

THE GREAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD OF 1927

A Natural Disaster and the Role
of the Arkansas National Guard



OVERVIEW OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD

Impact:

\$1 billion in damages
(equivalent to large portion
of federal budget at the
time).

- The Event:
- The flood of 1927 was one of the worst natural disasters in American history.
- Inundated 27,000 square miles (about the size of New England).
- Killed up to 1,000 people and displaced 700,000 individuals

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD

- Excessive Rainfall:
 - The flood was caused by an unusually wet spring in 1927 ,with the Mississippi River receiving rain from all areas within its watershed.
- Record-Breaking Flood Levels :
 - The Mississippi River reached record-breaking levels in some places,with water cresting over 40 feet higher than normal.
- Levee Failures:
 - Numerous levee systems failed,leading to catastrophic flooding across many areas,particularly in Louisiana ,Arkansas and Mississippi.



THE HUMAN TOLL OF THE FLOOD

- Casualties:
 - Over 1,000 lives were lost during the flood.
 - Many people drowned, while others succumbed to diseases such as malaria, which spread in the aftermath.
- Displacement:
 - Approximately 700,000 people were forced to flee their homes due to rising waters.
 - Entire communities were uprooted, and temporary refugee camps were set up for survivors.
- Economic Impact :
 - The flood devastated farming communities, destroying crops, livestock, and infrastructure, leading to an economic depression in the region.
- \$1 billion worth of damages (a massive sum during the region's economy)

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY RESPONSE

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

- President Calvin Coolidge declared a state of emergency, sending federal aid to the affected areas.
- The U.S. Army corps of Engineers played a crucial role in flood control and relief efforts.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

- In addition to regular military forces, the Arkansas National Guard was mobilized to assist with disaster relief and rescue operations
- Aviation units, including the 154th observation squadron, were instrumental in aerial reconnaissance, damage assessment, and delivery of supplies.

AREEN IDREES