

= SS El Sol =

SS El Sol was a cargo ship built in 1910 for the Morgan Line , a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Company . During World War I , she was known as USAT El Sol in service with the United States Army and as USS El Sol (ID @-@ 4505) in service with the United States Navy . At the end of war , she reverted to her original name of SS El Sol .

SS El Sol was one of four sister ships that carried cargo and a limited number of passengers for the Morgan Line . She was acquired by the U.S. Army after the United States entered World War I in April 1917 , and converted to carry horses and mules to France . In August 1918 , the ship was transferred to the U.S. Navy and continued transporting animals through the end of the war .

El Sol returned to the Morgan Line in 1919 and sailed with them until March 1927 , when she sank in New York Harbor after colliding with Sac City of the American Diamond Line . A portion of the ship 's cargo was salvaged but the ship was scrapped later in the year .

= = Early career = =

SS El Sol was a cargo and passenger steamship launched on 11 May 1910 by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. of Newport News , Virginia (yard no . 130) , and delivered to the Atlantic division of the Morgan Line on 20 August 1910 . She was the first of four sister ships ; the other three being El Mundo , El Oriente , and El Occidente . El Sol was 6 @,@ 008 gross register tons (GRT) , was 430 feet 1 inch (131 @.@ 09 m) long by 53 feet 1 inch (16 @.@ 18 m) abeam , and made 16 knots (30 km / h) . The vessel sailed for the Morgan Line , the brand name of the Southern Pacific Steamship Company (a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad) , which employed her to carry cargo and a limited number of passengers between New York ; New Orleans , the eastern terminus of the Southern Pacific line ; and Galveston , Texas .

= = World War I = =

After the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917 , El Sol was requisitioned by the United States Shipping Board (USSB) on behalf of the United States Army , who designated her as an animal transport ship . Although there is no information about the specific conversion of El Sol , for other ships this typically meant that any second- or third @-@ class passenger accommodations had to be ripped out and replaced with ramps and stalls for the horses and mules carried .

Sources do not reveal all of El Sol 's movements , but it is known that she departed on her second trip to France from Newport News on 10 February 1918 . Carrying 650 animals , El Sol headed to New York to join in a convoy with fellow Army transport Pastores , and U.S. Navy troop transports Covington , DeKalb , Manchuria , George Washington , President Grant , and Susquehanna . The convoy was escorted by Huntington when it departed from New York on 18 February , and arrived at Saint @-@ Nazeire on 4 March . Ten animals on board El Sol died or were destroyed during the crossing .

The next recorded activity of El Sol was on 3 August , when she was transferred from the Army to the U.S. Navy and commissioned the same day with Lieutenant Commander G. Anderson , USNRF , in command . El Sol was assigned to the Naval Overseas Transportation Service (NOTS) and continued to carry animals and supplies for the U.S. Army .

By August , each animal transport ship had a transport veterinarian and a permanent veterinary detachment to care for the animals while on board the ship . El Sol had also been joined by two of her sister ships , El Oriente and El Occidente in animal transport duty . She next departed Newport News on 23 August 1918 with 520 horses and mules on board . Upon arrival at Saint @-@ Nazeire on 19 September , El Sol delivered her complete load of animals ; none had died during the passage . After returning to the U.S. , El Sol departed again on 30 October with another 620 animals on board . Docking in Bordeaux on 13 November ? two days after the Armistice ? she again delivered her full load of animals .

El Sol made two more roundtrips for the NOTS over the next five months . While returning to the

United States from her last NOTS sailing in late March 1919 , El Sol responded to distress calls from Scranton , a Navy troop transport which had a damaged rudder and was disabled . El Sol came to the aid of the stricken ship , which was 900 nautical miles (1 @,@ 700 km) east of New York , to attempt to take her under tow . During the day on 28 March , Scranton attempted to run a towline to El Sol by sending a launch in the rolling seas , but it capsized , killing three men . Ultimately , El Sol stood by Scranton for over 40 hours until minesweeper Penguin arrived and took Scranton under tow .

At the conclusion of her last NOTS voyage on 3 April , El Sol was converted to a troop transport and assigned to the Navy 's Cruiser and Transport Force on 15 April . El Sol returned 2 @,@ 714 healthy and wounded American servicemen from France in two voyages . Decommissioned on 18 September , El Sol was returned to the Morgan Line soon after .

= = Postwar civilian service = =

El Sol resumed cargo service with the Morgan Line , where she had 8 years of uneventful operation . On 11 March 1927 , however , El Sol was inbound to New York with a \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 cargo of pig iron , copper , and bales of cotton . When a heavy fog settled over New York Harbor , Captain Charles H. Knowles ordered his ship to anchor until the fog cleared . As El Sol was being maneuvered into position at about 07 : 45 , the American Diamond Line ship Sac City hit a glancing blow to El Sol , bounced off and then struck El Sol a second time , ripping through El Sol 's plating . Sac City 's bow had some slight damage , but El Sol sank quickly in about 60 feet (18 m) of water about a half @-@ mile (800 m) south of the Statue of Liberty . Out of El Sol 's crew of 45 men , 44 were rescued ; the ship 's carpenter , who could not swim , was last seen clutching the ship 's rail as it went below the surface .

El Sol settled on the bottom at a 45 ° angle with only the tops of her masts protruding above the surface ; the Morgan Line house flag ? a blue house flag with a red M inside a white star ? still fluttered in the breeze . Even though the sunken vessel was not considered a hazard to navigation , in another fog two days later a Staten Island Ferryboat nearly hit El Sol 's wreck .

In a hearings before the United States Steamboat Inspection Service , Captain Knowles of El Sol and the captain of Sac City were both cleared of wrongdoing in the collision , and the blame was laid on the heavy fog . On 31 July , The New York Times reported on the cargo salvage operations still underway on the wreck of El Sol . In three months of continuous operations , the salvage company reported that about 35 % of the sunken ship 's cargo had been recovered . The hulk of El Sol was scrapped later in 1927 .