

The Tauranga Campaign 21 January 1864 to 21 June 1864

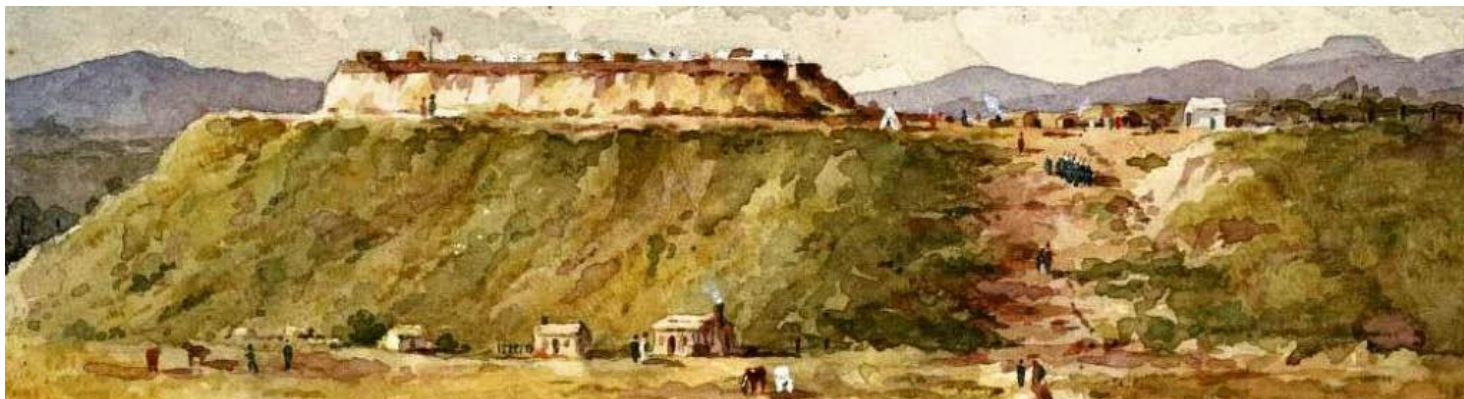
by Dr John Osborne MG DTT PhD FSG

The main cause of the war was the stance taken by the Maori King Movement – the Kingitanga (Kingites) – against land sales and their wish to pursue an independent political course. This was unacceptable to the NZ colonial government and war ensued.

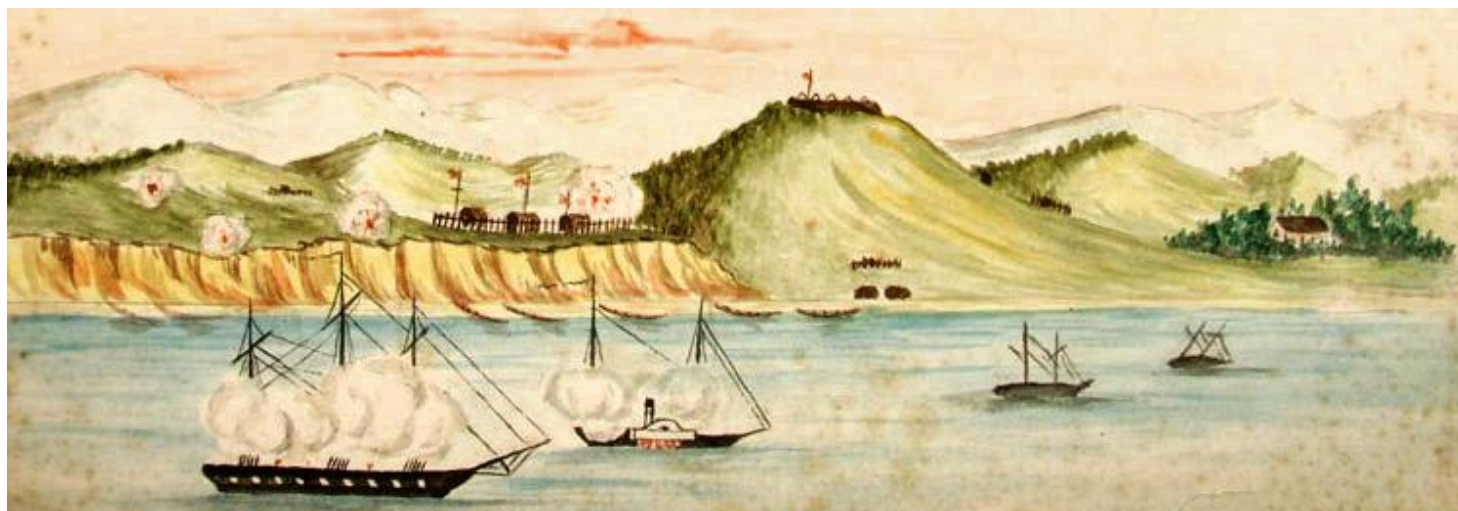
This campaign involved Maori “Queenites” supporting the Crown, the British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, 1st Waikato Militia, NZ Colonial Defence Force Cavalry, NZ Forest Rangers, settlers, provincial militia and police, fighting a confederation of Maori tribes known as the King Movement (Kingites). The Kingites were receiving assistance, arms, materials and recruits from several other Kingite North Island tribes. In an effort to curb this flow of support the British sent an expedition to Tauranga where they established a base named “Te Papa” (now the Tauranga Central Business District) under the command of Lt Col H. H. Greer and adopted a defensive position. However the local Maori Kingites threatened to attack Te Papa and built a strong pa at Pukehinahina (Gate pa) about 3 miles from Te Papa. A large contingent of about 700 East Coast Kingite toa (Maori warriors) were coming to assist the Tauranga Kingites. Their overland route took them through the territory of the Nagti Te Arawa tribe “Queenites” (who were allies of the British) based around Rotorua. Forewarned about the East Coast toa’s mission, the Te Arawa chiefs obtained more rifles and supplies from the British and on 7 April 1864 about four hundred Te Arawa warriors attempted to stop these East Coast Kingites in a two day skirmish on the shores of Lake Rotoiti. On 21 April 1864 Lt Gen Duncan Cameron overall commander of the British forces arrived in *HMS Esk* with his staff and by 26 April 600 sailors and Royal Marines had disembarked from *HMS Harrier*, *Curacoa*, *Esk* and *Miranda*. One 110pounder Armstrong gun and two 40pounder Armstrong guns from *HMS Esk*, along with 12 other artillery guns, were taken to within range of Gate Pa.

The Battle at Maketu 28 April 1864

About 700 East Coast Maori Kingites were heading for Maketu, a small settlement on the coast south east of Tauranga. From 21st April a detachment of troops including NZ Forest Rangers and Militia hastily occupied the area and built a substantial redoubt on an old Maori pa site Pukemaire. The East Coast Kingites arrived on 27 April 1864 by which time two 6 pdr Armstrong field guns had been installed in the redoubt commanded by Major F. M. Colvile 43rd Regiment. The East Coast Kingites surrounded the redoubt and began digging trenches and firing at it. On 28 April about 250 Te Arawa Queenite Maori reinforcements arrived at Maketu and on the same day HMS Falcon 17 guns and the NZ colonial two gun paddle steamer gunboat *Sandfly* were able to maneuver close in to shore and shell the Kingite attackers killing or wounding many. The Kingites soon found their position untenable and had to retreat. The Kingites tried to dig in further along the coast but were promptly attacked by the NZ Forest Rangers led by Captain Thomas McDonnell. A running fight - skirmishing through the sand dunes east towards Whakatane ensued and continued until dusk and again in the morning with the Te Arawa and local Maori Queenites lending enthusiastic support. Meanwhile the two armed vessels kept pace with the fighting and any of the Kingite Maori coming too close to the shore line were shelled. Eventually the East Coast Maori Kingites dispersed into the swamps and returned home. About 100 Kingites were killed or wounded including their Chief’s *Winiata* and *Aporo*. The British and NZ military and Queenites loses were small.



Major Fiennes Middleton Colvile’s redoubt (Pukemaire) at Maketu 1864. Artist unknown. Courtesy Tauranga City Libraries

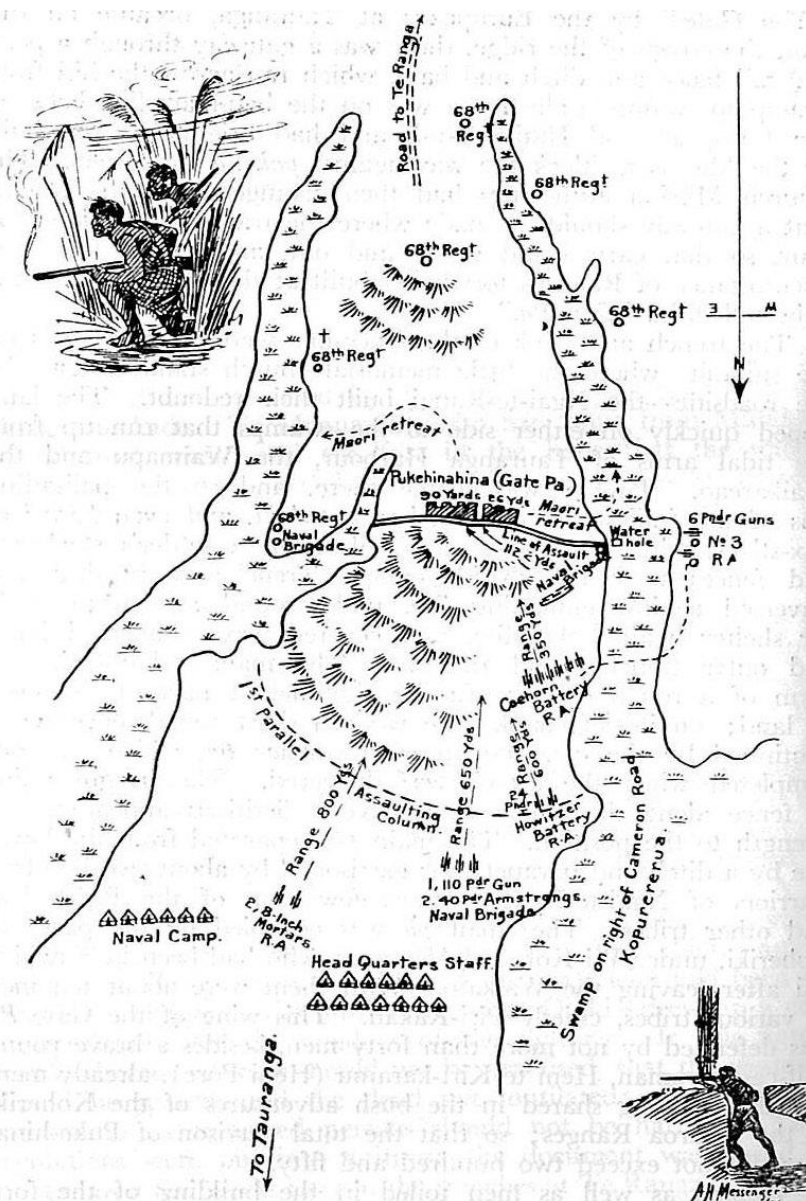
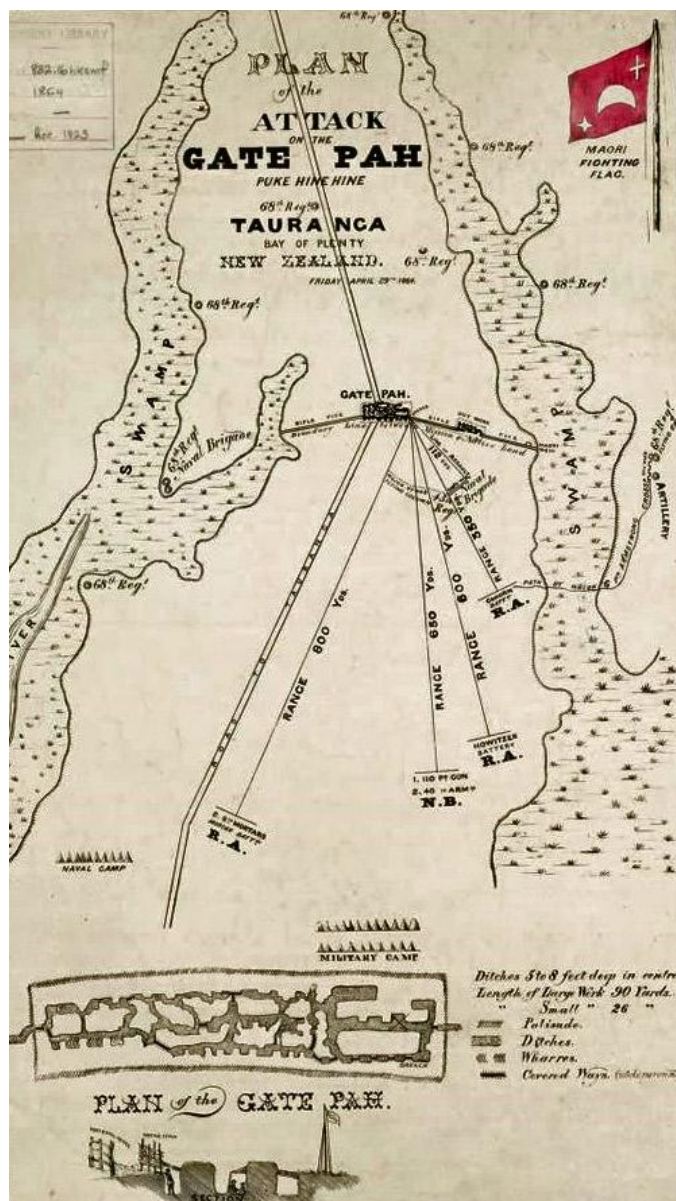


HMS Falcon 1045 tons was a steam-screw-sloop (two masts) rigged as a brig (not a three mast square rigged ship as depicted) armed with 1 x 32pdr long pivot gun & 16 X 32 pdr carriage broadside guns, launched in 1854. She served in the Crimean War, North America, West Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Also the NZ Colonial *Sandfly* 90 tons an iron clad wooden steam paddle gunboat with two 12 pdr Armstrong pivot guns, from 1863 it was used to blockade the Waihou River, Thames and then at Maketu in April 1864. Artist unknown.

Courtesy Tauranga City Libraries

The Battle at Gate Pa (Pukehinahina) 28 - 29 April 1864

About 1700 British and NZ Forces were opposed by about 230 Kingite defenders at Gate pa. On the afternoon of 28 April, Lt General Cameron ordered an hour-long shelling at Gate pa with four batteries of artillery placed at ranges from 350 to 800 yards. The heaviest guns used in the wars of 1863-64 - a 110-pounder Armstrong gun, two 40-pounder and two six-pounder Armstrong guns, two 24-pounder field howitzers, two 8" field mortars and six 4.5" Coehorn mortars. In total 15 guns



Left: Map by Engineer Captain G. Pulman RE showing the disposition of the British forces just before the attack on Pukehinahina (Gate Pa) on 29 April 1864. Right: Map from James Cowan's book "New Zealand Wars" showing the position of the artillery and troops at 12 noon

At daybreak on the 29th, artillery fire resumed and at noon two 6-pounder Armstrong guns were taken across the swamp and placed to the west of the pa in position on a high ridge from where they destroyed the left side pa defences. The 110 and 40 pounder Armstrong guns concentrated fire on the right hand corner of the pa. The 24-pounder howitzers, 8" and 4.5" Coehorn mortars as well as the continuous rain, converted the light soil of the pa defences into mud, and demolished some front fences. At about 3 p.m. the 110 pounder ceased firing, having expended 100 rounds. At about 4 p.m. the assaulting column of 150 men of the 43rd, under Colonel Booth, and the same number of the Naval Brigade led by Commander Hay, HMS *Harrier*, formed up on the extreme right, where the contour of the ground sheltered them from fire from the pa. At the same time 170 men of the 70th under Major Ryan marched to the right under cover of the artillery fire and lay concealed in the fern with orders to follow the assaulting column into the breach. 300 of the 43rd, seamen and marines under Captain C. F. Hamilton, HMS. Esk, comprised the reserve, was also to follow into the Pa. By mid afternoon there was a large breach in the centre of the pa palisade and at 4 pm the barrage was stopped and shortly after 4pm 300 troops were sent up to capture and secure the pa. Within ten minutes over one hundred British were dead or wounded and the rest retreated back to their lines, this was the single most devastating repulse suffered by a British storming party during the whole of the New Zealand Wars period. Following the British assault a considerable body of the defenders attempted to escape but the 68th supported by Lieutenant Hotham's Naval Brigade, drove them back with some loss. During the night the Maori in the pa gave assistance to the wounded and gathered up the British smallarms, then before daybreak abandoned the pa. Lt Gen Cameron returned to Auckland leaving Lt Col H. H. Greer in command, with orders to patrol aggressively and, if he found Maori digging in or attempting to build a pa, to attack immediately.



Officers of 68th Durham Light Infantry (Lt Colonel Greer standing 5th from left) at Te Papa, Tauranga April 1864. Courtesy Tauranga City Libraries



Some of the British and NZ Colonial officers and men at Gate pa April 1864 – shown at centre a 12pounder (4.5”) Coehorn Mortar with shells and lead coated elongated 6pounder Armstrong gun shells - Lt Gen Cameron with his arm resting on the wheel of the limber of a field gun Courtesy Tauranga City Libraries.

The British casualties at Gate Pa, 10 officers were killed or died from wounds. 23 non-commissioned officers and privates were killed and 73 wounded. Kingite casualties 29 killed and about 35 wounded



A Sketch by Lt H. G. Robley early morning 30 April 1864 British forces occupation of Gate pa the day after the battle. Courtesy National Library of New Zealand



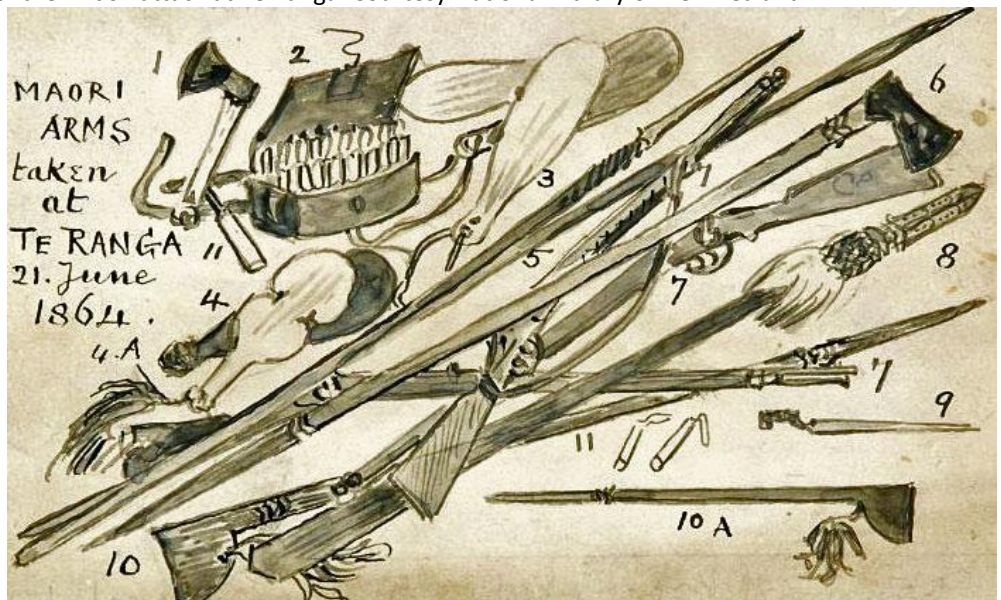
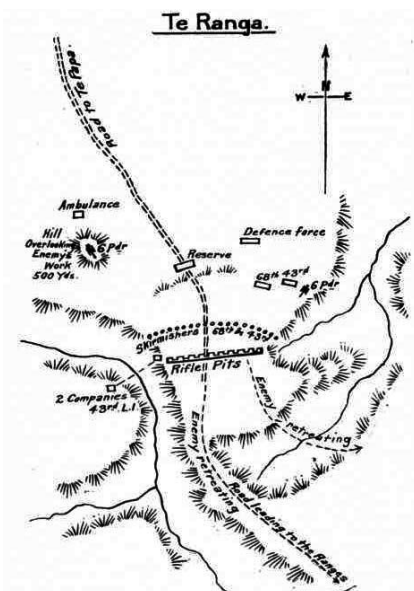
The British redoubt built at Gate Pa on the crest of Pukehinahina sometime after the battle with NZCDF Cavalry in foreground

Battle at Te Ranga 20 June 1864

Reports to Lt Col Greer advised that about 600 Kingites were constructing defences at Te Ranga about 5 miles south of Tauranga. Greer knowing any delay would allow the Kingites to strengthen their defences. At 8am on the 20 June 1864 Greer marched to Te Ranga with 594 officers and men of the 43rd and 68th Regiments and 1st Waikato Militia and sent to Te Papa for reinforcements about 220 men including the NZ Colonial Cavalry and one 6 pounder Armstrong field gun. At about 12.30pm with the arrival of the reinforcements Greer ordered an assault on Te Ranga pa. The Maori defenders responded with Tupara (double-barreled guns) and Enfield rifles but had little time to reload and were forced to fight hand-to-hand using their other arms. 123 Kingites were killed or died from their wounds Chief *Rawiri Puhirake* commander at Gate pa was among them. His death prompted the defenders at Te Ranga Pa to flee, 28 Kingites were taken prisoner. The British losses thirteen privates of the 43rd and 68th Regiments were killed in the battle and six officers and 33 non-commissioned officers and privates wounded.



Unknown artist's impression of the British attack at Te Ranga. Courtesy National Library of New Zealand



Left: Te Ranga Battle site surrounds shown magnetic north vertical. Right: The variety of arms captured at Te Ranga sketched by Lt H. G.

Robley 1. Toki Patiti (hatchet), 2. Cartridge box, 3. Patu/Mere (clubs), 4. Kotiate, 5. Koikoi hand spears, 6. Toki Kakauroa (long handled hatchet/spear), 7. Tupara (double barreled guns), 8. Taiaha (long club/spear) 9. Enfield rifle bayonet, 10 / 10A. Tewhatewha, 11. Rifle cartridges.

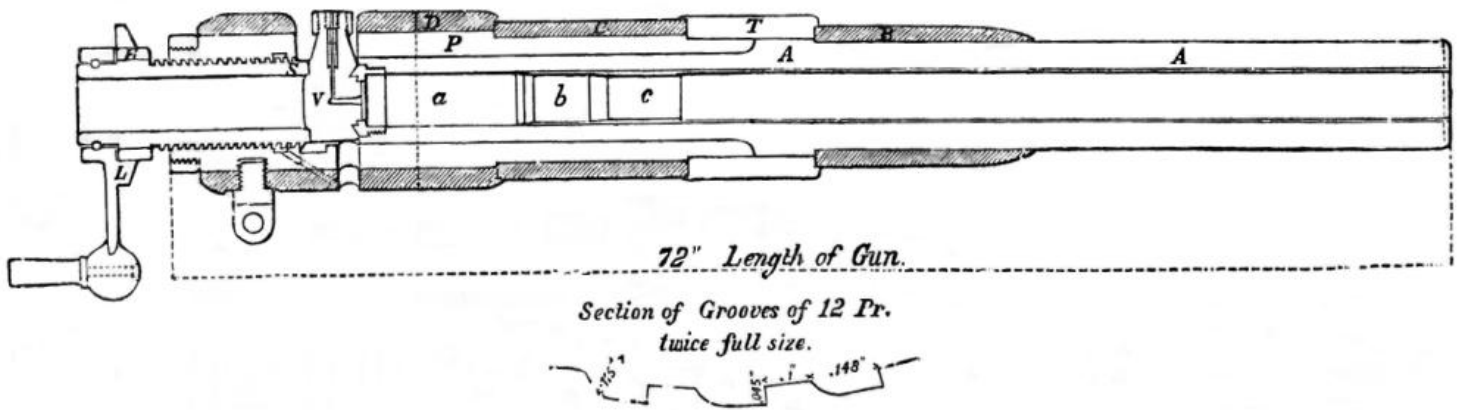


Te Ranga, was the last major engagement of the Tauranga campaign and largely crushed Kingite resistance in the Tauranga district. 578 Ngai Te Rangi and Ngati Ranginui surrendered to the British at Te Papa on 21 and 25 July 1864, with 165 guns plus other arms - refer painting above by Lt H. G. Robley. Most of the guns surrendered were old and virtually useless. The Kingites kept their modern serviceable arms and some of the British rifles and bayonets they had captured at Gate pa. Much of the Kingites land was subsequently confiscated by the New Zealand Colonial Government.

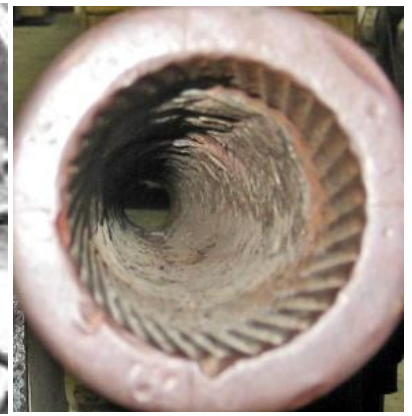
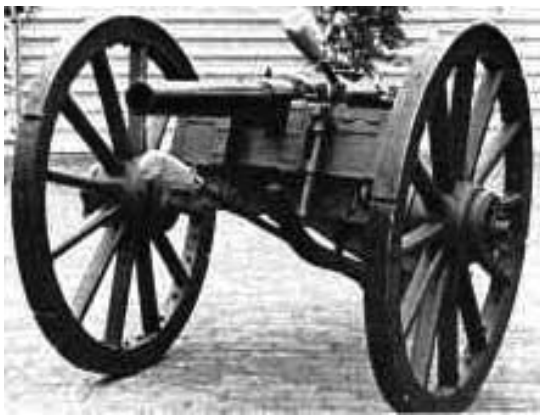
The approximately 10,000 British troops in New Zealand were very costly for the New Zealand Colonial Government which was paying approximately £40 per annum for an infantryman and £70 per annum for a gunner with no foreseeable end to the war. In late 1864 the New Zealand Colonial Government adopted a "self reliant" policy, which was to dispense with the services of British troops and to use New Zealand forces (the Colonial Defence Force, Forest Rangers, Provincial Militia and from October 1867 the NZ Armed Constabulary Force and Maori Auxiliaries) to carry on the wars, which did not end until May 1872.

Examples of the arms used by the British and NZ Colonial forces during the Tauranga Campaign 1864

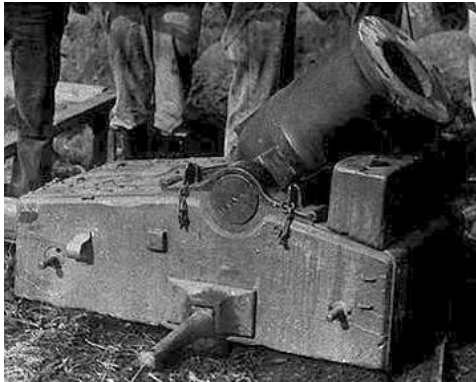
Screw Breech-loading 12-pr.



Left: 110 pounder 7" caliber Rifled Breech Loading Armstrong gun shown mounted on a sea service sliding carriage on the upper deck as a bow chaser which could be slewed across the deck on heavy brass rails, recoil checked by the breeching ropes. Centre: lead coated shells for the 110pounder 7" and 40pdr 4.75" Armstrong. Right: a 40pounder 4.75" calibre Armstrong RBL gun mounted on a trucked (wheeled) sea service carriage. Types used at Gate Pa



6pdr Armstrong (2.5" rifled bore) breech loading field gun - breech and screw elevator - 6pdr rifling -lead fouled



8" Field mortar on bed - wheels removed - 24 pdr (5.6" ML smooth bore) brass field howitzer - 4.5" Coehorn mortar and shells



8" mortar shell - 24pdr (5.5") Howitzer shell - 12pdr (4.4") Coehorn shell - 12 pdr (4.52") Coehorn mortar



25 bore (.577" caliber) 39" barrel Enfield Long Rifle pattern 1853 together with a triangular 17" blade socket bayonet carried in a black leather brass capped scabbard. Locking ring on socket



25 bore (.577" caliber) 33" barrel Enfield short Rifle pattern 1856 and later variations all with iron furniture for land service sergeants together with a Yataghan sword bayonet below. A similar short Rifle pattern 1858 with five groove rifling and brass furniture for sea service together with a pattern 1859 cutlass sword bayonet image below carried in a black leather scabbard.



25 bore (.577" caliber) 24" barrel Enfield Artillery Carbine pattern 1856 and later variations all with brass furniture together with a Yataghan sword bayonet same as for infantry sergeants carried in a black leather steel capped scabbard image below. Right: Hand grenade or hand thrown bomb shell. These were hollow cast iron round balls filled with gunpowder and ignited by a slow burning fuse ignited before being thrown, which was fitted inside a tapered wooden plug. The 3 1/2" diameter grenade weighed less than 3 pounds and a trained soldier could throw one over 100 feet



30 bore (.54" calibre) Terry breech loading carbine Pattern 1861 used by the NZ Forest Rangers & some NZ colonial cavalry & militia



Left: 7 3/4" rifled barrel .577" caliber pattern 1853, some officers preferred the trustworthy single shot pistol over the revolver. Right: .44" caliber five chamber Beaumont Adams percussion revolver pattern 1856, carried by most officers & Royal Artillery forces



Left: 54 bore (.44") Adams 5 chamber percussion ML revolver Pattern 1851 used by some NZ Forest Rangers, militia and cavalry officers Right: 80 bore (.36") Colt 6 chamber London Pattern 1853 used by some NZ Forest Rangers, Militia and Cavalry officers. Ex Royal Navy



General and staff officer's sword with Wilkinson blade pattern 1845 steel scabbard Brass hilt with, wire bound fishskin grip



Infantry officer's sword with Wilkinson blade pattern 1845 steel scabbard Brass hilt with folding inner flap, fishskin grip



Cavalry & Artillery officer's sword with Wilkinson blade pattern 1845, iron hilt, wire bound fishskin covered grip, steel scabbard,



Royal Navy officer's sword with Wilkinson blade pattern 1846, black leather brass mounted scabbard, fishskin grip



General officers sword P1845 - Infantry officers sword hilt P1845 - Artillery & Cavalry officers sword P1845 - Naval Officers sword P1846



Cavalry troopers sword pattern 1853, iron hilt, leather grips riveted to hilt, steel scabbard, used by the NZ CDF Cavalry troopers



Sea Service pattern 1859 cutlass sword bayonet leather grips riveted to hilt carried in a black leather scabbard.



Left: Dirk (fighting knife) belonged to Captain G F von Tempsky NZ Forest Rangers, blade length 8.6", courtesy Waikato Museum
 Right: Dirk (fighting knife) made by Joseph Rogers, England c1830 belonged to Private Sumsion NZ Forest Rangers, blade length 6.6"

Examples of the arms used by Maori during the Tauranga Campaign 1864

The Maori Kingites had a variety of arms including some captured Enfield rifles, bayonets and carbines same as the British also obsolete British military flintlock and percussion 11 bore muskets (Brown Bess), but their favorite and most commonly used firearm in the 1860s was the Tupara (double barreled percussion gun) which could fire either musket (.69" diameter) or carbine (.60" diameter) lead balls



11 bore (.75" caliber) 39" barrel flintlock smooth bore musket India pattern 1797 (Brown Bess) with reinforced cock. Ex British military



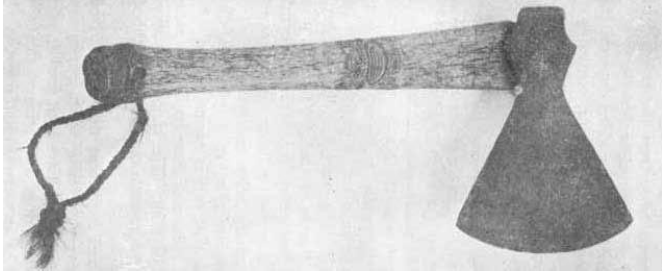
Musket bore (.75" caliber) 39" barrel percussion smooth bore musket pattern 1839 also pattern 1842. Ex British military



Carbine bore 31" barrel hooked breech smooth bored flintlock Tupara (double barreled gun) c1830, fired the older standard British military lead round ball carbine projectile / cartridge also buck and bird shot, carved hard wood projectiles, small stones, etc, very effective at close range.



Musket bore 29" barrel hooked breech smooth bored percussion Tupara (double barreled musket) the Maori warriors favorite firearm, fired the older standard British military ball cartridge sometimes both barrels together also buck shot etc, very effective at close range.



Toki Patiti (short handled steel headed hatchets with whale bone or wood handles some carved, all pierced for a wrist thong)



15.5" Mere pounamu (greenstone hand club with wrist thong)



18" Patu (hard wood hand club pierced for thumb thong)



13" Kotiate hardwood hand club with wrist thong



14" Mere / Patu hardwood hand club pierced for wrist thong



68" Taiaha (Maori equivalent to the English quarterstaff) used against opponents with bayonets or swords



Toki Kakauroa (long handled with steel hatchet head) about 5 feet long used for striking, stabbing and fending off swords and bayonets



Tewhatewha is a hardwood club / spear about 5 feet long used for striking, stabbing and fending off swords and bayonets



Pouwhenua or Hoeroa is a hardwood or whalebone club / hand spear about 5 feet long used for striking, stabbing and throwing.

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