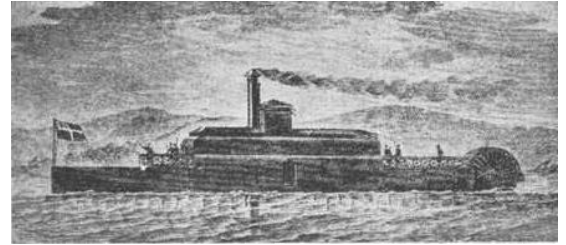


Pattern: *Koreroa & Rangiriri*, Steam River Gunboat; Introduced in to NZ Service: 1864; Withdrawn: 1865/1889
Builder: P.N. Russell & Co, Sydney, Both vessels shipped to Port Waikato in sections and re assembled, 1864.
Dimensions: 90 ft x 20 ft x 16 in.; Hull: 0.25 in. iron plate;
Propulsion: 30 HP steam engine driving a stern paddle wheel; Speed: 8 knots.
Armament: fitted for but not with one 12 Pdr. BL Armstrong gun; Complement: 24

*Koreroa**Rangiriri*

New Zealand Service

Realising that their first gunboats *Avon* and *Pioneer* were not ideal for the Waikato River the colonial government commissioned two new vessels designed by James Stewart of Auckland to be built in Sydney. The vessels arrived in sections and were assembled at Port Waikato, *Koreroa* was rushed into service before she was completed due to the sinking of *Avon* in February 1864 and as a consequence suffered many problems. She was commanded by Lt Coddington from *HMS Eclipse* and crewed by 12 men from *Eclipse* and 12 colonial naval volunteers. On 13 February she made her first voyage up river with barges in tow and from then on she carried stores to the front, every other day.

Following the battle at Orakao (31 March to 3 April) and the withdrawal from Pukerimu Pa, the Naval Brigade were withdrawn on 11 April and the gunboat crews returned to their parent ships. The gunboat flotilla was taken over by the colonial government and Captain Francis Cadell put in charge. Their prime task was supplying the British and Colonial troops stationed at various redoubts and the surveyers and settlers who moved in to the region.

Koreroa sank in November 1865 after hitting an obstruction between Ngaruawahia and Rangiriri, after much trouble and expense she was raised but never put back into service. After her engines and boiler were removed she was sold for £ 7.

Rangiriri made her maiden voyage on 16 June 1864 and became the backbone of the River Transport Service. She was briefly armed with a 6 Pdr carronade and 6 rifles from *Avon* in November when armed settlers, feared a Maori attack. In July 1869 she was put back to military service when Te Kooti threatened the Waikato region and 11 members of the Auckland Naval Volunteers were sent to Mercer to take charge of her. She continued in service on the river until she was laid up at Hamilton and abandoned in 1889. Today she has been partially preserved and can be seen at the Hamilton Gardens.

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The Waikato River Gunboats by Grant Middlemiss

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