

Monument for those who died in Greece

A MONUMENT commemorating the 841 Australians who died in Greece during World War II will be built in Melbourne's Domain Gardens, near the Shrine of Remembrance.

Final approvals for the memorial - a significant new Melbourne landmark - have been granted and the Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation hopes to raise \$200,000 to complete the monument by next year's anniversary of the 1941 Battle of Crete.

More than 50 members of the Australian 6th Division gathered at the site of the proposed Australian Hellenic Memorial last week before the annual march to the Shrine of Remembrance on the anniversary of the 20 May, 1941 attack on Crete.

Young women in traditional Cretan dress presented the ex-servicemen with a corsage made from olive branches in a gesture of the special friendship that developed when Greeks sheltered Australian soldiers in their homes during the war.

Designed by Melbourne artist Evangelos Sakaris, the temple-style monument will be a gift from Melbourne's Greek community to the Australian people. Part of its centrepiece will be a stone brought from Greece.

The Australian Hellenic Memorial Fund initiated the memorial proposal in December, 1990 and has raised \$50,000 during the lengthy planning and approval phase.

The Greek Government last month made a \$11,000 donation to the fund, while the Federal Government has pledged \$5000.

"This monument will mark a significant milestone in the life of Victoria's Greek community and highlight the special bond forged when they fought side by side for democracy, liberty and peace," Foundation president Pantelis Kalimnakis said.

"It is an alliance held dear by both nations and the monument will be our community's tribute to enduring friendship between the people of Greece and Australia," he said.