

## THE NEW ZEALAND GALANTRY STAR (N.Z.G.S.)

**Neville John REILLY, O.N.Z.M. (T30975)**  
**Colonel, Colonels' List, New Zealand Army**

Date of action: June – September 1999

Date of award: 5 June 2000

### *Citation*

Colonel Reilly, between June and September 1999, served with the United Nations Mission to East Timor (UNAMET). Immediately the result of the referendum was announced, East Timor began to descend to a state of anarchy. Colonel Reilly was then asked by the United Nations to assume responsibility for the security of the United Nations Mission. It was during this period that he displayed exceptional courage and presence in the face of great physical threat from the rampant militia forces. He often ventured unarmed and with complete disregard to his personal safety to provide support to displaced United Nations staff and to reconnoitre escape routes for possible emergency evacuation of United Nations staff. On one specific occasion, he drove some five kilometres through militia controlled territory to rescue a colleague who was trapped by militia forces attacking the house in which he was hiding. He effected the rescue at considerable personal risk, displaying a total disdain for the chaos and danger around him. Colonel Reilly's calm, unruffled leadership and courage were also inspirational during the siege by militia forces of the UNAMET compound. In addition, his diplomacy and Indonesian language skills were pivotal in successfully negotiating the safe evacuation of some two thousand people, comprising all United Nations staff from Dili and East Timorese nationals who had sought refuge with the United Nations.