



## USS *El Paso*, PF-41



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A city in Texas.

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Builder: Consolidated Steel Corp., Ltd., Wilmington, California

Class: Tacoma

Length: 303' 11"

Beam: 37' 6"

Draft: 12' 8" fl

Displacement: 2,230 tons

Propulsion: 2-shaft VTE, 3 boilers

Range: 9,500 nm at 12 knots

Top speed: 20 knots

Complement: 190

Armament: 3 x 3"/50; 4 x 40mm (2x2); 9 x 20mm; 1 x Hedgehog, 8 x depth charge projectors; 2 x depth charge racks. For those frigates fitted out for

weather patrol duty, the after 3-inch gun was removed and a weather balloon hanger was added aft.

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### **History:**

*El Paso* (PF - 41) was launched 16 July 1943 by Consolidated Steel Corp., Ltd., Wilmington, California, under a Maritime Commission contract. She was sponsored by Mrs. J. L. Kaster and was launched on 16 July 1945. She was commissioned on 1 December 1943 under the command of CDR R. J. Borromey, USCG.

Sailing from San Diego 20 February 1944, *El Paso* arrived at Milne Bay, New Guinea, 4 April after training at Pearl Harbor and convoy escort duty to the Gilberts and Espiritu Santo en route. The frigate patrolled in the New Guinea area, and carried out several bombardment missions. On 25 May she was ordered to provide gunfire support at Maffin Bay. Her mission was to pour destruction into the enemy forces that had stopped the Allied Army at Maffin Village. With all guns firing the *El Paso* made several runs along the Maffin Beach, raking the Japanese gun positions sufficiently to permit an Allied break through the next day. Three days later the frigate was requested to perform a similar mission at Wakde Island, New Guinea. Standing in company with two U.S. destroyer escorts, the *El Paso* passed through inaccurate enemy fire and bombarded the Wakde section.

While on antisubmarine duty in the Aitape Area, New Guinea on 14 June 1944, the *El Paso* was called upon to bombard enemy positions that night. Bivouac areas, supply dumps, and gun positions were shelled in this operation. Eleven days later the frigate struck again, this time hitting the eastern edge of the Maffin Airdrome, Wakde Island.

On 23 August 1944, the *El Paso* was assigned to furnish fire support in a two-part mission. The first objective was to salvage an Australian Beaufighter plane which had been forced down on Pegun Island and the second was to determine if the three members of a previous salvage crew were still alive and rescue them if possible. A PT boat landed a 6-man reconnaissance unit of the Alamo Scouts referred to as the Sumner Team. At 9:20 the *El Paso* was called to cover the retreat of the Scouts who were experiencing considerable opposition. The frigate laid down a blanket of fire at suspected Japanese gun positions and an accompanying airplane strafed the Japanese who were shooting at the Alamo Scouts. Every one of the scouting force returned safely and the *El Paso* gave the area a thorough going over before the small task force departed. All three of the original salvage team were killed by the Japanese.

On 16 September 1944, the *El Paso* was one of an escort screen that led some 40 craft, including Liberty ships, LSTs and LCIs into Morotai. A Japanese

bomber, penetrating American aircraft cover, dropped two bombs and let go several bursts from his machine guns. The *El Paso* fired at the retreating enemy plane, which was reported shot down several minutes later by one of our planes. Next morning, a dawn enemy plane attack developed and *El Paso* gunners fired at an enemy plane as it passed across the inner end of the harbor.

The *El Paso* earned an engagement star for participating in the Leyte operation. She served there from October 23rd to November 5, 1944, and then, following her bombardment of Sarmi Point and Mount Makko, New Guinea on 11 November 1944, returned to Leyte again. She was then assigned to escort duty between New Guinea and the Philippines until the year's end.

*El Paso* departed Humboldt Bay (Hollandia), 6 January 1945, and sailed to New York for overhaul during which she was converted to a weather ship. Her conversion was interrupted by a convoy escort voyage to Oran, Algeria, in April and May 1945. On 5 September 1945 LT Thos. W. Phillips, USCGR took command. When the war ended the frigate was on the way back to the Pacific, and arriving at Leyte on 23 September. LCDR Thomas W. Spencer, USCGR took command on 12 November 1945. The *El Paso* then began service as a weather station ship in the Philippines until 16 April 1946. During that time, on 10 February 1946, LCDR J. A. Small, USCG, took command.

She returned to the west coast, was decommissioned at Seattle, Washington on 18 July 1946, and was sold on 14 October 1947.

*El Paso* received three battle stars for World War II service.

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"Officers and men of U.S.S. El Paso PF41, Olongapo, Subic Bay, Luzon, P.I."; 8 April 1946; no photo number; photo by "Leonor Art Studio, Philippines."

Photo provided courtesy of Mrs. Beverly Duc.

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**Sources:**

*The Coast Guard At War, Transports and Escorts*, Vol. V, No. 1.

*Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946*. London: Conway Maritime Press, 1992, pp. 148-149.

*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol. II, pp. 345-346.

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