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of Engineers®**
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Kasprisin meets with field, district office staff



Photo by Paul Machajewski

District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin held a Town Hall meeting on May 11 in Winona with field personnel, mainly from the Mississippi River Project Office. He held a second meeting in St. Paul on May 20.

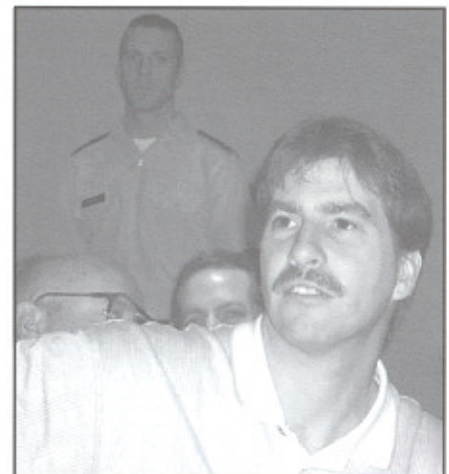


Photo by Jon Lyman

Tom Sully (above) was one of many district office employees to ask questions of Col. Kasprisin during the Town Hall meeting with district office personnel, May 20.



Photo above and below by Jon Lyman

Col. Kasprisin recognized the members of the Red River Response Team (at left) for their support to communities on the Red River of the North this spring. Left to right are Rick Femrite, Neil Schwanz, Darrell Morey, Jody Kormanik, Greg Eggers and Rich Pomerleau. Also honored was Ed Eaton.



Col. Kasprisin also recognized excellence in the pursuit of customer satisfaction. Left to right in the bottom photo are: Tom Sully, Bob Mike, Amy Bretoi and John Anfinson.



Strategic Vision: *Revolutionize Effectiveness*

An Investment in Our Future

By Kenneth Kasprisin
St. Paul District Commander

and Captain John Weidner
St. Paul District Deputy Commander

What is the most important resource in the district? Above all else, what determines success or failure? Answer: trained, competent, dedicated employees. So how do we identify what training we should provide?

Technique 1: Arbitrarily pick an amount of money (let's say three percent of our operating budget); then use a cookie-cutter approach to distribute the money to each office in proportion to their size; then let everyone submit a 'wish' list of what training courses they would like to attend in a location they prefer. You get the picture. We probably won't get the biggest bang for our buck here!

Technique 2: Identify what collective and individual tasks we must perform. Assess our capabilities to perform these tasks as Trained (T), needs Practice (P), or Untrained (U). Prioritize based on the assessment and criticality of the skills. Calculate how much it will cost to perform essential and desired training. Program the appropriate amount into the operating budget. Monitor and adjust throughout the year.

Technique 2 is what METL is all about. Our Mission Essential Task List (METL) prioritizes our resources and focuses our efforts. How well we master the particulars of the METL process directly affects how effectively we execute our mission – as individuals and as a group.

As you know, we are a project-funded organization. This makes us unique among government agencies. Because our budget

is dependent upon our workload, we need a system in place to prioritize our resources – particularly our training dollars – to ensure we conduct the most essential training each year. The METL process allows us to do just that by targeting training to the individual tasks that are most critical or most in need of improvement.

Moreover, METL tells us how much money we should budget for training. It establishes the training priorities for each person, section, branch and office or division so that training and objectives directly link to missions and projects. Under our old training philosophy, each division or office received a fixed percentage of training money regardless of their requirements. METL allocates training resources based on need, which are linked to missions.

The first step in implementing the METL process was to develop the list of tasks essential to accomplishing our mission. This means we needed a clearly defined mission and specified essential tasks. This step was completed early this summer when MG Anderson approved our official Mission and METL list.

Our mission is:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District executes water resource programs and projects, protects and restores the environment, and provides emergency services to benefit our region and the nation. The district is prepared to support military programs.

Our six mission essential tasks are:

- Execute water and environmental resource programs;
- Provide technical support for others;
- Respond to emergencies;
- Develop and maintain excellent administrative support systems;
- Develop and sustain a quality work force;
- Satisfy the customer.

As you can see, these are fairly

See "Future," next page

encompassing 'collective' tasks. They must be further distilled to get down to the individual level. Hence, each subsequent organizational level (division, branch, section, office, etc.) had to specify what collective and individual tasks must be accomplished at their level in support of the district's essential tasks. **BOTTOM LINE:** If we are doing things that don't directly support the accomplishment of a district level task - we should not be doing them! Conversely, we should clearly know and document every critical individual task that we must perform to effectively execute our mission and they should be clearly spelled out in job descriptions and on individual performance objectives.

Once this was done, section and office chiefs

assessed each individual's proficiency at performing their individual tasks. The options for assessment

were: Trained (T), Partially trained (P), or Untrained (U). Branch chiefs then assessed their section's proficiency, followed by division chiefs assessing their branches.

While this was going on, we also rated the criticality of each individual, section, branch and division-level task. Although all are needed to accomplish our mission, some appeared to have a greater impact on our performance than others. With this realization, we rated each task as either Critical (C), Important (I), or Beneficial (B) to our mission accomplishment. This gave us another dimension to prioritize our needed training.

When all of this was completed, we had a database that outlined our proficiency at every task necessary to accomplish our mission, and the relative significance of that

task to our mission accomplishment. With this information in hand, the next step was to prioritize and target our training needs. Clearly, we needed to train on tasks that were critical and untrained before training on beneficial tasks. The training committee sorted and prioritized these requirements and then identified a target amount for our FY00 budget. All that remains for this first cycle of the METL process is for you to attend training. Then, sometime next year, the assessment - prioritization - training cycle will begin again.

To truly complete the process, we must ensure there exists a clear linkage between METL, TAPES (Total Army Performance Evaluation System) and your IDPs (Individual Development Plans). Individual

tasks outlined in METL must be aligned with TAPES objectives. Moreover, future training needs should be reflected in each IDP.

Take this opportunity to discuss these tasks with your supervisor. Do you know what your METL tasks are?

I am confident you will see a more 'reasoned' approach to training through the use of METL. It certainly makes sense to allocate training dollars based on need rather than organizational size. This process identified the need for more than \$1.6 million in the FY00 training budget (includes tuition, travel, per diem and salaries) - a substantial increase over FY99!

The METL process may not solve every training challenge we have, but it brings us much closer than we have ever been. I appreciate your support as we continue to implement this methodology in the district.

ESSAYONS!

"We are a project-funded organization. This makes us unique among government agencies."

TRAINING IMPORTANCE			
	TRAINED	PARTIALLY TRAINED	UNTRAINED
CRITICAL	X	X	X
IMPORTANT	x	x	X
BENEFICIAL	x	x	X
PRIORITY x- LOW X-MODERATE X-HIGH			

Strategic Vision: Build the Team

Julson, Maybach and Crump honored as 1999 Civil Servants of the Year

Recognition banquet held in Minneapolis on May 7

By Molly Howe
Public Affairs student



Photo by Paul Machajewski
Denise Julson

Denise Julson, administrative assistant for the Mississippi River Project Office (MRPO,) was surprised at receiving a 1998 Civil Servant of the Year Award. "I had not given any thought to ever receiving it," she said.

Julson's "we can get it done" motto leaves little time to think about awards. She deals with hundreds of personnel actions for the project and works extra hours on the weekdays and on weekends.

Processing includes return-to-duty actions, seasonal layoffs and terminations. Julson requests approximately 1,000 personnel actions every year for the MRPO.

Julson's high quality processing of personnel functions is critical to the success of the project's missions.

"Denise exemplifies the Mississippi River Project's 'can do, will do' customer service philosophy," said Dean Peterson, Julson's current supervisor. "Denise combines commitment and competency, along with professionalism and integrity to get the job done for the project."

With responsibility to provide support for seventeen field offices and more than 300 employees, Julson works hard to ensure the needs of each office and individual are met. She is one of the district's primary sources of information and support on the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS). She also coaches others through complex CEFMS commands.

"No problem is too big or too small - she finds a way to solve them all. We truly appreciate everything that she does for us," said Peterson.

Julson was nominated for the Civil Servant award by her supervisor at the time, Leon Mucha. "She is truly an inspiration to all of us that are fortunate to be able to work with her," said Mucha.

The MRPO is in Fountain City, Wis. The MRPO has the largest concentration of employees outside the district office with 350-400 people per year, or 280 full-time equivalents (FTE's).



Photo by Paul Machajewski
Jim Maybach

I felt very honored to be selected for the award from among a lot of excellent people with which I work," said James Maybach, a recipient of the 1998 Civil Servant of the Year Award.

Maybach, plant engineer for the Mississippi River Project Office, is referred to as the "Engine Doctor." He is responsible for ensuring the operational ability of the project's major land plant, such as bulldozers and front-end loaders, and floating plant, which includes the Dredge William A. Thompson.

Maybach is always inventing better ways to maintain the project's equipment. In the winter of 1997-1998, for example, the dry-docking of the Dredge Thompson was completed on time and within budget with 12 percent of the hull being replaced.

"Maybach is always looking for faster and better value," said Tom

Civil Servants, cont. on next page

Oksness, Maybach's supervisor. He found a source for engine rebuilding at the Army National Maintenance Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa, which rebuilt a 16-cylinder diesel engine. Contracting this work could cost up to \$160,000, but, at the center Maybach found, it only cost \$84,000. This saved the Mississippi River Project Office almost \$80,000.

By using the training center, Maybach was able to support the total Army by giving the employees at the center training experience and training in engine rebuilding.

"He was a contractor himself and he applies this knowledge to our business practices. It is an asset in our plant maintenance decisions," said Tom Oksness, Maybach's supervisor. "I would be lost without this guy."



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Tom Crump

Nobody does anything by themselves at the Corps – it's all teamwork. So I

am honored to receive such an award," said Tom Crump, a recipient of the 1998 Civil Servant of the Year Award.

Crump, senior project manager in the Project Management and Development Branch, has worked to promote team building, pride in the workplace and quality improvement initiatives. He has been a model for teamwork by professionally representing the Corps on numerous committees and task forces and by guiding a new project manager in his office.

Crump entered his current position as manager of the Continuing Authorities Program in February "with little warning and intense pressure to get results," said Charles Spitzack, Crump's supervisor. "He came up to speed quickly and is providing effective leadership and getting results."

The Continuing Authorities Program is a small projects program for flood control. Its emphasis is on construction but includes studies and projects.

When he is not managing projects and building teams, Crump spends his time as a preschool and Sunday school teacher at his church, as an assistant scout master for Boy Scouts, and as a speaker at Toastmasters.

Angie Peterson, secretary in the Executive Office, nominated Crump for the Civil Servant of the Year Award. "Tom is easy to work with, gets along great with people, likes dealing with customers, and has a caring attitude," said Peterson

Blexrud receives CO2 award

Cheryl Blexrud is the May 1999 Considering Others Award recipient. "I'm glad to see that she's getting some recognition," said Ted Engelen, lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 7, where Blexrud is the clerk. "She's very deserving of it."

Blexrud's nomination cited her great attitude and the extra personal effort she made to be sensitive to the needs of others. The result has improved daily morale.

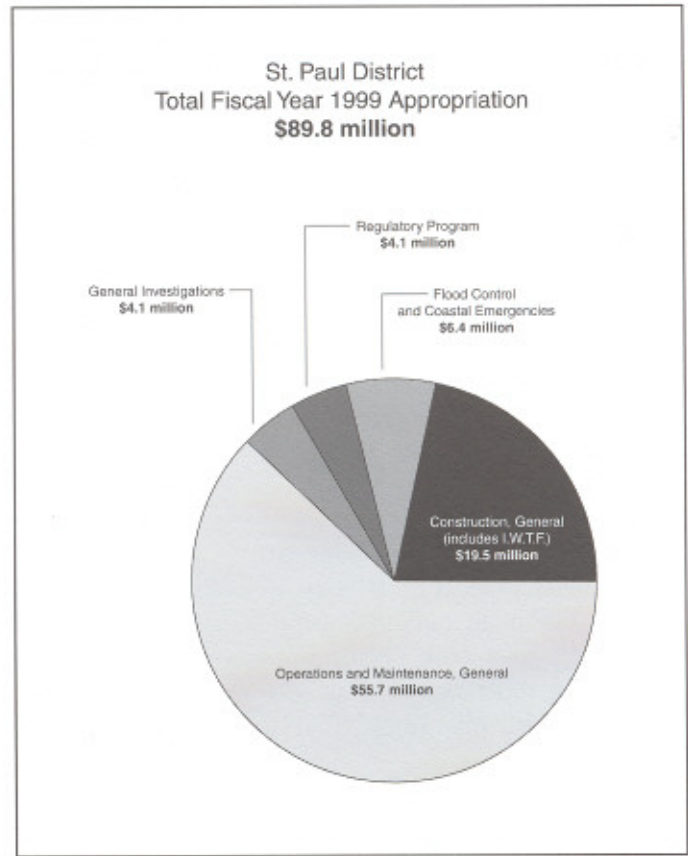
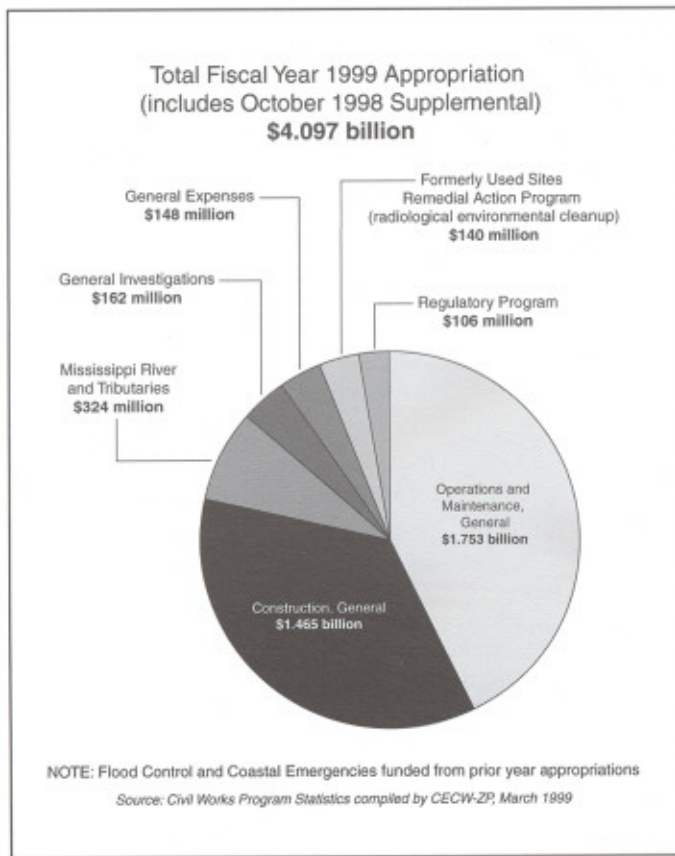
She made an extra effort to help people applying for jobs by successfully navigating through new procedures created as a result of regional personnel centers. Blexrud called the personnel center on their behalf and relayed the information to the applicants at home. Her personal effort was beyond the expected, showed consideration to the applicants, assisted in affirmative action, and improved the image of the Corps of Engineers.

Newspaper features VI's Anna Wetterling

In the June "Lifelong Learning" section of the Minneapolis Star Tribune featured Anna Wetterling, who works in the district's Visual Information Section. She earned a 4.0 grade-point average at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and gave the commencement address. Her courses emphasized art and computerized graphics. Wetterling graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1987 from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Strategic Vision: *Build the Team*

\$4 billion allotted to Corps; \$90 million to St. Paul



Charts by Anna Wetterling in cooperation with Jim Stadelman and Jack Calhoun

O&M takes biggest slice in FY99

By Peter Verstegen, Public Affairs specialist

Here is a description of where the Corps and the district allocated funds for the fiscal year 1999:

- **Operations and Maintenance:** Provides funds for preservation, operation, maintenance and care of existing river and harbor, flood control, and related works.
- **Construction, General:** Provides funds for detailed engineering studies, plans and specifications and construction of navigation, flood control, dam safety, major rehabilitation and related projects. Includes Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF)
- **General Investigations:** Provide funds for studies authorized by general or specific Congressional legislation or resolution to determine the advisability of adopting new or

modifying existing federal projects for navigation, flood damage prevention and related water resources needs. Planning assistance to and coordination with other federal agencies, states and other non-federal public interests are also funded under this appropriation.

- **Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies:** Provides funds for disaster preparedness activities, advance measures and emergency responses.
- **Regulatory Program:** Provides funds for permit evaluations, compliance and enforcement, preparation of environmental impact studies, other studies, regulations and administrative appeals.
- **General Expense:** Provides funds for technical, administrative and staff supervision assigned to the level of organization, such as HQUSACE and division offices whose missions are to establish policy, develop guidelines, review performance, and otherwise manage the direction of work accomplished by other Corps organizations.

Strategic Vision: Reshape Culture**Life jackets float, you don't**

'We know that life jackets can save lives, but they only work if people wear them'

Safety Corner

By Dana Werner, Safety Office

Earlier this year, a veteran employee of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) lost his life while taking stream gauge measurements on a river in northern North Dakota. Decked out in winter clothing and waders, he and another fellow employee waded out onto an emergency spillway with ice and with about two feet of water flowing over it. Both employees lost their footing because of the strong current and passing ice. They plunged into the frigid waters. One lost his life; the other struggled to safety.

What is wrong with this scenario?

First, consider the force of the water flowing over that spillway. Two feet of water may not seem like much or appear unsafe to cross. Consider this: six inches of fast-flowing water can knock you off your feet. Two feet of swift water can move a car.

Second, like the title suggests "Life Jackets Float, You Don't,"

neither employee was wearing a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD) or had a safety line at the time of the accident. Both employees had PFDs in the vehicle but failed to use them.

In this month's "Safety Corner," I use life jackets and PFDs interchangeably.

The combination of frigid water, heavy clothing, waders, and swift current meant certain death without a PFD.

While this accident was truly a tragedy that could have been avoided, it is a lesson each of us can learn from as we enter into the summer boating and water sports season. The vast majority of people who die in water-related accidents are not wearing a PFD. Once in the water, even the most experienced swimmer can quickly lose orientation and drown. Wearing heavy clothing, feeling the shock of cold water,

or consuming alcoholic beverages compound the problem.

We know that life jackets can save lives, but they only work if people wear them. Life jackets stored below deck, used as a seat cushion, or jammed into storage compartments are of no use to you if you are knocked unconscious in a fall overboard or off of a dock.

The National Safe Boating Council and the U.S. Coast Guard remind recreational boaters and water sports enthusiasts that the best "insurance policy" against accidental drowning is to wear a life jacket. Countless lives have been saved because accident victims were wearing a life jacket. And many lives have been lost because they were not.

For parents with children, if your child is playing unattended near water, has a fear of the water, or does not know how to swim, a Type II child or infant life jacket is recommended. And make sure the life jacket fits the child. A life jacket should fit snugly making sure it does not slip over the chin or ears. A crotch strap is an important feature on life jackets for children.

Working together, parents and other adults can ensure a child's optimum protection. Make sure children wear their life jackets! Parents, you need to be a good role model for your children. Wear your life jacket when you're out on the water.

Remember: "Life jackets float, you don't."

Until next time, THINK SAFETY.



Clip art provided by Visual Information

Upper St. Anthony Falls rededicated

Officials from the district, retirees and the City of Minneapolis rededicated the Upper St. Anthony Falls Project on June 18. The lock and dam offers a new visitors' center with displays that show the development of the lock and dam and the milling district. In the photo at right Dean Peterson, Col. Kenneth Kasprisin and Joe Dvorak cut the dedication ribbon. Below, left to right, are Kasprisin, Ken Buck, Mel Platt, Harold French, Bob Stahl, Harry Schulz and Jerry Minder. Steve Lenhart, Dvorak, and Peterson are in the front row.



Photo by Henrik Strandskov



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Strategic Vision: Reshape Culture**First district coin highlights tradition, missions**

By Bryan Armbrust
Public Affairs Office

The St. Paul's first-ever district coin provides a tangible symbol of the district's commitment to the Corps' traditions and the district's missions. The coin also "reinforces customer service, core values and the importance of investing in people" – a Strategic Vision sub-strategy.

"Bestowing an organizational coin is a time-honored, military tradition," said District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin at a recent Town Hall meeting. "Typically, the organization's commander bestows the coin upon those who have contributed to the organization in an extraordinary manner," said Capt. John Weidner, deputy district commander.

Kasprisin handed out a number of coins to district personnel (see page one) for outstanding customer service at the district's Town Hall meeting on May 20.

The coin is 2.5 inches in diameter. John Fisher and Al Geisen in Engineering Division; MaryKay Linder, the administrative assistant in the executive office; and Dave DePoint, Logistics Management, contributed to the design. The gold-toned, metal coin also comes mounted as a key chain.

The front side shows the Unit Crest over the Branch Insignia. The official Unit Crest is worn by USACE military members. It

See "Coin," page 10



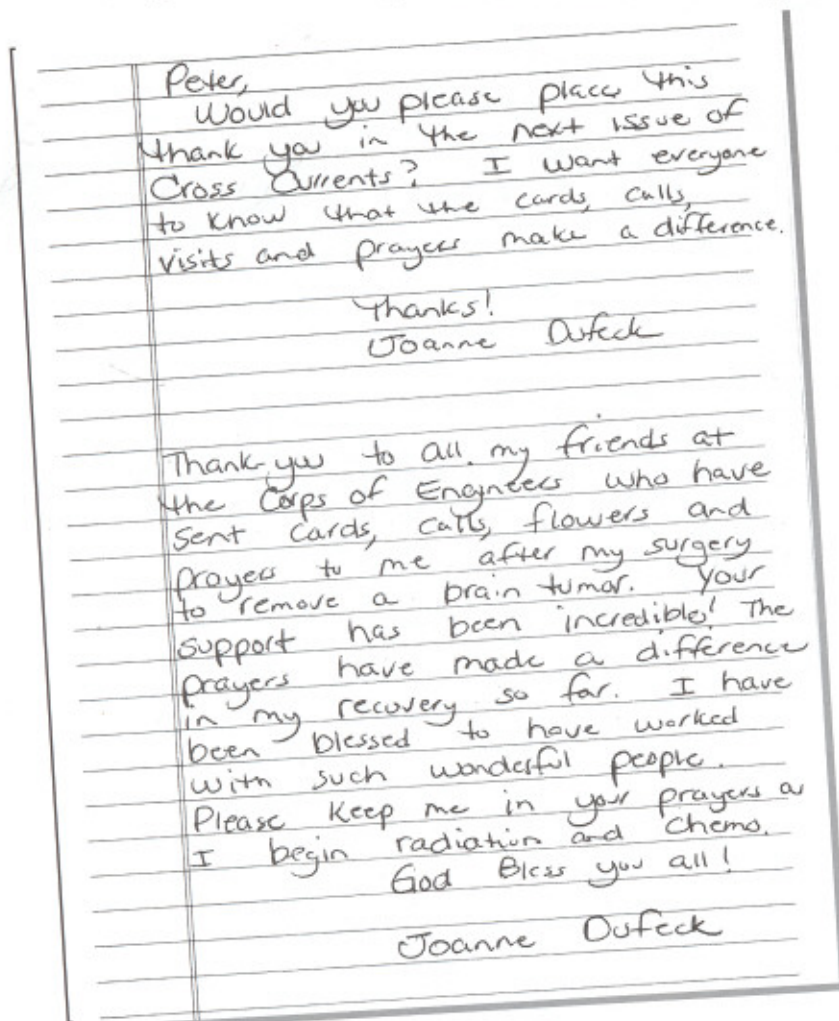
Design by John Fisher

The top coin shows the front view. Below is the reverse side.




Letter to the editor

'Thank you to all my friends at the Corps'



Joanne Dufek formerly worked in Contracting Division. She now works at the 88th Regional Support Command and has started chemotherapy.



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"Coin," cont. from page 9

depicts an eagle, the nation's symbol, with the Corps' motto, "Essayons," Latin for "Let Us Try." The sun and globe represent the worldwide scope of the Corps' mission and its service to the nation in the past, present and future. The olive branch signifies the peaceful nature of the Corps' mission. The oak leaves stand for fortitude, while the branches symbolize the Corps' concern for the environment.

The Branch Insignia is the gold-colored castle with three turrets. This castle represents the Corps of Engineers and its construction mission. The castle has been the symbol of the Corps of Engineers since 1840. The Corps of Cadets of the United States Military Academy were the first to wear the castle insignia on their uniforms. It was chosen after the first major construction undertaken by the Corps of Engineers — the building of a system of castle-like fortifications to protect harbors along the Atlantic Coast. These fortifications, many of which still stand, were called castles. This Branch Insignia evolved into its current design and gold color in 1924.

The reverse side shows the Mississippi River navigation channel, winding through the award-winning St. Paul flood control project. It represents the district's excellence in design, project management and construction operations. The tow represents the navigation industry, one of the district's most important customers. The eagle represents the district's respected, responsive and reliable vigilance to the environment.