

## *Colonel John Malcolm Hutcheson, MC*

*John Hutcheson, soldier, engineer, accountant and scholar, has died aged 92 years. Vice-President of the Institute and a life member, he was working in the Institute's office the day before he died.*

John Hutcheson was born in Townsville in 1927 where his mother owned a small Greek café and his father worked as an accountant for Burns Philp. The family moved to Newcastle in 1940 and John entered the Royal Military College at Duntroon on 24 February 1945. The key influencers in that decision may have been his strong connection to the scouting movement, Army cadets and watching a military parade in Glasgow (home of the Malcolm clan). He completed Duntroon second in his class and was awarded several of the graduation prizes.

John was commissioned on 10 December 1947 into the Royal Australian Corps of Engineers. He was posted initially to the School of Military Engineering before serving in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan. On return to Australia, he completed a bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the University of Sydney in December 1951. In June 1952, he returned to the BCOF, before being posted to Korea, first as the assault pioneer officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), and then as the engineer intelligence officer of a British engineer unit. For his gallantry in mapping minefields by night in no-man's-land, at times under fire from both sides, John was awarded a Military Cross which the Queen presented to him in Sydney in 1954.

In 1956, after completing a basic parachute course at Williamstown with Major Mac Grant (who would later command 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Company in Sydney), John was posted to the Royal Marines in Britain to train as a commando, replacing Major John Anderson who had died on the course earlier that year. En route home, John undertook on-the-job training with the British 22<sup>nd</sup> Special Air Service Regiment during the Malaysian Emergency, before taking command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Company in Melbourne.

His commando service was followed by postings to the School of Military Engineering (Officer Commanding Dog Section), Army Staff College (as a student), the Jungle Training Centre and as Director of Engineer Stores, where he designed the Army's Lysaght hut (known as Hutch's huts) as well as mobile hospitals, and he built up the engineer stores for Australia's involvement in Vietnam. In March 1971, John was posted to South Vietnam as the Chief Engineer Australian Forces for which service he was awarded a United States Army Commendation Medal for



*Colonel Hutcheson on Anzac Day, 2020  
[Source: The Hutcheson Family]*

meritorious service and two South Vietnamese public works awards.

On 4 March 1973, John transferred from the Regular Army to the Army Reserve and held numerous postings culminating in his appointment as Colonel Plans, Headquarters 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. He retired from the Army on 3 October 1982.

On leaving the Regular Army in 1973, John commenced civilian employment in Cambridge Credit Corporation Limited (owned by his cousin). In 1975, John embarked on an academic career as a lecturer in the School of Building at the University of New South Wales teaching scientific management, arbitration, applied building economics, and quantity surveying. Concurrently, he undertook further studies in the administration of building contracts at the university leading to a PhD being awarded to him in 1980. In 1994, John was appointed a

visiting professor in the School of Building and developed and taught postgraduate courses in the Master of Real Estate Management degree and the Graduate Diploma in Valuation. John also became head of the campus live-in accommodation at Philip Baxter College and shaped the future of many students at the University. On retiring from academia, John continued to consult on the design and supervision of a number of building projects and acted as an expert witness in many court disputes.

Over his 92 years, John was committed to hard work and to the organisations of which he was a member. In his later years, John would spend his week going to talks at the Royal United Services Institute, CPA Australia – a certifying body for practising accountants (57 years a member), the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Engineers Australia.

John was Vice-President and a life member of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, New South Wales (RUSI) when he died. He was serving on the Institute's Board and he especially enjoyed volunteering in the RUSI's library at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney. The day before John passed away, he was in the library managing the sale of surplus books and talking with visitors who were fascinated by his depth of knowledge, intellect and experiences. But the two things that RUSI members will remember most about John were his insightful questions of guest lecturers and his being behind the camera that recorded so many moments in the life of the RUSI.

**John Hutcheson (Junior) and Paul Irving**