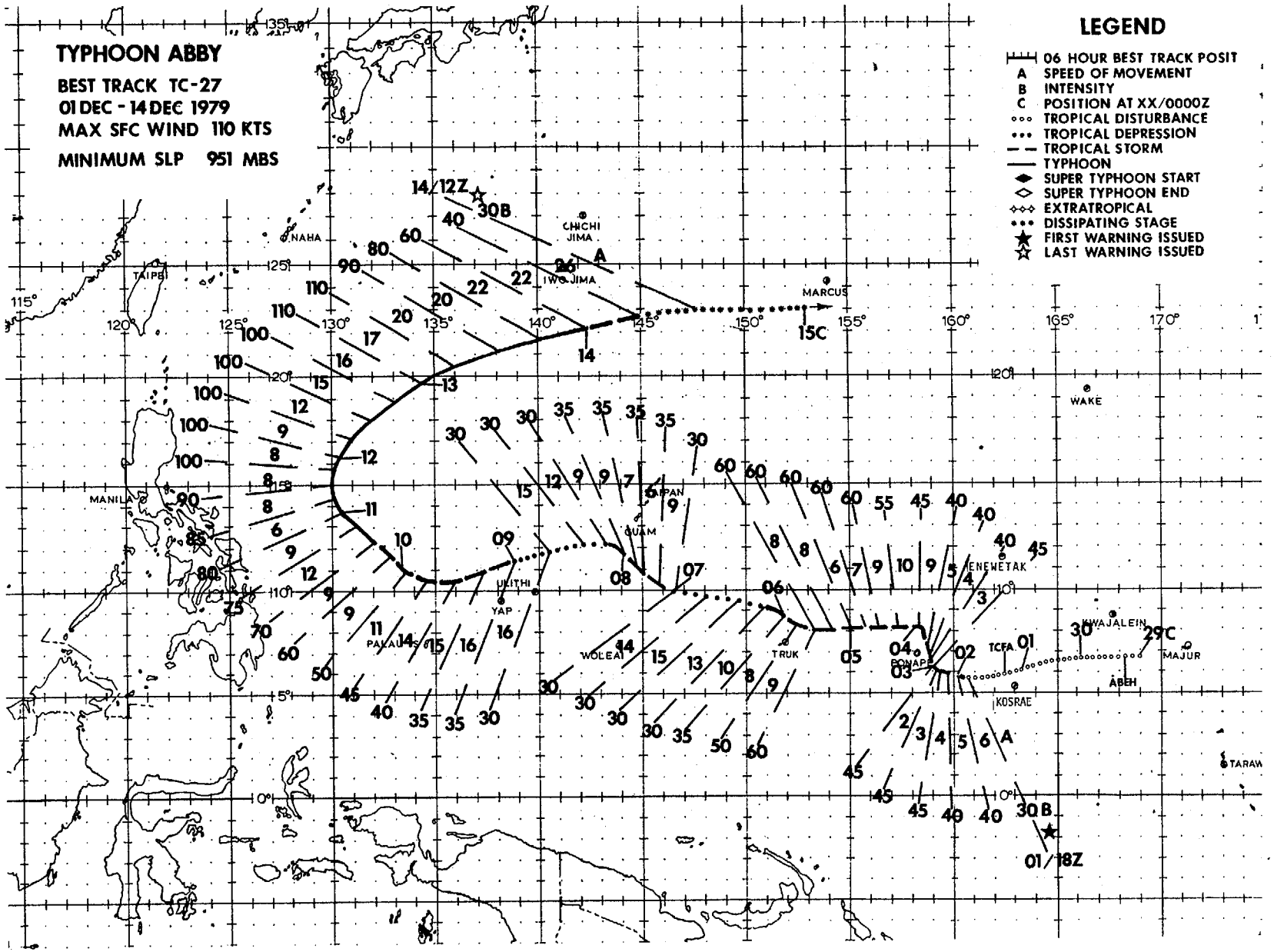
TYPHOON ABBY
BEST TRACK TC-27
01 DEC - 14 DEC 1979
MAX SFC WIND 110 KTS
MINIMUM SLP 951 MBS
LEGEND
06 HOUR BEST TRACK POSIT
A SPEED OF MOVEMENT
B INTENSITY
C POSITION AT XX/0000Z
TROPICAL DISTURBANCE
TROPICAL DEPRESSION
TROPICAL STORM
TYPHOON
SUPER TYPHOON START
SUPER TYPHOON END
EXTRATROPICAL
DISSIPATING STAGE
FIRST WARNING ISSUED
LAST WARNING ISSUED
NAHA
TAIPEI
MANILA
CHICHI JIMA
IWO JIMA
MARCUS
WAKE
SAIPAN
GUAM
ULITHI
YAP
PALAU
WOLEAI
TRUK
PONAPE
ENEWETAK
KWAJALEIN
MAJUR
ABEH
KOSRAE
TARAW
TCFA
14/12Z
30B
15C
29C
01/18Z

Abby, the last typhoon of the 1979 season, developed over the Marshall Islands during early December. Abby proved to be an unusual cyclone in several ways. Throughout much of Typhoon Abby's existence, Abby was not vertically aligned. Aircraft reconnaissance located the mid-level circulation center displaced as much as 55 nm (102 km) from the surface center. At one point, two centers were identified; a point to be discussed later. In addition, Abby fluctuated between tropical depression and tropical storm strength several times before reaching typhoon strength 10 days after formation.

Within 24 hours of the first warning, aircraft reconnaissance observed surface winds of 45 kt (23 m/sec) and a sea-level pressure of 996 mb. The surface and 700-mb centers were displaced by 12 nm (22 km). Abby continued to intensify to 60 kt (31 m/sec) on 4 October while increasing the displacement between the surface and 700-mb centers.

Abby deviated from a westward track to a north-northwestward track on 3 December with a reduced forward speed of movement. The temporary northward movement was associated with a deepening mid-tropospheric trough which moved rapidly northeastward away from Japan on 1 December. Abby resumed a westward track with increased forward speed after the trough axis passed east of Abby late on the 3rd.

All available information (climatology, analog aids, analyses and numerical forecasts) indicated continued intensification as Abby tracked towards Guam. This expected intensification was reflected in JTWC warnings during this period. However, the opposite occurred. As Abby moved west of Truk, she weakened to less than tropical storm strength. An upper tropospheric anticyclone north of Abby restricted Abby's outflow and resulted in the observed weakening (Fig. 3-27-1). By 7 December, Abby reintensified to minimum tropical storm strength as she moved westward and away from the influence of the restricting anticyclone. Abby then tracked west-northwestward under the influence of a mid-tropospheric long-wave trough oriented along 142E. As the trough moved east of Abby, the subtropical mid-tropospheric ridge again built eastward, providing a mechanism which steered Abby towards the west-southwest. During the 8th, Abby once again weakened to less than tropical storm strength and increased her forward speed of movement.

Abby was not vertically aligned from the issuance of the first warning through the 9th. On the 9th, aircraft reconnaissance making a supplemental fix at 0617Z observed that Abby possessed multiple 700 mb centers. By the time of entry into Abby for a levied 0830Z fix, only one well organized, intensifying center was found. The following is a storm mission summary by the Aerial Reconnaissance Weather Officer (ARWO), who made the double penetration into Abby: "This mission started out as a normal fix but ended up being unusual. On our way inbound for the supplemental fix, there was no problem reading winds at flight level or on the surface. Winds were 20-25 kt the entire way. An area of thunderstorm activity became visible ahead of us. As we neared it, the doppler indicated that the 700 mb center was in the middle of the thunderstorm. Not eager to go find this out, we went back to find the surface center. Enroute, we saw surface winds in excess of 35 kt which led us to a fairly disorganized surface center just east of the main thunderstorm. Over it was a fairly small light and variable wind center. Radar showed little curvature in the shower pattern, but the surface winds did indicate a weak circulation existed at this first position. No weather existed to the east of our first fix, and this position was right on the JTWC forecast track. On the second fix, things had changed. As we came in the second time, we encountered considerable precipitation. Doppler and search radar indicated a center with a possible wall cloud forming considerably west of our first fix. Winds were stronger at flight level and we penetrated a wall cloud of about 80% coverage. When we broke through, we encountered our strongest winds at flight level. The surface center was under the eastern wall cloud with a small light and variable wind center at 700 mb centered in the eye. Lightning started in the eastern wall cloud and spread around the

FIGURE 3-27-1 is on following page.

FIGURE 3-27-2. Typhoon Abby's two outflow centers are indicated by arrows, 9 December 1979, 0144Z. (DMSP imagery) *Figure 3-27-1 is on next page.*

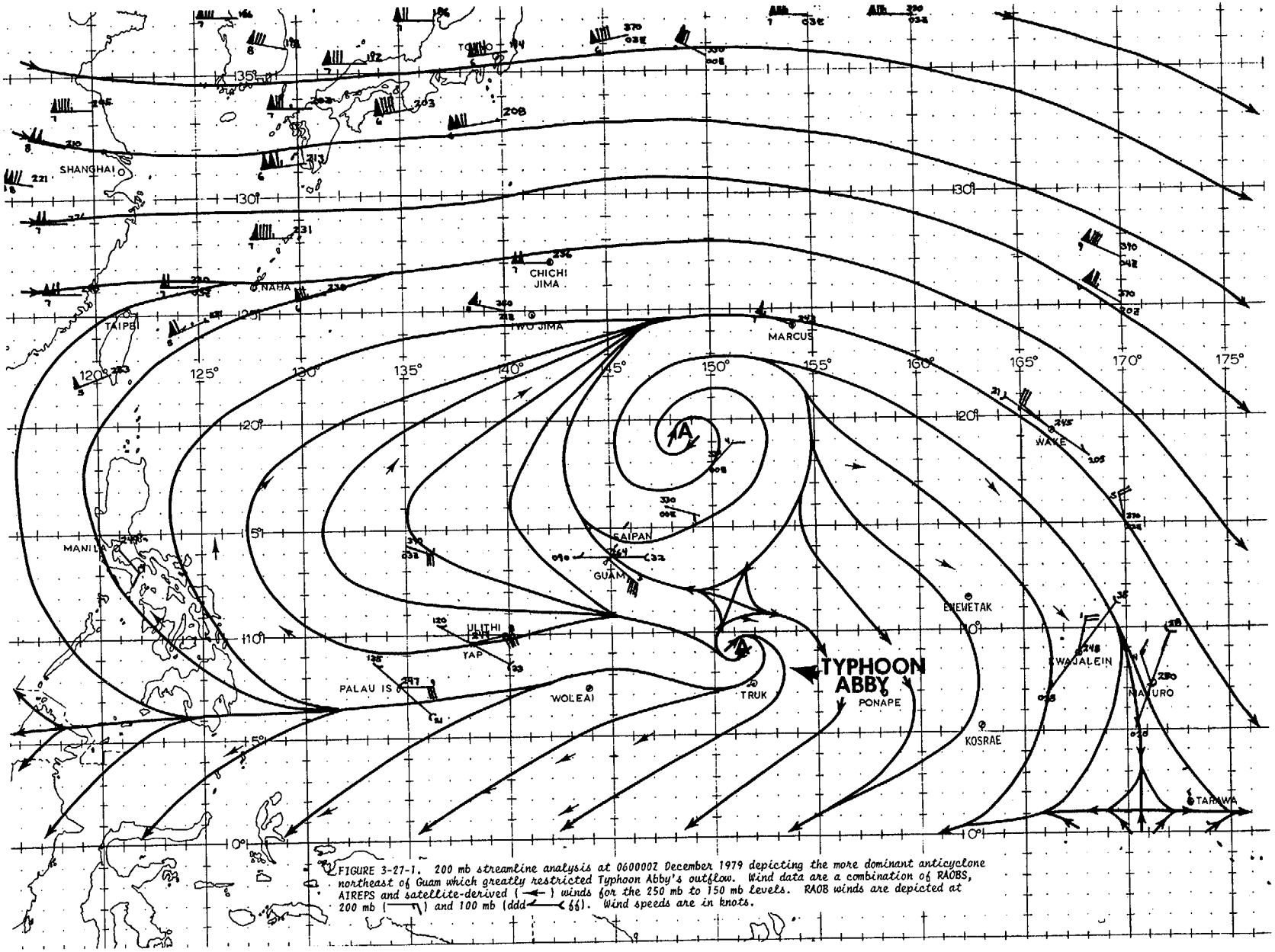

FIGURE 3-27-1. 200 mb streamline analysis at 060000Z December 1979 depicting the more dominant anticyclone northeast of Guam which greatly restricted Typhoon Abby's outflow. Wind data are a combination of RAOBS, AIREPS and satellite-derived (◄—) winds for the 250 mb to 150 mb levels. RAOB winds are depicted at 200 mb ( ) and 100 mb (ddd ◄ ff). Wind speeds are in knots.

eye. Our drop was made as close to the surface center as was possible and indicated a good 988 mb sea-level pressure. The 700 mb height was down 72 meters from the first fix. The positions were 85 miles apart causing me to believe that two centers existed for a short time with the latter becoming the predominate one. The pressure profile seems to indicate this theory...."[1] Satellite imagery at 090144Z also indicated the possible existence of multiple outflow centers (Fig. 3-27-2). While Abby was reorganizing into a single center, she began to reintensify to tropical storm strength. By the 10th, Abby had attained typhoon strength which made her the last typhoon of the decade.

A mid-tropospheric short-wave trough moved from mainland China into the Sea of Japan and deepened on the 10th. In response to the short-wave trough, the subtropical mid-tropospheric ridge again receded eastward north of Abby. The interaction of these two synoptic features allowed Abby to again track northwest. On the 11th, Typhoon Abby recurved in response to another mid-tropospheric short-wave trough, which extended further south than the trough on the 10th. This last trough in the series moved into the northern part of the South China Sea and deepened, causing Abby to finally follow a recurvature track.

Typically, recurving typhoons have their maximum intensities either less than 12 hours after recurvature or prior to recurvature (Riehl, 1971). Abby, however, did not reach maximum intensity until 36 hours after recurvature. By 13 December, Typhoon Abby reached maximum intensity of 110 kt (57 m/sec) with a minimum sea-level pressure of 951 mb (Fig. 3-27-3). As Abby continued toward the east-northeast, she approached a regime of very strong westerlies in the middle-and upper-troposphere. The strong westerlies induced Abby's acceleration and rapid weakening. Abby dissipated on the 14th due to strong vertical shear between the surface and middle levels.

FIGURE 3-27-3. Typhoon Abby just after recurvature, 12 December 1979, 0021Z. (DMSP imagery)

[1]CHARLES B. STANFIELD, Capt, USAF: Mission ARWO.