

## Wrecks & torpedo attacks at/near PPLH

### St. Paul



Even sunny days along the shore of Point Pinos may begin and end with fog. For the steamer St. Paul, the lack of visibility in dense fog became an obstacle even its experienced crew couldn't overcome.

The Perils of Fog. In August 1896, a coastal steamer was northbound with passengers, a cargo of grain and 100 livestock. The captain and first mate were on the bridge at midnight in heavy fog when she ran onto the rocks just south of Point Pinos near Point Joe. Her steel hull partially protected her passengers and cargo as the captain tried to reverse to pull her off the rocks, but she stuck fast.

The passengers went ashore in lifeboats. Most of the livestock had to swim. A Board of Inquiry found the captain guilty of "negligence and lack of skill."

### Gypsy



On September 27, 1905, the Gypsy, a relatively short, stubby and small ship, was approaching Monterey

from Moss Landing after dark about 8pm with a heavy sea running. The substitute Captain mistook a red

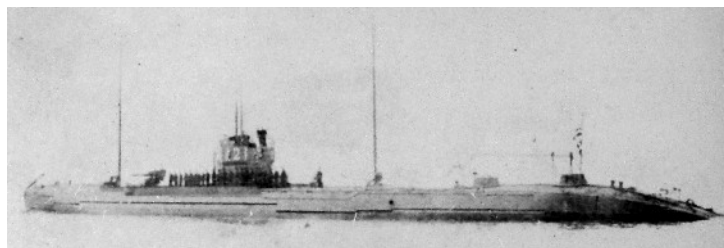
lantern over a sewer trench at the foot of Hoffman Avenue in New Monterey for the lantern at the end

of steamer wharf in Monterey. He realized his mistake about the time the ship hit the rocks. The crew

abandoned ship in good order and a crowd soon collected, intent over the

next 24 hours on collecting whatever was salvageable, including 400 cases of bottled beer.

## World War II saw torpedo attacks by Japanese subs, type B1



- Steamship Dorothy Phillips shelled off Monterey
- Tanker Agwiworld shelled off Santa Cruz
- Tanker Emidio shelled, torpedoed, and sunk off Cape Mendocino
- Tanker H.M. Story shelled SW of Cape Mendocino
- Tanker Montebello torpedoed, and sunk 4 miles south off Piedras Blancas light
- Tanker Idaho shelled south of Piedras Blancas light
- Tanker Larry Doheny shelled SW of Cape Mendocino
- Freighter Absoroaka shelled 26 miles off San Pedro

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## Roderick Dhu



The Roderick Dhu, an aging steel-hulled vessel was originally fully rigged as a three-masted sailing ship. Sail couldn't compete with steam, but her steel hull gave her a second life as an oil barge towed by a tug.

Run Aground. In April 26, 1909, in the foggy early morning hours, a tug towed the Roderick Dhu into what the helmsman thought was Monterey Bay. Perhaps the sounds of waves breaking on shore alerted the tug's captain that he was headed for the beach. He quickly turned back towards the open ocean, but the Roderick Dhu swung wide and became stuck fast upon the sandy beach.

A tug arrived to help pull her free, but only succeeded in tipping her sideways, and breaking waves flooded her hold. Abandoned as not salvageable, you may still see her keel during very low tides on Moss Beach, a mile south of Point Pinos.

NOTE: We have a wooden bucket from the Roderick Dhu in the navigation room. Many houses in Pacific Grove still have parts salvaged from the Roderick Dhu.

## CG-256

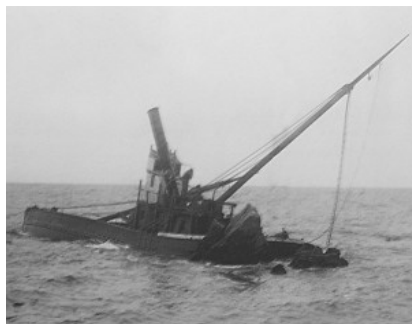


The Coast Guard revenue cutter CG-256 was initially commissioned to stop bootleggers from smuggling liquor during Prohibition. In September 1933, three months before the repeal of Prohibition, the Coast Guard re-assigned the CG-256 to keep the peace during the Monterey sardine fisherman's strike.

Stuck Fast on the Rocks. With a thick fog hanging over the rocks just south of Point Pinos, the 75-foot cutter heaved straight onto shore, wedging firmly among the rocks. Even with both engines in full reverse, the cutter couldn't pull free. Water poured in and quickly drowned the engines.

The five crewmen made it to shore safely. The next day, help arrived and salvaged a small deck cannon, weapons and other equipment, abandoning CG-256 to be slowly dismantled by the pounding waves.

## Celia



Built in 1884, the sailing steamer Celia set sail from Santa Cruz in a dense fog in August of 1906. She was bound for Monterey with a cargo of 160,000 board feet of lumber.

Fog takes a toll. Missing the entrance to the Monterey harbor, the Celia ran hard into the rocks south of Point Pinos, near Point Joe in Pebble Beach. She ran aground in almost the same spot as the coastal steamer St. Paul ten years before.

Two lifeboats carried the crew and several passenger safely to Monterey, while the ship broke apart in the waves. Most of the cargo, worth an estimated

\$14,000, was a total loss.

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### Frank Buck



On a clear May evening in 1924, the oil tanker Frank Buck sailed along the California coast, having survived the hazards of service as a supply ship during World War I. After offloading her cargo in Southern California, she headed north to pick up new cargo in Monterey.

Around 9 pm, the captain turned over command to the third mate and retired to his cabin. The third mate altered course and was on his way to report the change to the captain when the ship ran at full speed onto the rocks at Point Pinos.

The crew safely evacuated. Two weeks later, through the use of tugs, the Buck's own winches, and a high tide, she was freed and towed to San Francisco

for repairs.

The above represent known commercial craft. There have also been smaller craft including sailboats, fishing boats, etc.

NOTE: None were the result of the lighthouse itself not being functional.