



# News Release

## US Army Corps of Engineers®

Mississippi Valley Division/  
Mississippi River Commission  
cemvd-pa@mvd02.usace.army.mil

**Release #:** 03-11

**For Release:** August 20, 2003

**Contact:** Public Affairs Office

**Phone:** 601-634-7783

---

## Death of a Former MRC President

VICKSBURG, Miss., August 20, 2003 -- Maj. Gen. Charles C. Noble (U.S. Army-Retired), former president of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC), died August 16, 2003, in McLean, Va. He was 87 years old. General Noble served as MRC president from September 1971 to August 1974.

The commission was established by an act of Congress on June 28, 1879, to develop a flood control and navigation plan for the Mississippi River. The commission consists of seven members:

- 3 officers of the Corps of Engineers, one of them its president
- 1 member from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and
- 3 civilians, two must be civil engineers

All MRC members are nominated by the President of the United States, subject to confirmation by the Senate, and serve as advisers to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Engineers.

The MRC has authority to operate on the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., to Head of Passes, La.

While serving as MRC president, General Noble successfully guided the lower Mississippi Valley through the Mississippi River flood of 1973. In January of that year he ordered an acceleration of a planned valley-wide flood fight exercise to rehearse vital personnel in the activities they would be expected to perform in an actual flood emergency.

## 2-2-2-2 NOBLE

This dress rehearsal paid drastic dividends during the ensuing flood fight. General Noble is remembered for making the difficult and controversial decision to open the Morganza Floodway for the first and only time since its completion in 1954.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) designed the floodway to protect the city of New Orleans, La., from inundation and to reduce stress on levees flanking the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers.

In 1973, General Noble was confronted with the potential failure of the Old River control structure, a portion of which had collapsed due to excessive scour caused by the flood. Maj. Gen. Noble recognized that opening the Morganza Floodway represented the only way to relieve pressure on the eroding structure and to prevent the Atchafalaya from possibly capturing the Mississippi River.

Maj. Gen. Noble was born in Syracuse, N.Y. in 1916. He was a 1940 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he received a bachelor of science degree, and a 1948 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received a master's degree in civil engineering. General Noble was also a graduate of the Army War College (1957), the National War College (1964) and George Washington University (1964-AMIA).

He served as Battalion Commander in the European Theatre during World War II. After the war, Maj. Gen. Noble served as Executive Officer in the Manhattan District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Deputy Executive Secretary of the Military Liaison Committee to the Atomic Energy Commission. He also served as plans officer at Department of the Army and at Supreme Headquarters Europe. General Noble later served as the Assistant District Engineer, New York District (USACE) 1954-1956; and District Engineer, Louisville District, (USACE) 1958-1960.

### **3-3-3-3 NOBLE**

After directing construction of Minuteman ICBM facilities in the Western United States, he became the Engineer, United Nations Command and Eighth U.S. Army in Korea. Subsequently, he served as Director of Southeast Asia Construction in the Office, Secretary of Defense; as Director of Civil Works in the Office, Chief of Engineers, with concurrent duty on the Atlantic-Pacific Interoceanic Canal Study Commission; as Engineer, U.S. Army, Europe; and as Engineer Command, Vietnam, and Commanding General, U.S. Army Engineer Command, Vietnam, immediately prior to his Mississippi River Commission appointment.

General Noble will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery October 1, 2003. He is survived by three daughters: Jeanne Davey, Barbara O'Looney and Carol Noble, and one son: LTC (U.S. Army-Retired) Stephen Noble.