

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Lieutenant Colonel Warwick John KING-MARTIN

(1942-2007)

Warwick King-Martin was born in India on 24 September 1942, the son of Brigadier Johnny King-Martin, CBE, DSO, MC, a well-known gunner, and Jeannie Jemima Hollins. He entered RMA Sandhurst after schooling at Bristol and South Devon, and was commissioned into the Royal Artillery (RA).

This career took him to Germany, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Canada. In Germany he commanded 76th (Maude's) Battery, RA, armed with 8 inch nuclear capable self-propelled guns, where he was wont to recall that a '50 metre bracket' was superfluous. Then Singapore and Camp Terendak, Malaysia, with 45th Light Regiment, then serving in Borneo during Confrontation, and which then included 102nd Battery, RAA.

Here he first became involved with Australian gunners. With his natural flair for making friends he soon found he was on the same 'wavelength'. He took leave of the British Army and migrated to Australia and settled in Brisbane. Here he joined the 5/11th Field Regiment, (41st Battery, also known as the 'Coastal Cowboys').

In 41st Battery Warwick's style was somewhat foreign to the laid back Queenslanders but he soon established the respect that comes from a professional approach and a desire to train a good battery. His nickname soon became 'two fathers'. At Army Reserve camps King-Martin's light touch produced what Colonel Mick Crawford, CRA 1st Division, nominated as 'the best trained Army Reserve battery in the Australian Army'. To further his civilian career Warwick transferred to the Inactive Reserve, but this only lasted six months when the CO of 5th/11th moved on and Warwick was asked to take command. It was recorded that he lifted the standard of decorum within the regiment.

As a result of his association with Terry Brown, whom he succeeded as CO, he joined his consulting company based in Brisbane. After five years he established his own company, Diverse Marketing, and the Albert Battery of the Queensland Volunteer Artillery. When Warwick was BC 41st Battery in Southport he was persuaded by Rod Dux to join the Albert Shire Australia Day Committee which led to the formation of the battery. It was based on an old 9 pounder gun, and with help from the local council, a 'Detachment of the QVA circa 1890s' became an integral part of the Shire's ceremonial occasions with their dark blue uniforms with red facings, gold trim, brass buttons and white pith helmets. King-Martin became the 'battery officer' and his stewardship brought the battery an award (the John Herbert) for 'excellence in heritage preservation'. They became, as Warwick's obituarist describes, 'fiercely dedicated citizens in uniform'. This was merely another of expression of

his charismatic leadership style that motivated both regular soldier and volunteer, or for that matter, his own employees.

He had a willingness to listen and consult, enthusiasm with a focus on results, inspiration, and the ability to show genuine grace and compassion. He believed in the people around him, and although a man's man he knew the very thoughts of those he commanded. He was an exemplar of the cachet, 'an officer and a gentleman' who never lost 'the common touch'. He died from cancer on 5 May 2007, and his funeral was held at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point on 14 May 2007. The QVA fired volleys from Martini-Henry rifles over the casket, and the folding of Maude's Battery flag and its presentation to Birgit completed the rites. A Memorial Service attended by his daughters was also held in London on 26 October 2007.

Warwick King-Martin married Birgit in Germany in 1974. They had two daughters, Natja and Michelle.

Sources: Obituary, Col. Arthur Burke OAM; *Cannonball* No.67 August 2007; Mrs B. King-Martin.