



REUNION SPEAKER ANNOUNCED – Art Webster, Merchant Seaman will speak at the Reunion Banquet on Saturday September 21, 2019. Art will recount joining the Merchant Marine after leaving home June 1944. Art obtained false papers showing he was age 16. False papers in hand, he signed his seaman's papers and left for San Francisco to seaman training. When his training was complete, he was assigned to Engine Room duty as a Wiper. His parents believed he was spending the summer with Aunt Kitty and Uncle Harry in the city. Art was at sea when he turned 16 in November 1944. In early 1945, aboard the gasoline tanker **SS Smokey Hill**, Art was one of 34 merchant marine crew with a cargo of 147,000 barrels of aviation fuel. The T-2 tanker was protected by 15 US Navy Armed Guards under the command of LTjg Richard Evans. Evans would provide Art with an example of bravery that Art never forgot.

Art's spirit of adventure got him into endless trouble and his guiding star, *Lesath*, helped him make many close escapes. After more than a decade of wandering, running aground in Alaska, a love affair in Panama, a Hindu Princess and a tiger hunt, Art was arrested for selling a gun in occupied Poland, then crosses the Egyptian Mafia and was aboard the **SS American Ranger** in March 1953 when three officers mutinied against their captain while delivering war supplies to Korea. This story and others will keep you glued to your seat. [Several former Navy Captains recently reviewed *THE CAINE MUTINY* by Herman Wolk. They concluded that Captain Queeg, the Commanding Officer of USS Caine, was relieved "for cause" in their opinion and there was no mutiny aboard the USS Caine.] ED]

After wandering from 1944 to 1953 Art gave up his love of the sea and, heroically, attempted to settle into a life of marriage and abject boredom. He did not succeed. Art is the author of two books *Down to the Sea* and *Under Sacanta's Shadow*. A third book is nearly complete.

