

NZART ID: 298 Arm Type: Armed Vessel, Date of Draft: (V1) 17 Nov 2015, Compiled by: Phil Cregeen

Pattern: HMS Torch, Alert Class Escort Sloop or Gunboat; Introduced in to NZ Service: 1914; Withdrawn: 1920
Builder: HM Naval Dockyard Sheerness, UK; Launched 28/12/1894; First commissioned in RN 10/1895.

Tonnage: 960; Dimensions: 204.5' x 180' x 32.5' x 11.5' (62.3 x 54.9 x 9.9 x 3.5 m).

Sail Plan: Barque rigged; Hull: Steel.

Colour scheme: Ordinary - red bellow waterline, black hull, white superstructure & boot-topping, buff funnel & ventilators.

Machinery: 1 shaft, coal fired Triple Expansion steam engine, 1400 ihp; Speed: 13 knots.

Armament: Guns - 6 x 4.0 in. QF Armstrong single mount; 4 x 3 Pdr. QF Armstrong single mount; 2 x .303" Maxim MGs.



NZ Service

HMS Torch joined the [Australian Station](#) in February 1897, serving in New Zealand waters in 1898, where she took part in the “Hokianga dog tax war”, and 1899. In 1901 she was part of the escort for the royal visit to Australia and New Zealand by the Duke and Duchess of York. After a refit, she recommissioned at [Sydney](#) on 29 November 1913, and in August 1914 became part of the [New Zealand Division](#) of the [Eastern Fleet](#). In September 1914 she arrived in Wellington where it was intended to use her as a training ship for reservists. On 16 August 1917 she was transferred to the New Zealand Government having been replaced by *Philomel* as the training and depot ship. She was renamed *Rama* but in September 1918 recommissioned as *HMS Firebrand* and loaned to Australia to serve as a patrol vessel. With the end of the war she was sold in 1920 and fitted out as a [refrigerated](#) ship for the [Chatham Islands](#) fishing trade. While approaching the [Chatham Islands](#) on 17 November 1924 she struck an uncharted rock, and was beached and abandoned.

Acknowledgements: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A02550> ; *New Zealand Naval Vessels* by RJ McDougall.

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