

## THE NEW ZEALAND GALLANTRY DECORATION (N.Z.G.D.)

**Phillip Murray CHEATER (X1003534)**  
**Private (now Trooper), Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment**

Date of action: 24 July 2000

Date of award: 31 December 2004

### *Citation*

On 24 July 2000, Private Cheater was the lead scout and tracker for a patrol operating on the border between East and West Timor. The patrol was following up signs of an armed militia group when it was fired on by a militia element occupying high ground overlooking the patrol's intended route. During the initial stages of the contact, Private Cheater and Private Manning were in the direct line of fire from the militia. Private Manning was shot and Private Cheater saw him fall. Both men had become momentarily isolated from the remainder of the patrol and it was at this time that Private Cheater received splinter wounds to the side of his head and face from bullets that had struck nearby trees. Showing complete disregard for his own safety, and the injuries he had sustained, Private Cheater began moving, under heavy militia fire, to the spot where Private Manning had fallen. Despite the risk of drawing further fire, Private Cheater began calling to Private Manning to ascertain whether or not he had been killed. He then attempted to retrieve Private Manning's machine gun to prevent it falling into the hands of the militia. During this period he continued to be exposed to heavy fire.

Realising that he was isolated and that the militia were attempting to outflank his patrol, Private Cheater withdrew under fire and linked up with the remainder of the patrol. It was during this withdrawal that he suffered an ankle injury due to the extremely rough terrain. As the patrol broke contact, Private Cheater, with the assistance of another member of the patrol, fired three rounds from his grenade launcher, which finally halted the militia attack and forced them to withdraw. Private Cheater had been determined to help Private Manning if at all possible and, when he realised that he was dead, he had tried to retrieve the machine gun to prevent it falling into the hands of the militia. His action demonstrated exceptional gallantry and comradeship in the face of extreme danger and stress.