PORT ELLIOT SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS
AN OUTLINE HISTORY

Foreward

In 1914 young Port Elliot men went off to fight in World War One (1914-1918).

During World War 1, Port Elliot was a venue for soldiers on recreation leave. In May 1917 the idea of planting ‘Honour’ trees for fallen soldiers was posed by adding to an existing stepped garden on the side of a hill facing Horseshoe Bay on the Port Elliot foreshore. In June 1918, the first 12 trees were planted on the cliff overlooking Fisherman’s Bay. A large water tank ensured an adequate water supply for the gardens. The 12 wooden boards naming each soldier initially placed with each tree, were updated with brass plaques in 1970. Local men, both soldiers and airmen from later wars, were also recognised by additions to the gardens including a World War Two Memorial (1943-1945), and more trees acknowledging World War Two, the Korean (1950-1952) and Vietnam Wars (1963-1973).

Over time, various locals and council staff helped plant, extend and care for the gardens. In 1931 the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association members were involved in additions to the gardens and in the early 1980’s Council did a big upgrade of the gardens with assistance from members of the Association. Working bees by Association members continue to this day, meeting at the gardens twice a month.
The gardens include the Soldiers Monument Park (Memorial Norfolk Pines and Cypress Trees), WWII Memorial Lookout, geranium and rose gardens, fernery and garden shed and includes Continental Park and the croquet lawns in The Strand.

In 2007 local resident Robert Miller collated and documented an outline history of the Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Gardens from what records he could find. The following information is what he was able to collate. Where there has been further information obtained post 2007, or minor errors of fact have been found in his history, we have placed footnotes or bracketed corrections within his original text.

Ruth Miller  10 September 2018
PORT ELLIOT SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS

AN OUTLINE HISTORY

By ROBERT J. MILLER – 21 NOVEMBER 2007

There has been an absence of documentary evidence and plans related to the Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Gardens, including the Memorial Trees, Plaques, Rose Beds, Fern House, Summer House, Gardeners and land control. The 22\textsuperscript{nd} June 2018 was the 100\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the planting of the first 12 Memorial Trees to local soldiers.

This is a history – a limited documentary – from printed evidence. There are omissions as data has been unavailable. Errors may be evident. The outline is possibly compounded by bias. Various plans for the gardens have been mentioned but have not been sighted, e.g. C.C. Reade of 1917 and H. Day of 1933, and in May 1939 Councillor H. H. Hanby’s scheme plan for improving the Soldiers Memorial Gardens.

Illustrations include photos from various sources, my own plan based on an aerial photo and improvised measurements, and a framed photo of circa 1920.

Robert J. Miller\textsuperscript{1} 21 November 2007

\textsuperscript{1}The Reverend Robert John Miller was a school teacher, historian and Uniting Church Minister and retired to Port Elliot in the mid 1980’s. His wife Avis Jean Miller joined him in Port Elliot when she retired from the role of Principal, Annesley College in 1996. Robert was a committee member of the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association. Reverend Miller passed away in Port Elliot 15\textsuperscript{th} September 2010.
Soldiers Memorial Trees in the Memorial Gardens above Horseshoe Bay C. 1920

Sunrise March 1997 – The Harbour Masters Reserve

Garden and Jetty – Port Elliot - 1917
The Port Elliot Cheer-Up Society had its fortnightly meeting on the 3rd July 1916 at Cliff House under the Chairmanship of President Miss Nellie Welch\(^2\). This Society on 31st March 1916 (which may have arisen from supporters of the local Red Cross Society), held a Farewell Social in the Port Elliot Institute for two local boys. By the 30th June 1916 the Society had purchased a Port Elliot Role of Honour, which was presented at the Institute Hall the 9th June 1916\(^3\).

On the 30th July 1916 the Annual General Meeting of The Cheer-Up Society elected Miss Nellie Welch President, Mrs. Emily Trigg as vice-president, Irene Abbott to replace Doris Harding as Secretary and A. Arthur as Treasurer\(^4\). On the 18th May 1917 a public meeting was called concerning Honour Trees for soldiers, possibly as wounded Alex Hiltunen had returned and subsequently died in January 1917, and for other soldiers lost overseas\(^5\).

In May 1917 there were existing gardens on the foreshore at the foot of the cliff. On Monday 21st May 1917 a large representative group attended the Institute Hall where Mr. H. H. Hanby was elected Chairman of a committee of 20 persons, with A. Arthur and Miss Nellie Welch elected joint Secretaries. The committee

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\(^3\) Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council Minutes Books 1914-1952
was to study proposed sites for a Soldiers Memorial Garden and report on 3rd June. Some of the committee members met on a Wednesday afternoon on a proposed site and were joined by the newly appointed S.A. Town Planner Mr. C. C. Reade. He was visiting Victor Harbor concerning a similar proposal for Soldiers Memorial Gardens and also proposed sites at Goolwa and Port Elliot.

On the 28th May 1917 Reade suggested a site first proposed in 1916, but that site was no longer available, so he chose a site above Fishermans Bay overlooking gardens and the Bowling Green. No plan indicating this proposal has been found. By June 1917 permission was sought from the Commissioner of Railways to plant Memorial Trees, and this was obtained by the 22nd March 1918.

During 1917-18 Mr. Reade had drawn sketches (not sighted) including an ‘Italian Piazza’ designed for the spot where in December 1918 Port Elliot tennis players wanted to put down 2 more tennis courts. Reade also planned 2 more grass courts half way down to the jetty.

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6 Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council Minutes Books 1914-1952
7 Town Planning Dept. correspondence Docket G.R.G 20/1920 following letter from Port Elliot Ladies Improvement Committee
PORT ELLIOT’S BIG DAY – THE TREE PLANTING

The Victor Harbor Times of the 28th June 1918 recorded “...the planting of the first 12 trees on the cliff overlooking Fishermans Bay on Wednesday last. Mr. Hamilton Welch capably presided and arrangements for the day were in the capable hands of Miss Welch. Appropriate addresses were delivered by the Revds. George Slade and A. C. Stevens BA.

Twelve trees were planted for the following fallen by relatives or friends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier</th>
<th>Companion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTE Eric Walker</td>
<td>Mrs. B. Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGT Frank Willoughby</td>
<td>Miss Welch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE A. E. Vince</td>
<td>Mr. Vince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Clarence S. Padman</td>
<td>Mr. Ragless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Roy A. Bright</td>
<td>Mrs. Sibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE W. R. Baker</td>
<td>Miss Harding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPL Vernon Lanyon</td>
<td>Miss Lanyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Leslie Alexander</td>
<td>Mrs. Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCPL Eric G. Padman</td>
<td>Mr. Raglass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Alexander Hiltunen</td>
<td>Mr. Trigg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Lance Swift</td>
<td>Mr. F. Swift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE Gilbert J. Snell</td>
<td>Mr. H. Welch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the evening the Port Elliot Brass Band played sacred airs at the Town Hall and Mr. Hubert Basham presided over a magnificent gathering at a Violet Day Memorial Service⁸. Revd. G. Slade conducted prayer in memory of the fallen, and the Revd. A. C. Stevens BA and the Rector Revd. T. M. Boyer BA suitably addressed the gathering. Appropriate hymns were sung with Miss Nellie Welch at the piano.”

PTE W. R. Baker’s tree was planted by Miss Harding, (probably Rita Doris Emily Harding), later Mrs. Arthur Hornsby, Secretary of The Cheer-Up Society at the time. It appears that the tree nearest the World War Two Memorial Lookout

⁸ The First Violet Day – By Catherine Manning, History SA, ‘Violet Day’, SA History Hub, History SA

Before the poppy became the recognised flower for war memorials, the violet in South Australia, was the ‘symbol of perpetual remembrance’. Violet Day was first held in Adelaide on 2 July 1915. Alexandrine Seager, Secretary and Organiser of the Cheer-Up Society, is credited with the creation of the event. The original idea appears to have been to remember the war dead, in reaction to events at Gallipoli in April that year, but the commemoration extended to honouring the wounded and all those who had made sacrifices for their country.
may have been Bakers, but the plaque currently there has the name of CPL L. Ray Pellew, although he was not named among the first twelve.

A number of other Name Boards, e.g. CPL Ernest Lovell, PTE Howard G. Dodd and CPL L. Ray Pellew were later placed at the foot of trees but no record has to date been found of when and by whom.

Name boards or plaques were revised as in 1918 the first 12 wooden boards with names were placed at the foot of trees. Names were repainted in 1943, repainted in 1944 and 1955. In 1956 Mr. Greenwood had them repaired, in 1957 re-lettered, and in 1965 repainted by Council⁹.

On the 2nd July 1969 concrete bases were proposed with brass plaques held down by 4 bolts. These plaques were completed by 6th November 1970 by Jack Rogerson.

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⁹ Port Elliot RSL sub-Branch Minute Books 1942-1993 – History by Keith Dodd 1992
THE BRASS PLAQUES

THIS TREE WAS PLANTED TO THE MEMORY OF CPL L. RAY PELLEW KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. NOV. 5. 1914

DVR SIDNEY SWIFT DIED OF WOUNDS FRANCE. AUG. 25. 1916

PTE LANCE SWIFT KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. MAR. 24. 1918

PTE GILBERT J. SNEILL KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. APR. 24. 1918

PTE ALEX HILTUNEN WHO DIED JAN. 5. 1917

PTE ROY BRIGHT KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. NOV. 21. 1917

PTE CLARENCE PADMAN KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. SEP. 27. 1917

PTE A. E. VINCE DIED OF WOUNDS AUG. 4. 1916

PTE LESLIE ALEXANDER KILLED IN ACTION FRANCE. AUG. 4. 1916

CPL VERNON LANYON DIED OF WOUNDS SEP. 19. 1915

PTE ERIC WALKER KILLED IN ACTION GALLIPOLI. AUG. 11. 1918

CPL ERNEST LOVELL DIED OF WOUNDS FRANCE. JUN. 30. 1918

PTE HOWARD G. DODD KILLED IN ACTION GALLIPOLI. MAY. 2. 1918

SGT FRANK WILLOUGHBY FELL AT GALLIPOLI NOVEMBER 1915

THE AIRMEN WHO FELL DURING THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

IN MEMORY OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS OF NEW ZEALAND 1914-1918

TO THE MEMORY OF GORDON F. HIGHMAN SGT PILOT RAAF KILLED MIDDLE EAST JUNE 14.1942

DOUGLAS C. COOTE SGT WOp/AG RAAF KILLED NEW GUINEA JUNE 21.1942

RAYMOND J. RICHARDSON SGT WOp/AG RAAF MISSING RABaul FEB. 23.1942

THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE KOREAN WAR 1950-52

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE VIETNAM WAR 1962-73
ALEXANDER HILTUNEN

Alexander Hiltunen, a member of the RSL, died at Port Elliot on the 5th January 1917. On 1st July 1917 a memorial stone was erected on his grave in Port Elliot-Middleton Cemetery.

Aleksander Hiltunen, a Russian Finn, arrived at Port Adelaide as a sailor in 1910, and made his way to Port Elliot. He spoke no English but conveyed by hand signs to Mrs. Trigg of Cliff House that he was very hungry. She treated him as if a son, teaching him English and gave him some experience at a trade.

He enlisted in the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion 3rd Brigade AIF on 2nd September 1914, and was posted on 21st September 1914 to Mena Camp Egypt, then on to Gallipoli. After being wounded at Gallipoli, and the discovery of first pleurisy, then tuberculosis, he spent many months recovering in various hospitals before eventually being repatriated home to Australia in December 1915. He did not want to embarrass his friends at Port Elliot, so obtained a job as a watchman at Port Pirie, where his money ran out paying doctors expenses. He returned to Adelaide and sought help, but was refused, being told “…he already had a pension.” [He had been granted a disability pension of some £78 per annum].

10 Aleksander Hiltonen, born 6th April 1890 in Wiborg, Finland, arrived Australia 15th October 1910. Naturalised an Australian citizen 22nd February 1913. (Cert.15129)

Using the anglicized form of his christian name, he enlisted as Alexander Hiltunen in the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion 3rd Brigade AIF on 2nd September 1914, Service No: 652, and was posted on 21st September 1914 to Mena Camp Egypt, then on to Gallipoli.

On 2nd May 1915 he suffered a bullet wound to his right foot and was sent back to Overseas Base Mustapha. Following his recovery, on 14th June 1915 he embarked on the HMT Southland at Alexandria and returned to his unit at Gallipoli on the 27th June 1915.

On arrival however he was found to be suffering a bad case of dysentery and was hospitalized first at Gallipoli then transferred on 30th June 1915 to No 16 Stationary Hospital at Moudros, on the island of Lemnos.

He was transferred to Malta on 14th July 1915 via the SS Clan MacGillivray, arriving on 18th July 1915 and transferred to St. Andrews Hospital Malta. By this time he had been diagnosed with pleurisy, and subsequently tuberculosis in his right lung, which he is thought to have contracted in Egypt during February 1915.

On 30th July 1915 he was embarked on HMAT Ceramic and taken to St. Georges Hospital London, where his TB was confirmed, and decisions about his future service were deliberated. He spent some weeks of rehabilitation at Pinewood Sanatorium, then known as the London Open Air Sanatorium run by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. He was deemed unfit for any further service and arrangements were made for his repatriation to Australia.

He embarked 7th November 1915 on the SS Runic in Portland England and was returned to Australia, arriving at 7 Army General Hospital Keswick on the 18th December 1915. He then transferred to Kalyra Sanatorium on 24th December 1915. He was discharged from the AIF on 3rd May 1916.

He succumbed to his illnesses at Port Elliot on the 5th January 1917.

Alexander Hiltunen’s Service Records
He returned to Port Elliot and told his friends of his condition, and Mrs. Trigg then
nursed him for some time until joined by Nurse Doudy, who assisted until his death on
5th January 1917. Four returned servicemen were pallbearers at his funeral.

A concert party led by a Mr. Ball sought to raise funds for a headstone to be placed on
his Port Elliot grave. Later a concert which included a Miss Trigg among the singers
was held at Cliff House Drawing Room to raise funds for a headstone and a fence. A
sum of £5.00 was raised.11

The headstone below in white marble is in the Port Elliot Cemetery and stands about
4 ft.[120 cm] tall and has the following wording inscribed upon it. On the reverse side
is an Australian Commonwealth Military Forces badge.

_Erected in Honour_

_And_

_In Loving Memory_

_of_

_Alex Hiltunen_

_Late 12th Battalion AIF_

_Who died Jan 5th 1917_

_In his 25th year_

_For the life so young and fair_

_Now is missed from earthly care_

_God himself the soul will keep_

_Giving his beloved sleep_

_ANZAC_

_A noble Hero true and brave_

_Peacefully rests in a soldiers grave_

11 Victor Harbor Times – 17th January 1917
Robert Miller's 2007 Plan of the Soldiers Memorial Gardens & Foreshore
NAME PLAQUES AT TREES
[Refer plan on previous page]

WORLD WAR I
[Left of central path from WWII War Memorial]
P 1 PTE L. Ray Pellew §
S 2 PTE Sidney Swift
S 3 PTE Lance Swift
S 4 PTE Gilbert J. Snell
H 5 PTE Alexander Hiltunen
B 6 PTE Roy A. Bright

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATH</th>
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</table>
P 7 PTE Clarence S. Padman
P 8 LCPL Eric G. Padman

PATH
V 9 PTE A. E. Vince
A 10 PTE Leslie Alexander
L 11 CPL Vernon Lanyon
W 12 PTE Eric Walker

PATH
L 13 CPL Ernest Lovell

§ It appears that PTE Ray Pellew’s name replaced that of PTE W. R. Baker.

[Left of brush fence from pond]
W 14 SGT Frank Willoughby
D 15 PTE Howard G. Dodd

[Right of central path from WWII War Memorial]
16 Airmen who fell during the Great War 1914-18
17 The Fallen Soldiers of New Zealand 1914-18

WORLD WAR II
[Right of ANZAC Plot]
R 18 SGT Raymond J. Richardson RAAF
C 19 SGT Douglas C. Coote RAAF
H 20 SGT Gordon F. Highman RAAF

LATER CONFLICTS
[Right & below level of ANZAC Plot]
21 Korean War 1950 - 1952
22 Vietnam war 1962 - 1973
GARDENS and PLANS

On the 24th October 1919 Mr. J. W. Trigg sought a water supply for ‘the Gardens’. On the 18th December 1919 he wrote a letter on behalf of the Town Improvement Society to the Commissioner of Public Works seeking ‘...a permanent water supply for the Soldiers Gardens and adjacent flower beds etc. along the beach at Port Elliot. Some time ago the late Railways Commissioner ...laid out grounds and planted flowers and shrubs along the beach. Subsequently the residents prepared and planted gardens and the croquet lawns as a Soldiers Memorial. This property adjoins the Railway Gardens. A water main runs past the property. The large tank we have erected on the Soldiers Gardens could be kept full and gravitate over the area needing attention.’ Mr Ritchie replied on the 20th December 1919 that he had seen the Hydraulic Engineer, who agreed to supply water to the Soldiers Gardens, and on the 23rd June 1920 was notified that ‘...the work was completed on the 27th January 1920.’

On the 17th April 1920 Miss E. Dodd of Port Elliot Ladies Improvement Committee wrote to Town Planner Mr. C. C. Reade seeking a plan of proposed gardens ...’enclosed find a rough sketch of the grounds where the Soldiers Memorial trees are planted... We wish to improve the grounds and would be much obliged if you will suggest a plan...Norfolk Island pines are growing beautifully.

On Saturday 8th May 1920 Reade visited Port Elliot whilst working at Victor Harbor, and on the 14th July 1920 [Miss Dodd] asked ‘...will it be advisable to order Norfolk Island pines and have them planted 20 feet apart as you suggested when you were here ...Grounds are looking beautiful and Mr. Hutchison, Railways employee, has dug around the trees and planted the steep bank below the creepers and cleaned up all the area ...anxious to get plan ...get on with work before winter is over ...’ By the 17th August 1920 Reade wrote ‘...am forwarding under separate cover plan of Port Elliot Soldiers’ Memorial ...in pencil ...(too busy to do in ink).’

On the 31st March 1931 Mr. H. C. Day, who had been Senior Draughtsman to Reade, and for some time to January 1930 was Town Planner, prepared a plan which was to be on display in The Port Elliot Institute, but no copy of this plan has been found.
PORT ELLIOT RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE INVOLVEMENT

The Port Elliot RSL sub-branch formed on the 6th July 1942, and on the 6th March 1943 approval was granted by RSL League Headquarters. This occurred after the 24th February 1943 when it was agreed to name trees for WWII. CPL Collin Williams and SGT W/OpAG Douglas Cook [Coote], although these names may not be accurate\(^\text{12}\).

The RSL discussed on the 5th November 1943 the planting of trees in memory of fallen comrades of WWII. A committee comprising Mr. Gray, Mr. W. [Bill] Tuffery and Treasurer the Rev’d. D. L. Benson were to meet Councillors and discuss types of trees and sites.

SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS POST WORLD WAR I

From July 1932 Mr. W. D. MacDonald and the Association carried on the gardens work with general improvements to the Foreshore, Soldiers Gardens including Continental Park and the Soldiers Monument Park, with Mr. T. K. Barnes to carry on the work for the Association. He appears to have continued his involvement until 1941, whilst on the 25th February 1949 “…T. K. Barnes work was noted with appreciation.”

In March 1933 James Dodd was thanked for work on the Foreshore and Monument Gardens, and Town Planner Mr. Day’s plan for Port Elliot was to be on show at the Institute. Later that year Mr. C. G. Smith was to make a Collection Box for the gardens. In July 1935 Norfolk Island pines were to be planted between the Life Saving shed and the jetty.

It is difficult to know how long and for what Alex Hutchison was employed but in August 1935 he was to be retained as Foreshore Caretaker. At least for some of the time during his employment he was responsible for care of toilets for the District Council from the Foreshore at Port Elliot to Boomer Beach. Some of his time involved caring for the Foreshore Gardens and also for the Soldiers Memorial Gardens [SMG].

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\(^{12}\) CPL Collin Williams has no known memorial amongst the trees. There are no records for WWII for a Collin Williams from SA, but four possible members named Colin [first or second christian names] born in SA – 3 enlisted in SA, 1 in Watsonia, Vic. SGT Cook was in fact SGT Douglas Coote, for whom a plaque is current.
In November 1937 a Soldiers Memorial Gardens sign some 3 ft [91cm] x 1 ft [30cm] on 5” x 5” [13cm x 13cm] posts was to be erected at the entrance on Murray Place. It was decided in January 1938 that a rosemary hedge should replace tamarisks alongside the Summerhouse wall. Water was running down the cliff wall and bank from the street and washing away the dirt at the bottom of the steps. Efforts were considered to limit this, and in June 1964 terraces were made below the road level opposite Cliff House with adequate drainage.

In February 1941 Mr. Carnegie Smith was to build a granite Collection Box in the gardens, while it was proposed that on the 15th November ‘The Fernery’ was to be opened by Mrs. J. W. Smith with a plaque to note the opening, however Mrs. Smith declined to have her name recorded.

A Christian Convention held on the foreshore in Port Elliot – 1936. 
Note the Memorial Trees in the Soldiers Memorial Gardens above.
SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS POST WORLD WAR II

Mr. S. Vince was assistant caretaker from the 27th April 1947, but was replaced in April 1948 by Mr. William Tuffery, a returned soldier, who from the 25th October 1949 was paid for foreshore work.

In June 1954 Mrs. Eileen Whelan [nee Sibly, later Mrs. Monty Warrender] who lived in the Harbour Master’s cottage, was planting flowers and gave pot plants, and in July 1958 gave a small pond for fish.

In January 1962 Lloyd Murfet dug and weeded a plot in the SMG, and by the 3rd February Keith Dodd reported that the ‘Lest We Forget’ bed had been damaged by hot weather, so he watered and revived the bed.

From 1969 Doug Sweetman, as Council Overseer for an extended period, supervised drainage work and stabilized cliff banks, as well as undertaking garden maintenance.

When it was reported in December 1980 that the flower plants needed replacing, a committee comprising Mesdames Rose Hogg, Doris and Nan Brittain and Keith Dodd were appointed to pursue the issue. Henry Arthur, Bill Richardson and Ken Hogg helped when the patch needed weeding, and needles raked and burnt. Flowers were then reported as ‘growing well’ and a few replaced.

In March 1939 an ANZAC Service was to be held at 11:00 AM in the Soldiers Memorial Gardens, and later on 9th April 1944 it was considered appropriate to hold the ANZAC Day service at 06:23 AM in the gardens, where it continued for some five years. By 1944 Postmaster Durward placed an order for 10 new Norfolk Island pines, which had arrived by the 6th October 1944, and were to be planted on the 10th. On the 1st December 1944 it was decided to leave their planting until after the end of the war.

On the 3rd September 1954 the Country Womens Association [CWA] sought approval to plant 2 candle pines for Colin Williams and Douglas Coote, and it was reported by the Town & Foreshore Association Secretary on the 1st October 1954 that they had been planted. These were probably the 2 cypress trees still [in 2007] at the south eastern end of the rose gardens area.
On the 24th April 1958 trees at the SMG were named for three 1942 airman. A Special Dedication Service was held on Sunday the 24th April 1960. Three growing Norfolk Island pines at the northern end of the gardens were dedicated and marked with plaques to the memory of the three airmen, namely SGT WOp/AG Raymond J. Richardson RAAF, SGT WOp/AG Douglas C. Coote RAAF and SGT PLT Gordon F. Highman RAAF, whose lives were noted in 1942 as lost from the Port Elliot area. There was also a plaque placed at a tree for Korean War servicemen and women.

Name boards or plaques were revised as in 1918 the first were wooden boards with names for the twelve. Names were repainted in 1943, repainted in 1944 and 1955. In 1956 Mr. Greenwood had them repaired, in 1957 re-lettered, and in 1965 repainted by Council.

On the 2nd July 1969 concrete bases were proposed with brass plaques held down by 4 bolts. These plaques were completed by 6th November 1970 by Jack Rogerson.

On the 4th April 1979 as SGT Willoughby’s tree had died, the plaque was shifted to another tree by George and Albert Brittain and J. Mitchell just prior to the 02:15 PM ANZAC Sunday Service.

In 1988 a Vietnam plaque was fitted on a concrete base and dedicated in an official service.

In 2007 the plaques of the World War II airmen were moved to the seafront row of trees, and for some reason the Korean and Vietnam plaques were placed between them.

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13 Victor Harbor Times
ANZAC Day 1960
Dedication of
Memorial Trees
to WW2
Casualties
War Memorial Lookout
Dedication
12th November 1961

ANZAC Day 1960
RSL Members

Korean War
Casualties
Memorial
Dedication
SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS – SOME FURTHER HISTORY

During the 1920’s a railway employee named Alex Hutchison planted flowers from the kiosk against the cliff face to the Life Saving rooms and Ladies swimming beach.

About this time Mrs. Trigg was tending flowers in ‘gardens’ when Joe Barton\(^\text{14}\) was between 10 and 12 years old, but little is heard again until March 1931 when James Dodd provided and planted flowers and shrubs at the north end of the gardens.

In June 1931 Mr. C. G. Smith submitted plans for additions to the gardens which the Town & Foreshore Association accepted, and during the following summer Mr. F. Barnes attended to the gardens.

In 1982 Mr. Edward [Ted] Harding, then a council worker for some 6½ years, was instrumental in upgrading the gardens. Some 1400 seedlings were planted each year from ‘gifts’ from the ‘money tree’ in the gardens. He also replaced the old wooden garden shed with a new one.

By the 4th March 1983, Mollie Ellis, during her time as Councillor, proposed that work between the steps and the kiosk was required, possibly by planting geraniums. Messrs. J. Lawson, D. Small and K. Dodd helped, while Town & Foreshore Association members were involved between the Memorial Lookout and the breakwater. By the 15\(^{th}\) March some 400 geranium cuttings had been planted.

Kallan Dennis, Head Gardener in the 1990’s for the Council, provided support for working bees by local volunteers until 2003, until David Mullins replaced him. At this time, “Dad’s Army”, led by Brian Jarman and Rod Hussey, began a new era in Council support for upgrading the gardens by upgrading the watering system.

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\(^{14}\) Joseph Edwin Barton [1916-2016], 2\(^{nd}\) AIF 1941-1946, partner with brother Cliff in Barton Bros. Motor Garage Port Elliot, Councillor & later Mayor of Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council, Chair & later long term Patron of the Port Elliot Town & Foreshore Improvement Society.
ROSES IN THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS

Little information can be found about the Rose Gardens from the District Council, the Town & Foreshore Improvement Association, the RSL minutes or the Victor Harbor Times.

By the 24th February 1943 kerbing around the roses was to be completed, and on 1st April 1949 Bill Tuffery explained the desirability of extending the present rosebuds, but a decision was postponed until members inspected the gardens. During August 1954 Mrs. Smith, daughter of Mrs. Trigg had pruned some roses.

On the 4th March 1981 it was proposed that bush roses be planted in the rectangle and Keith Dodd thanked helpers at SMG especially the two ground diggers. It was proposed then that 3 standard roses be planted near the cross and by the 1st July Mrs. Lorraine Pomery, Mr. J. Lawson, Mr. Hubert Abbott and possibly Mr. Ivan Ellis offered to donate these, which were obtained from Mr. Catt. By the 5th of August the roses planted by Keith Dodd on the 27th March were reported to be budding, and he dug over and fertilized the roses as they needed attention.

Roses had been growing in the circular beds on the lawn area from at least the 1980’s, and in 2006 the kerbed rose area was dug over, fertilized and pruned by Dad’s Army Town & Foreshore members and Council employees. Regular care and water improved the display.

THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS FERN HOUSE

On the 28th April 1941 Mr. S. R. Gray proposed a fern tree garden be created in the southern corner of the Lawn, with the District Council to be directly responsible for the fernery, and for which he would be willing to obtain ferns from the eastern states. By 26th August the following year it was almost completed, with a brush fence and including a small pond. The roof was to be completed by Messrs. H. Fraser and M. Meyer. On the 15th November 1942 at 2:30 PM it was to be officially opened by Mrs. J. W. Trigg with a proposed bronze plaque bearing the name of Mrs. Trigg for her involvements in the garden, however she declined to have her name on the plaque.

In May 1950 a cleanup was required, and in May 1957 a suggestion that care of the fernery was ‘a specialized job’ because of the state of the plants, but the RSL
opposed the proposal of the Town & Foreshore Association. In 1970 disrepair of the structure led to it being dismantled.

THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS SUMMER HOUSE

The Summer House was erected on the northern side of the steps from the Murray Place pedestrian entrance. The steps were rebuilt from stone after 1968 and during the period of Mr. Frank Mudge’s tenure as Town & Foreshore Association Chairman. Near these steps down into the rose garden level, a circular line can be seen on a later aerial photograph. No data about its erection or opening has been found, but on the 25th January 1938 the Town & Foreshore Association members suggested that a rosemary hedge replace tamarisks alongside the wall. Ten years later palings needed to be replaced and in 1949 a dangerous tree alongside was removed. Whilst some older residents recall this refuge, no data has been found about its removal. The structure was demolished about 1970.

The Summer House from a contemporary booklet of Views of Victor Harbor and Port Elliot courtesy of Geoff Mudge

THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL LOOKOUT

A proposal for a WWII Memorial, a curved lookout overlooking Horseshoe Bay, was first mooted at a RSL sub-branch meeting on the 7th September1945, and a War Memorial Committee with representatives from RSL, Town & Foreshore
Association and The Fathers Association were to meet to discuss this on Friday 14th September at 8:00 PM. In a report of the community committee appointed to manage the project on the 5th October, contact was to be made with Mr. Day, government Town Planner, for assistance and advice. The local committee was then to meet the day after Mr. Day had attended.

On the 27th November 1945 at a special meeting concerning a war memorial, Mr. S. R. Gray, who had made the original proposal, suggested a Gala Day “Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Day” to be held on the 28th December to raise funds and submitted a proposed programme. When Mr. Gray was farewelled on the 4th October 1946, Mr. Durward, the 1946 President reported ‘he considered enough funds were on hand to complete the War Memorial’.

Building had commenced in 1946 but ceased when funds ran out, although various appeals were made into 1961. No work was carried out on the project for a number of years. George Brittain, Secretary of the committee, worked in a number of ways to achieve its completion, but it was not until July 1961 that Jack Rogerson completed the work. Twelve RSL men volunteered to assist to fix wire mesh fencing on Saturday the 15th July 1961.

The Remembrance Service was held at the new War Memorial, including laying of wreaths and reciting of the Ode. On the 12th November 1961 it was dedicated by two Boer War veterans, Mr. H. G. M. Cole and the Reverend H. Hobbs. The RSL President thanked Mr. Brian Francis, president of the War Memorial Committee, Mr. Ivan Cooper, RSL representative, Mr. George Brittain and all sub-branch members. The dedication went without a hitch, and Ivan Cooper gave a summary of the newly formed committee’s efforts in completing the War memorial.

THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS LAND

It is difficult to clearly delineate land and boundaries for the gardens, but it appears the main land involved was a Railway Superintendents Reserve and portions of the Harbour Masters Reserve. Most is now Crown lands under the control of Alexandrina council. In 1918 the then Railways commissioner gave permission for the tree plantings.

From January 1852 Port Elliot was declared a Government Town, and 12 x quarter acre blocks were formally allotted for public auction. In 1854 the
foreshore of Encounter Bay at Port Elliot came under the control of the Port Elliot – Goolwa Superintendent of Railways as a reserve, with a portion under the control of the Harbour Master also as a reserve.

In 1914 some of the land was under the control of the Immigration & Tourism Department. The cliff face area to the high water mark level was closed and transferred to the Crown. The rest of the inland area of Section 295 including the Obelisk was a Railway Reserve from the east side of Rosetta Terrace to the ‘Camping Ground’.
In 1940 some land was transferred from the Harbours Board to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa.

As late as 1955 some land was still a Harbours Board Reserve, but in 1958 a Railway Reserve closed road passed to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa, and in 1961 a lease was given for 21 years for a kiosk.

In 1976 land passed to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa as a Public Recreation Reserve, whilst in 1967 Section 394 was made a Life Saving Reserve, whilst an Obelisk Reserve also was extant.

In 1995 Section 295 was designated a Public Recreation Reserve under the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa and later, Alexandrina Council\(^\text{15}\).

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\(^{15}\) LTO Plans RP 953 of 1914 & RP 3235 of 1940 plus enlargement.
Rectangular Rose Garden
Pre 1982

Lest We Forget
Ground Cover
Pre 1982

ANZAC
Ground Cover
12 November 1961
Rose Garden Entrance - 2007

View of Gardens from above Surf Club 2007

View from near Obelisk 2007