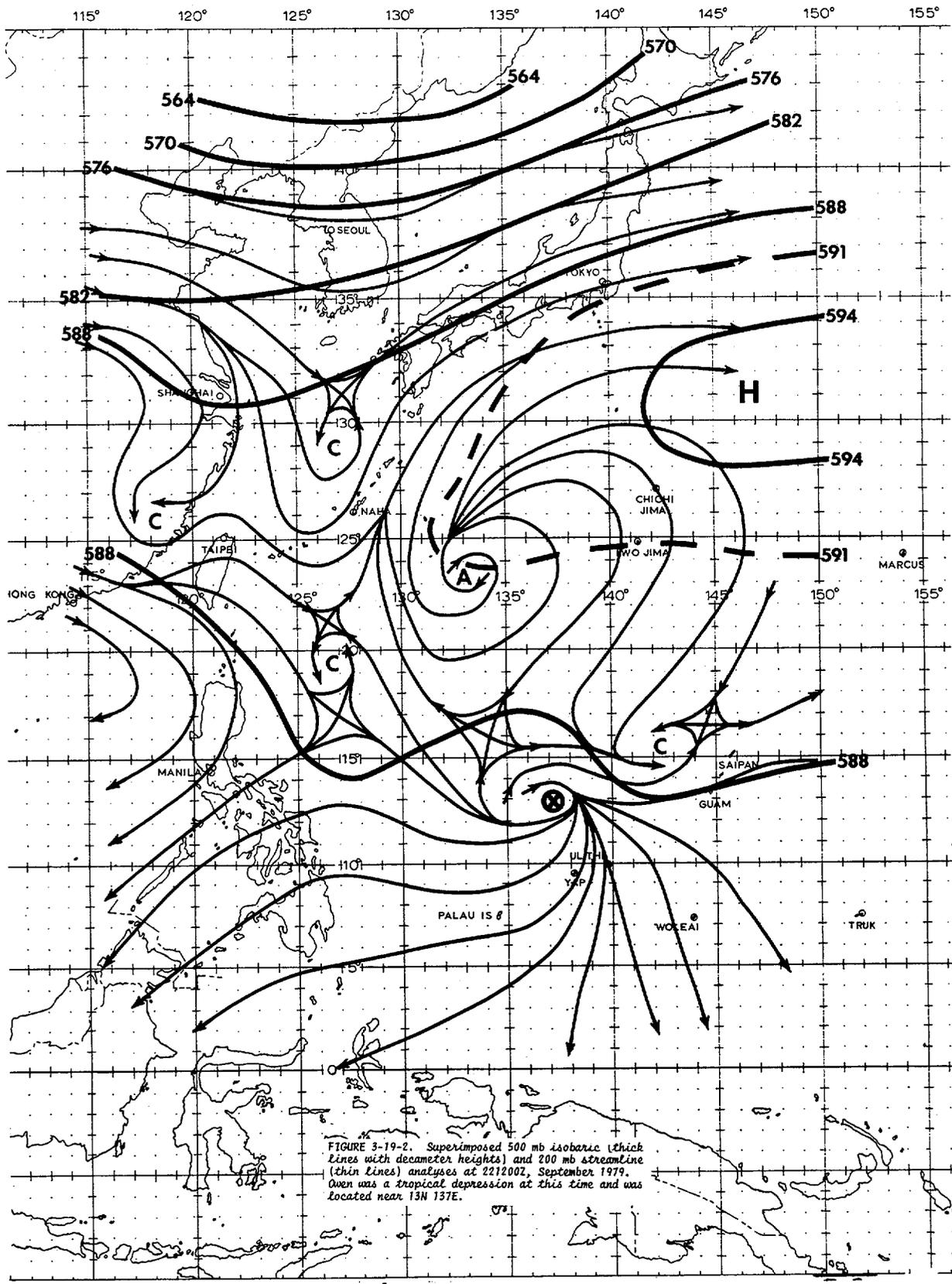


FIGURE 3-19-2. Superimposed 500 mb isobaric (thick lines with decimeter heights) and 200 mb streamline (thin lines) analyses at 221200Z, September 1979. Owen was a tropical depression at this time and was located near 13N 137E.



FIGURE 3-19-3. Typhoon Owen at maximum intensity of 110 kt (57 m/sec), 26 September 1979, 0145Z. (DMSP imagery)