



## Newsletter Issue 18, January 2013

### Pershing Memorial Bridge



General Pershing characterized the crossing of the Meuse River at Dun-sur-Meuse by the U.S. 5<sup>th</sup> Division on 4 and 5 November 1918 as one of the most brilliant military exploits by the American forces during the war. The Society of the Fifth Division originally funded the placement of a memorial on the town's bridge to commemorate the event, which was dedicated on 4 July 1931. The bridge was damaged in 1918 and again in 1945, and both times the Society of the Fifth Division funded its renovation. The bridge was the scene of a major memorial ceremony in September, when the town named the bridge the Pershing Memorial Bridge and installed a new plaque to that effect.



### Monument Vandalism

We are often asked if vandalism is a problem with overseas American war memorials. The answer, happily, is that vandalism is very, very rare. We almost never see defacing or other hate crimes. Interestingly, this has always been the case. Even during WWII, the Germans generally did not deface or damage our WWI monuments and cemeteries in France and Belgium. When it occurs, vandalism is most often the theft of valuable features, such as bronze plaques. This type of incident has become more prevalent in recent years because the cost of bronze is so high. An example is shown below. In July 2012, two bronze plaques honoring soldiers of the 35th Infantry Division on the bridge in Flavigny, France, were stolen. Local outrage was high, there was lots of press coverage, and the money to replace the plaques was raised in short order. New plaques were hung on the bridge in September. American War Memorials Overseas donated to the project, along with several local historical organizations, many local citizens, and two German brothers who were orphaned when their father was been killed while fighting for the Nazis in the town on 11 September 1944. The brothers attended the plaque rededication ceremony while visiting their father's grave in the area.



### About American War Memorials Overseas



American War Memorials Overseas had a very successful 2012 and would like to thank you for your continued support. We are involved in many projects across Europe, and can often leverage good results with relatively small expenditures. Above is a picture of work being done on a 2ID WWI memorial. We continue to be a group of passionate volunteers who work with different organizations to find maintenance solutions for many neglected sites. Your donations go a long way in preserving the memory of America's wartime contributions overseas. Thank you!

Please consider a donation to help us continue our important work