



## Vice Admiral **Ernest R. Riutta**

**Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area,  
Eleventh, Coast Guard District,  
U.S. Maritime Defense Zone Pacific,  
Regional Emergency Transportation Coordinator**



Vice Admiral Ernest R. Riutta assumed duties as Commander Pacific Area/Eleventh Coast Guard District on May 24, 2000.

The Coast Guard's Pacific Area plans and directs marine safety, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection and national security related operations throughout the Pacific Basin.

A native of Astoria, Ore., Vice Admiral Riutta graduated from the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., in 1968 and has commanded the Coast Guard Cutters Chase, Vigorous, Ironwood, Cape Wash, and Loran Station Tan My, Vietnam. He has also served other tours of duty as Executive Officer on the cutter Acacia and Deck Watch Officer on the cutter Bearing Strait.

Vice Admiral Riutta's assignments at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C., have been as Deputy Chief, Office of Law Enforcement and Defense Operations and as Chief, Officer Assignment Branch, Assistant Chief, Plans and Programs Staff. He has also been assigned to duty at Coast Guard Activities Europe, London, and as Chief, Aids to Navigation Branch, Seventeenth Coast Guard District, Juneau, Alaska.



Since his promotion to Flag Officer, in 1994 Vice Admiral Riutta has served as Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District, and Commander, Maritime Defense Command One Seven, U.S. Naval Forces, Alaska. Vice Admiral Riutta comes to the Pacific Area from Coast Guard Headquarters where he has served as the Assistant Commandant for Operations since 1997.

The Vice Admiral is the recipient of Legion of Merit (two awards), Meritorious Service Medals (two awards), Coast Guard Commendation Medals (five awards), Coast Guard Achievement Medal, Unit Commendation Ribbons (five), Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon, and Vietnam Service Medal, among many others.

Vice Admiral Riutta is married to the former Barbara Star Kramer of Chester Springs, Pa. They have two sons, Ian and Aaron.

## Vice Admiral Ernest R. Riutta, USCG (Ret.)

### *Updated Biography (27 April 2015)*

Born on 30 April 30 1946 in Astoria, Oregon

Graduated from Astoria High School in May, 1964; entered Coast Guard Academy June, 1964

- 1968**            **June 4, 1968 Graduated from U.S. Coast Guard Academy**
- 1968-1969**      **Deck Watch Officer, USCGC BERING STRAIT, Honolulu, Hawaii:** Ocean Station Patrols on Ocean Station Victor between Hawaii and Japan
- 1969-1971**      **Commanding Officer, USCGC CAPE WASH, Monterey, California:** Search and Rescue operations off the Big Sur Coast of California
- 1971-1972**      **Commanding Officer, USCG Loran C Station, Tan My, Viet Nam:** Station located near the DMZ in South Viet-Nam. A joint-service (USCG, USAF, USN, US Army) command responsible for precision electronic navigation in support of Air Campaign and providing logistics support for US Special Forces and Army helicopter units.
- 1972-1975**      **Executive Officer, USCGC ACACIA, Port Huron, Michigan:** Aids to navigation and winter icebreaking during year round navigation seasons on the Great Lakes.
- 1975-1978**      **Plans and Readiness Officer, USCG ACTIVITIES, Europe, London England:** Responsible for security at all Coast Guard Loran Stations in the Mediterranean and North Sea stretching from Turkey to Iceland. Coast Guard member on CINCUSNAVEUR Battle Staff during significant terrorist activity across Europe by IRA, Japanese Red Army, Brigade Rouge and Baader-Meinhof Gang, PLO and others. Worked closely with Lloyds of London intelligence staff.
- 1978-1981**      **Commanding Officer, USCGC Ironwood, Adak and Kodiak, Alaska:** Aids to navigation, fisheries enforcement and search and Rescue on the Aleutian Chain and the Bering Sea north to the Arctic Circle. Pioneered the concept of the Flying Aton Team in western Alaska, first with Army National Guard helo's then Coast Guard helo's. Result was establishment of AtoN teams at both Alaska air stations.
- 1981-1984**      **Chief, Aids to Navigation branch, D17, Juneau, Alaska.** Responsible for all buoy tenders and Loran C Stations in Alaska.
- 1984-1986**      **Commanding Officer, USCGC VIGOROUS, New London, CT:** Search and Rescue, fisheries patrols off New England and Drug Law Enforcement and Migrant Interdiction in the Caribbean. Among numerous drug bust was the D 'Milu's One off the west coast of Florida...D' Milu's One was a 140 foot offshore supply vessel. Over 40 tons of marijuana were found in hidden tanks within the fuel tanks of the vessel..took it to St Petersburg. Final bale count was 1324 weighing in at 85,900 lbs. worth about \$40-50M. VIGOROUS was featured on CNN and we did live interviews with NBC and a number of local TV stations. It was one of the largest marijuana busts ever made. On 4 July 1986,

Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration in New York Harbor. Vigorous was in charge of the Hudson River line and responsible for moving the 40 fireworks barges to and from the Battery.

VIGOROUS took station abeam of the World Trade Center and had a small armada of boats and cutters to coordinate. This was a huge event, 35,000 small boats, Parade of Sail with dozens of Tall Ships, Naval Review with President Regan on the battleship IOWA.

**1986-1989 Chief Officer Assignment Branch and Deputy Chief Plans and Programs Division, USCG HQ.**

**1989-1990 Student at National War College, Ft. McNair, Washington, DC**

**1990—1993 Commanding Officer, USCGC CHASE, Boston, MA and San Pedro, CA:** Fisheries patrols in the Bering Sea, Drug Law Enforcement off Central America and Search and Rescue. CHASE was the host ship with Captain Riutta acting as senior U.S. official for the reopening of the U.S. Consul General's office in Vladivostok, Russia in 1991, the first since the beginning of the Stalin era; CHASE was the second U.S. warship to enter Vladivostok since the beginning of the Cold War. During CHASE's stay in Vladivostok several Russian Spetsnaz personnel approached a CHASE sailor and said "since we are no longer enemies you should have these" and handed over 5 American dog tags from the Viet Nam war...these were later authenticated by the MIA Team. Working for JIATF West, CHASE was task force commander for two Navy FFGs and an USNS oiler working counter drug ops off Central America. During this patrol CHASE'S helo rescued a NOAA sailor from nearly 600 miles offshore using CHASE and the Navy FFG's for hot refueling with air cover from a Navy P-3 to medevac the injured seaman to Acapulco.

**1993-1995 Deputy Chief Office of Law Enforcement and Defense Operations, Washington, DC:** During the summer of 1994, the Caribbean and Straits of Florida were blanketed with rafts and sailboats full of Haitian and Cuban migrants. Rear Admiral Riutta was the Coast Guard's principal in numerous interagency discussions between NSC, DOS, DOJ and DOD which led to major national policy decisions. These decisions included handling migrants intercepted at sea, developing the concept of a "safe haven," devising operational options to enforce United Nations sanctions on the illegal Government of Haiti and implementing Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-9 to curb alien smuggling by criminal syndicates. In this role he provided oversight for Operations ABLE MANNER, ABLE VIGIL and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.

**1996-1997 Commander 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District  
Commander U.S. Naval Forces Alaska, Juneau, Alaska**

Responsible for all Coast Guard operational and support activities in Alaska, the North Pacific, the Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean, including search and rescue and fisheries enforcement over the largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the U.S. and the most valuable fishery in the world. Worked closely with State and Industry on Cruise ship disaster preparedness and safe tanker operations in and out of Valdez. Established Cruise ship

task force with State and shipping companies to examine accidents and held first Cruise ship disaster drills in Alaska. Developed nation building concept to remote native villages using USCG Russian Orthodox Chaplain and Coast Guard crews in partnership with Alaska National Guard to bring health care, religious services and community service projects. Member, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

Developed a close working relationship with the Russian Border Guard visiting Petropavlovsk on numerous occasions and hosting Russian delegations in Alaska. Set up first direct command center to command center real time communication via internet and developed the first USCG-Russian Border Guard Joint operations manual for Search and rescue and fisheries enforcement in the Bering Sea. Presented the State of Alaska Legion of Merit by the Governor for work with the State.

**1997-2000      Assistant Commandant for Operations, Washington, DC:**

Program manager for operational Planning, Policy, and Capabilities for the Service. Program sponsor for Deepwater Project. Member of High Level Contact Group with Mexico, a senior level team headed by ONDCP, to develop cooperative counter drug effort. Principal Coast Guard member in numerous senior level forums with DOJ, DOD, Customs, NOAA, DEA, State Department, and NSC dealing with counter-narcotics, migrant smuggling, fisheries enforcement, international crime, and national security issues. Developed foundational documents and requirements for Deepwater Project, the largest acquisition project in Coast Guard history, as project sponsor. Initiated Project Kimball, a multi-year effort to rejuvenate and rebuild our coastal forces, with particular emphasis on standardized small boats. Pioneered new concepts in counter-drug efforts developing armed helicopter interceptors (HITRON), from concept to field operations in one year; developed non-lethal weapon technologies; and acquired improved command and control systems for the Coast Guard. Developed National Fleet concept with U.S. Navy counterparts, setting stage for Deepwater project and forged stronger relationship with USN. As Chief of Intelligence, broke new ground with Intelligence Community that resulted in Coast Guard being admitted as full member of the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB) and the Military Intelligence Board (MIB) at Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). First Coast Guard Flag officer to sit as a member the MIB. For service on the MIB was presented the DIA Director's Award.

**2002-2002      Commander Pacific Area,  
Commander Eleventh District  
Commander Maritime Defense Zone Pacific  
Alameda, California**

Responsible for all Coast Guard activities in the Pacific theater, which includes approximately one-third of the capital resources, personnel, and budget, operating in the Service's largest geographic area of responsibility. Managed forces on worldwide assignments in the Middle East, the Polar Regions, and across the Pacific basin conducting operations and support functions across the spectrum of Coast Guard missions.

Following 11 September terrorist attacks, immediately repositioned forces to protect all west coast ports and waterways. Invented Sea Marshal program providing effective ship security without disrupting maritime commerce flow, then implemented in California; recalled reservists and re-directed Coast Guard forces to a counter-terrorist posture. Partnered with Governor to coordinate federal-state resources for Maritime Homeland Security activities in California. Partnered with industry to develop and issue uniform terminal security guidelines for West Coast Ports that became the basis for new national and international standards. Pac area forces also had two consecutive record years for cocaine seizures during this period, deployed HITRON to the Pacific theater for the first time, dealt with serious confrontations with foreign fishing fleets in the Bering Sea and deployed USCGC SHERMAN to the Persian Gulf.

**2002-2012      Executive Director, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute** Juneau, Alaska

Directed all activities for the Institute, a state of Alaska Corporation. Reported to a Governor appointed Board of Directors composed of CEOs of the largest seafood companies operating in Alaska. Brand manager responsible for marketing all Alaska Seafood, the state's largest export, in the global marketplace. Through creative marketing strategies increased the overall value Alaska Seafood by over 100% in many categories. Trade partners are major retail store chains, broad line distributors and national foodservice operators. Economic value to state is over \$5.8B. Alaska Seafood Brand ranks in the top 2 brands at U.S restaurants and one of the best know seafood brands in the world. Work closely with Industry members, Legislature and Administration. Increased budget from \$9M to \$25M since 2003. Staff of 19 plus contract staff in Japan, China, UK, France, Spain and Brazil. Work with the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service in international marketing utilizing federal Market Access Funds to promote Alaska Seafood in Europe, South America and Asia. Guided transition to new organizational structure, designed first ever strategic plan and executed numerous domestic and international marketing campaigns including TV, radio and print ads. Introduced new IT system and website to improve productivity and outreach capability.

**Family:** Married to the former Barbara Starr Kramer of Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. Two sons, Ian and Aaron and four grandsons. Youngest son Aaron Riutta is a Coast Guard Lieutenant.

**EDUCATION:** **Senior Service School**, National War College  
**B.S.** U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
**New Paths to Business Growth**, CSC Senior Management Interchange  
**The Changing Corporate Context**, CSC Senior Management Interchange  
**Revolution in Business Executive Course**, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

**PUBLICATIONS :** Co-authored with Admiral Tom Fargo, USN, and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, “A National Fleet for America” (1999) in U.S. Naval Institute’s *Proceedings* (April 1999). Co-authored with Dr. Scott Truver, “21<sup>st</sup> Century Hemispheric Maritime Security: A USCG Deepwater Vision” in *EEZ Technology* (Autumn 1999).

**Awards :** Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal (2)  
Legion of Merit (2)  
Meritorious Service (2)  
Coast Guard Commendation (5)  
Coast Guard Achievement  
Unit Commendations (5)  
Meritorious Unit Commendation (1)  
Viet Nam Service  
State of Alaska Legion of Merit  
Defense Intelligence Agency Director’s Award