



The Honda Point Disaster

was the largest peacetime loss of U.S. Navy ships. On the evening of September 8, 1923, seven destroyers, while traveling at 20 knots (37 km/h), ran aground at Honda Point, a few miles from the northern side of the Santa Barbara Channel off Point Arguello on the coast in Santa Barbara County, California. Two other ships grounded, but were able to maneuver free of the rocks. Twenty three sailors died in the disaster.



Photo # NH 66721 Seven destroyers wrecked at Honda Point, 1923

RRH684-9-23

They thought they were at San Miguel Island

- The ships were navigating by dead reckoning, estimating their positions by their headings and speeds, as measured by propeller revolutions per minute.
- Radio navigation aids were new and not completely trusted. The USS *Delphy* was equipped with a radio navigation receiver, but her navigator and captain ignored its indicated bearings, believing them to be erroneous.
- No effort was made to take soundings of water depth. These operations were not performed because of the necessity to slow the ships down to take measurements.
- The ships were performing an exercise that simulated wartime conditions, hence the decision was made not to slow down.
- The dead reckoning was wrong, and the mistakes were fatal.



Photo # NH 69508 Wrecked destroyers at Honda Point, California, 1923

Photo # NH 84819 Wrecked destroyers at Honda Point, Sept. 1923



Photo # NH 84822 USS Chauncey & other DesRon11 ships wrecked at Honda Point, Sept. 1923



Photo # NH 86411 USS Chauncey and other ships wrecked at Honda Point, Sept. 1923



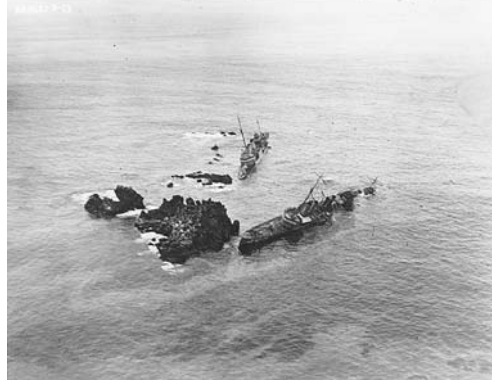
Photo # NH 86413 USS Delphy, Young & Woodbury wrecked at Honda Point, Sept. 1923



Photo # NH 86415 Wreck destroyers at Honda Point, California, September 1923



Photo # NH 69586 Wrecked destroyers Woodbury and Fuller at Honda Point, California, Sept. 1923



Honda Point

