

= Sea Cloud =

Sea Cloud is a sailing cruise ship of the Sea Cloud Cruises line . Initially built as a private yacht , it subsequently served as a weather ship for the United States Coast Guard and United States Navy during World War II . The ship served as the first racially integrated warship in the United States Armed Forces since the American Civil War . Following the war , Sea Cloud was returned to private ownership , serving as a yacht for numerous people , including as presidential yacht of the Dominican Republic . The ship currently sails in Europe and the Caribbean as part of a fleet of sail cruise ships operated by Sea Cloud Cruises GmbH of Hamburg , Germany , often under contract to the National Geographic Society .

= = Private yacht = =

Sea Cloud was built in Kiel , Germany , as a barque for Marjorie Merriweather Post and her second husband Edward F. Hutton of Wall Street fame E. F. Hutton & Co .. She was launched in 1931 as Hussar II ; at the time of her construction , she was the largest private yacht in the world . In 1935 , the United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union , Joseph E. Davies , married Marjorie Merriweather Post . Mr. and Mrs. Davies renamed the ship Sea Cloud . Although Mrs. Davies owned the ship , she allowed Mr. Davies to claim ownership of the vessel . As a man with political influence , Davies entertained many high profile people on the ship , including Queen Elisabeth of Belgium . The ship even served as an informal embassy , as Soviet and United States officials stayed and met on the vessel .

= = Coast Guard service = =

Mrs. Davies had first offered the ship to the U.S. Department of the Navy in 1941 , but the Navy turned her down . President Franklin Delano Roosevelt objected to the ship entering service , remarking that she was too beautiful to be sacrificed . However , on January 7 , 1942 , the Navy reassessed their position , chartering the ship for \$ 1 per year . The Navy sent Sea Cloud from Georgetown , South Carolina , to the United States Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay , Maryland , to be refitted as a " weather observation station vessel " , and had its four masts removed and hull painted battleship gray . Sea Cloud was commissioned as a United States Coast Guard Cutter on April 4 , 1942 , and assigned to the Eastern Sea Frontier , with a permanent home port in Boston .

During 1942 , Sea Cloud mostly served as a weather ship at Weather Patrol Station Number Two (position 52 ° 0 ' N 42 ° 30 ' W) . On June 6 , 1942 , the ship rescued eight survivors from the schooner Maria da Gloria . On August 3 , 1942 and August 4 , 1942 , Sea Cloud served at Weather Patrol Station Number One while USS Manhasset was converted to a weather ship .

= = Naval service = =

In 1943 , the Navy asked for control of Sea Cloud and Nourmahal , another former yacht converted into a weather ship . On April 9 , 1943 , the United States Navy commissioned Sea Cloud as USS Sea Cloud (IX 99) , though she maintained a Coast Guard crew . She was assigned to Task Force 24 .

Relieving USCGC Conifer in February 1944 , Sea Cloud patrolled a 100 square mile (260 km²) area near the New England coast , generating weather reports for the First Naval District . On February 27 , 1944 , Sea Cloud traveled to be refurbished at Atlantic Yard in East Boston , afterwards taking over a new one hundred square mile area at Weather Station Number One .

On April 5 , 1944 , Sea Cloud received radar indication of a small target at position 39 ° 27 ' N 62 ° 30 ' W , bearing 350 ° at 3 ,000 yards (2 ,700 m) . General quarters were sounded and battle stations manned , but contact was lost ten minutes later . The target was identified as a submarine , but after Sea Cloud carried out standard anti submarine drills with no evidence of

damage being inflicted , she returned to port .

After minor repairs , Sea Cloud was rebased to Argentia , Newfoundland , where she was assigned to Weather Station Number Three . While patrolling the area on June 11 , 1944 , the crew spotted a Navy Grumman TBF Avenger , exchanging recognition signals . Sea Cloud received orders to report to the escort carrier Croatan and join the five other escort ships under her command . The envoy searched for a raft reported in the area , but returned with no sightings . After this event , Sea Cloud was once again reassigned to Weather Station Number Four . After a search for a downed aircraft , she returned to port in Boston . Sea Cloud was decommissioned on November 4 , 1944 , at the Bethlehem Steel Atlantic Yard and returned to Davies , along with \$ 175 @, @ 000 for conversion to pre @-@ war appearance .

For her wartime service , Sea Cloud was awarded the American Campaign Medal and the World War Two Victory Medal .

= = = Racial integration = = =

In late 1944 , Lieutenant Carlton Skinner took command of the ship , after previously serving as executive officer in November 1944 . At that time , black seamen were only permitted to serve as ship stewards . After witnessing a black man save the crew of Northland yet still be denied promotion because of the rule , Skinner proposed an experiment . Skinner submitted his plan to the U.S. Secretary of the Navy and was allowed to sail his first weather patrol with a fully integrated crew . Within a few months , fifty black sailors , including two officers , were stationed aboard Sea Cloud . Skinner requested that the experiment not be publicized and the ship not be treated differently from other ships in the task force . Skinner showed that his integrated crew could work just as efficiently as a segregated crew , if not more so , when his crew passed two fleet inspections with no deficiencies .

Under Skinner 's command when the ship was integrated , American painter Jacob Lawrence served on the Sea Cloud . He was able to paint and sketch while in the Coast Guard , notably his War Series .

= = Return to civilian service = =

Following its return , Sea Cloud received a reassembled rigging in 1947 , and a new set of twenty @-@ nine sails in 1949 . The vessel was painted white , and a gold eagle painted on the bow . The ship 's reconstruction took nearly four years . Marjorie Merriweather Post retained ownership of Sea Cloud in the aftermath of her divorce from Mr. Davies , since she had originally brought the ship into the marriage . After evaluating the cost of running a year round crew of seventy @-@ two , Marjorie Merriweather Post decided to sell the ship .

In the beginning Sea Cloud featured royal @-@ sails over single topgallant- and double top @-@ sails on the fore and mizzen masts . The main mast was equipped with a royal @-@ sail over double topgallant- and double top @-@ sails . Today the first three masts are rigged with double top @-@ sails , single topgallants , royals and a main skysail .

= = = Presidential yacht Angelita = = =

Rafael Trujillo , ruler of the Dominican Republic , purchased Sea Cloud in 1955 , trading a secondhand Vickers Viscount for it . He renamed the ship Angelita after his daughter . The yacht served as a houseboat and government office . Following Trujillo 's assassination on May 30 , 1961 , his family attempted to smuggle themselves and Trujillo 's body to the Canary Islands aboard Angelita , but were forced back by the Dominican Republic 's new government .

= = = School ship Patria = = =

Five years after Trujillo 's death , the ship , now named Patria , was sold to Operation Sea Cruises ,

Inc. in 1966 . Company president John Blue registered her in Panama and sent her to Naples , Italy , to recondition and outfit her for charters . Sold to Antarna Inc . , Miami , in 1969 the ship was renamed Antarna . Blue brought the vessel to the United States , but port authorities docked the boat after a dispute in Colón , Panama . Charles and Stephanie Gallagher paid the fees to get the ship free and set her to sea , even though Blue still held the ship 's papers . The two dreamed of making the ship an " oceanic school " where students would supplement their traditional learning with at @-@ sea education . Blue eventually retrieved his ship after a confrontation in Panama .

= = = Cruise ship Sea Cloud = = =

After the ship stayed in port for eight years , Hartmut Paschberg and a group of Hamburg associates purchased her , once again naming her Sea Cloud . Paschberg and thirty @-@ eight other men sailed the ship to Europe , arriving in the Port of Hamburg on November 15 , 1978 . Sea Cloud spent eight months undergoing repairs in the now @-@ named Howaldtswerke @-@ Deutsche Werft shipyard , the very yard she was built in . She was redesigned with a sixty @-@ four passenger capacity for a crew of sixty . The ship set sail on her first cruise in 1979 , and has since been described by the Berlitz Complete Guide to Cruising & Cruise Ships as " the most romantic sailing ship afloat " . In 2011 , the Sea Cloud underwent extensive renovations at the MWB @-@ Werft , Bremerhaven . She is still operating as a cruise ship .