

# U.S., Canadian icebreakers conduct operation, rendezvous en route to Arctic Ocean



[Release from Coast Guard Pacific Area](#)

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BEAUFORT SEA – The Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) and crew conducted joint operations with the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Sir Wilfrid Laurier and crew, Friday, in the Beaufort Sea, while northbound on a month-long science mission in support of the Office of Naval Research (ONR).

Healy, the U.S. Coast Guard's largest polar icebreaker, and crew participated in a personnel exchange off the coast of Utqiagvik, Alaska, and Capt. Michele Schallip, commanding

officer of Healy, hosted Rear Adm. Megan Dean, the Seventeenth Coast Guard District commander; Youssef Mani, the assistant commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, Arctic Region; Shane Sadoway, regional director of Navigational Programs and Operations Canadian Coast Guard, Arctic Region; and Capt. Timothy Williams, Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak commanding officer.

The crew showcased the cutter's unique capabilities, including science laboratories, various conning stations, and extensive engineering spaces. The meeting of the two research-oriented icebreakers deepened their respective flag states' mutual commitment to Arctic stewardship, and fostered esprit de corps as the crews reflected on their shared experiences. Healy displayed its work with ONR's Arctic Mobile Observing System, which is the cutter's objective this month in the Beaufort Sea.

Additionally, the Healy and Sir Wilfrid Laurier held exercises including formation steaming, boat operations, and flying the latter's embarked helicopter.

Healy is on a five-month deployment in partnership with ONR and the National Science Foundation. Meeting with Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the latest iteration of international cooperation and strong partnerships among Arctic nations.

Commissioned in 1986, the 272-foot Sir Wilfrid Laurier is based out of Victoria, British Columbia. It executes scientific research in addition to buoy tending and ice escort missions. Famously, in 2014 Sir Wilfrid Laurier embarked on the Victoria Strait Expedition, where the wreck of HMS Erebus was rediscovered 166 years after its abandonment, sunken west of the Adelaide Peninsula in Nunavut.

The Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutter program will continue the legacy of the Healy and Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star, and several classes of cutters before them, as the next generation

of vessels to ensure continued access to both polar regions and uphold sovereign rights, provide national security, and promote economic prosperity in the Arctic.