



# MEDIA PACK

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## **Willis Group Announces The Willis Resilience Expedition Antarctica - From Coast to Pole December 2013**

**Willis, the global risk adviser, insurance and reinsurance broker, teams up with teenage explorer and climate campaigner Parker Liautaud to attempt a World Record South Pole speed expedition that will help explore the impact of climate change on the planet.**

- ▶ World Record Attempt: Parker Liautaud aims to break the speed record for transiting Antarctica from the coast to the South Pole on foot and will become the youngest man ever to accomplish this feat.
- ▶ Snow samples to be taken along a full coast-pole-coast continental transect that will form a valuable contribution to current studies on climate change.
- ▶ Big Data: The expedition partners with leading technology company EMC to create data visualisations to engage the public in a better understanding of the science behind climate change and its importance in society.
- ▶ Lightweight weather station to be tested for the first time in Antarctica.

Global risk adviser and insurance and reinsurance broker Willis Group is proud to announce the launch of the Willis Resilience Expedition 2013: A World Record attempt by a 19-year-old explorer, Parker Liautaud, to reach the geographical South Pole on skis in the fastest time ever recorded. Along the way, Parker will deploy and test a lightweight weather station which has not been used in the Antarctic before. It will relay meteorological data every 30 minutes. Additionally, Parker will gather snow samples in order to test the isotopic composition of the Antarctic snow at various depths. These samples will contribute to the global effort to better understand our changing climate and the impact on Antarctica.

Just 19 years old and a sophomore at Yale University, Parker has already skied to the North Pole three times and has undertaken research for leading institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the University of Alberta. His thirst for knowledge and passion for adventure, supplemented by a rigorous training regime in the months ahead, will prepare him for this extreme expedition across the world's harshest and most unforgiving terrain. If those stakes were not enough, Parker and his expedition partner Doug Stoup will have to pass the Trans-Antarctic Mountains, which at their highest point reach 2,528 metres (14,855 feet) close to height of Mount Blanc.

The Willis Resilience Expedition will set off on 3 December from the Ross Ice Shelf, where Parker, towing an 82kg equipment and supply pulk (sled) will begin his 397 miles (640km) trek to the South Pole. To beat the current world record, Parker needs to average around 18 miles (30km) a day, almost three quarters of the length of a modern marathon, for up to 22 days, facing temperatures between -28°C and -60°C. On an average day, Parker will be on the move for around twelve hours, and will spend around four hours making and breaking camp and cooking specially sealed meals to ensure that he takes in his nourishment of 6,000 calories required each day.

At this time of year, Antarctica is bathed in sunlight 24 hours a day, which will allow for planned live television coverage. Viewers around the world will be able share in the journey: each step through the snow, each morning melting ice for drinking water and every evening setting up camp will be observed by specially-designed long distance television cameras and broadcast live on the internet at a new website, [www.willisresilience.com](http://www.willisresilience.com). The broadcast of the Expedition will be enabled by a custom-designed vehicle that will remain separated from Parker except for voice radio and telemetry transmissions and will serve as the mechanism for round-the-clock social media engagement.

*“On the 3rd December 2013, I leave the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica to ski 397 miles (640 km) unsupported from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole in the hope of breaking the 22-day speed record. At 19 years old I hope to also become the youngest man to ski to the South Pole. Along the way I will be collecting snow samples which we hope will provide a valuable contribution to our understanding of Antarctic climate.”*

**- Parker Liautaud**

While one of the harshest environments on the planet, Antarctica holds extraordinary value to scientists as a record of environmental change. Its ice sheet contains an archive of past climates, chronicling changes in temperatures and greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere stretching back hundreds of thousands of years. This brings the Willis Resilience Expedition to one of the most important places on earth for the study of the history of climate change and for understanding the implications that this has for the future of our planet.

According to the British Antarctic Survey, the Antarctic Peninsula is also one of the fastest warming parts of the planet. If global warming leads to the collapse of Antarctica's ice sheets, sea levels could rise much more than already predicted. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) sea levels are expected to rise by 18 – 59 centimetres (7 to 23 inches) over the next hundred years.

As one of the world's leading risk advisers and insurance and reinsurance brokers, Willis is supporting this inspirational journey to test the limits of human endurance and resilience in the harshest of environments and to promote greater understanding of our changing climate and the risks associated with it. Since its founding in 1828, Willis has helped clients to explore new frontiers, mitigate natural and man-made risks, and achieve

through human endeavor what many thought impossible. Willis was, for example, the insurance broker for the first Lunar Rover and is a lead broker for the reconstruction of Lower Manhattan now underway in New York.

Working alongside Willis in support of the expedition is global IT leader EMC, who will engage in a comprehensive effort to connect the role Big Data has on understanding climate change and the world's changing environment. By analysing historical and present climate conditions in Antarctica, along with Parker's live data from the expedition and the millions of conversations about climate change on social media, EMC will use Big Data as the cornerstone of its approach to better understand our changing world.

This expedition marks an important new step for Willis and the insurance industry, which serves a crucial role in helping companies and organisations withstand the impact of extreme weather and rebuild and recover after catastrophic events. As these events change in frequency and severity, the insurance industry can play a leading role, not only in transferring the financial costs, but also by sharing data and modelling exposures to help those affected better understand and mitigate these risks and build resilience.

*"We live in an increasingly fragile and constantly changing world and Willis is on the front line helping people and businesses to rebuild when disaster strikes. Truly to build resilience to extreme weather risks, we need a detailed understanding of our climate. Using the past as well as advanced mathematics as tools for predicting future patterns is fundamental to the insurance industry, and this is why we are proud to be part of an expedition that uncovers new data on historic climate patterns and shares this with scientists around the world. The heart of this expedition is closely aligned to Willis' everyday business: using analytics and cutting edge science to overcome challenges and build resilience to risks. We look forward to cheering Parker on as he embarks on what will be not just an extraordinary adventure, but a true test of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity."*

**- Dominic Casserley, Willis Group CEO**



**- Parker's journey to the South Pole -**

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## Notes to Editors

**About Willis:** Willis Group Holdings plc is a leading global risk adviser, insurance and reinsurance broker. With roots dating to 1828, Willis operates today on every continent with more than 17,000 employees in over 400 offices. Willis offers its clients superior expertise, teamwork, innovation and market-leading products and professional services in risk management and transfer. Our experts rank among the world's leading authorities on analytics, modelling and mitigation strategies at the intersection of global commerce and extreme events. Find more information at our website, [www.willis.com](http://www.willis.com), our leadership journal, [Resilience](#), or our up-to-the-minute blog on breaking news, [WillisWire](#). Across geographies, industries and specialisms, Willis provides its local and multinational clients with resilience for a risky world.

**An unsupported expedition:** The Willis Resilience Expedition will have a vehicle tracking the explorers however, the team in the truck will provide no support to Parker along the way. The vehicle is tracking the team to provide round the clock footage and imagery along the way and will not carry any equipment for Parker with them.

**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. In the same year, the UN General Assembly endorsed the action by WMO and UNEP in jointly establishing the IPCC. Further information about IPCC can be found at [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch).

**About EMC:** EMC Corporation is a global leader in enabling businesses and service providers to transform their operations and deliver IT as a service. Fundamental to this transformation is cloud computing. Through innovative products and services, EMC accelerates the journey to cloud computing, helping IT departments to store, manage, protect and analyse their most valuable asset - information - in a more agile, trusted and cost - effective way. Additional information about EMC can be found at [www.EMC.com](http://www.EMC.com).



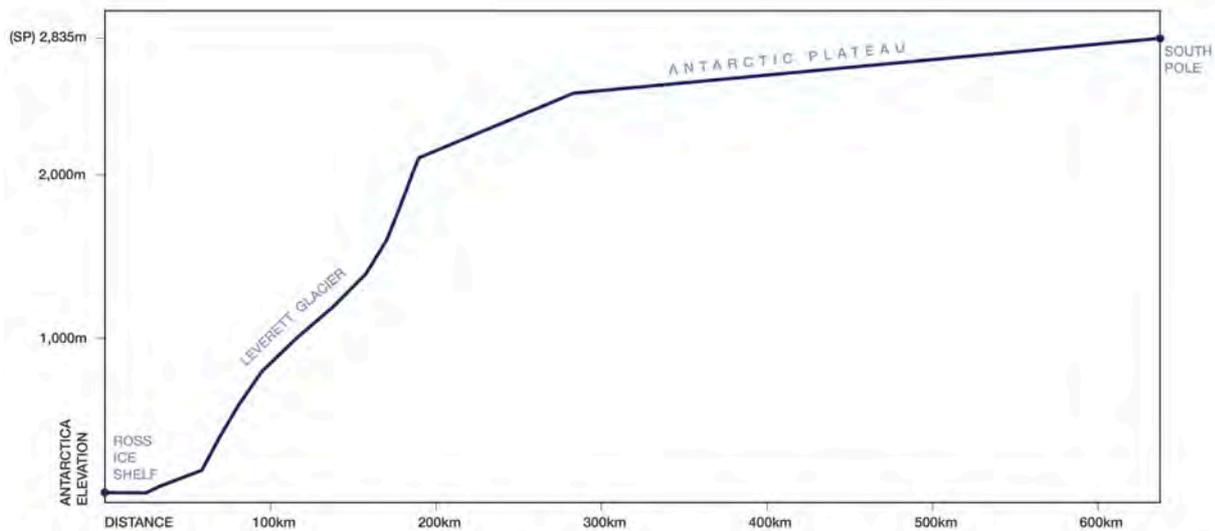
## Facts about Antarctica

- ▶ The first man to reach the Geographic South Pole was Norwegian Roald Amundsen and his party on December 14, 1911. He and his team narrowly beat a British expedition lead by Robert Falcon Scott, who arrived at The South Pole five weeks later. Tragically, Scott and his team died on their return journey. Out of respect, one of the permanent American research center in Antarctica is named the Amundsen-Scott Station.
- ▶ The lowest temperature ever recorded on Earth was at Vostok Station in Antarctica, at  $-89.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; that is roughly 4 times colder than the average temperature of your average household freezer
- ▶ The highest temperature ever recorded at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station was  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  on December 25, 2011; just slightly warmer than the lowest temperature ever recorded in London, which stands at  $-19\text{C}$ .
- ▶ The average temperature at the South Pole is  $-28^{\circ}\text{C}$  in summer, dropping to  $-58\text{C}$  in winter. Compare this to England's average temperatures of  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$  in Summer and  $7^{\circ}\text{C}$  in winter, and you'll soon stop complaining about the weather.
- ▶ In September the sun rises and does not set until March the following year, making it rather difficult to sleep in the summer months. In contrast, the South Pole has no sunlight at all for six whole months during winter.
- ▶ The South Pole is located at the top of a large plateau 2,835 metres (9,301 feet) above sea level. This is the same altitude as the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest city on Earth: China's Shigatse in the Tibet Autonomous Region, which stands 13 and a half times higher than The Shard.
- ▶ As well as being the coldest, windiest and most elevated continent on earth, it is also the driest continent on earth, with only 200mm of rainfall a year, making it the world's largest desert.
- ▶ Antarctica has hundreds of subglacial lakes beneath its ice sheet.



## South Pole Expedition Facts

- ▶ Parker will travel 397 miles (640 km) from The Ross Ice Shelf to the South Pole, pulling a pulk that weighs 82 kg.
- ▶ To break the speed record, Parker will have to complete the trek in just 22 days, meaning he'll have to cover 18 miles (30 km) a day, 1.5 hours at a time, separated by very short, 6-8 minute breaks. Parker will trek for an average of 12 hours a day.
- ▶ Beginning at an elevation of about 656 ft (200m) above sea level, Parker will reach over 9,186 ft (2,800m) by the time he arrives at the South Pole.



Maurer, J. 2007. Atlas of the Cryosphere. Boulder, Colorado USA: National Snow and Ice Data Center. Digital media.

United States Antarctic Resource Center, 2013. Topographic Reconnaissance Maps (250k): Leverett Glacier. U.S. Geological Survey. Digital Media.

- ▶ During the trek, Parker will pass the Transantarctic Mountains, the mountain range which divides East and West Antarctica. Its highest mountain, Mount Kirkpatrick, reaches 4,528m.
- ▶ Man-hauling a pulk in Antarctic conditions uses around 10,000 calories per day, equivalent to 18 Big Macs or 38 Mars Bars.
- ▶ Parker's meals will consist of high-calorie, custom-made, freeze-dried meals for dinner, and usually oatmeal with dried fruit for breakfast. During the day he will eat high-calorie and high-fat items like chocolate, beef jerky, and nuts at scheduled times.
- ▶ Water is melted at the beginning of the day from surface snow shoveled the evening before, and stored while hot in vacuum flasks so that it remains unfrozen for as much of the day as possible. Often, the water is mixed with electrolyte powder or soup mixes, for additional calories.
- ▶ Parker will bring 44 chocolate bars weighing around 3 kg. The chocolate will freeze and so will be broken up into little pieces before the expedition so he doesn't have to bite through rock-hard frozen bars.
- ▶ The pressure elevation at the South Pole ranges from roughly 3,300m - 4,000m, so Parker will have to face the challenges of not just Antarctic weather conditions, but also high altitude. He may feel physical symptoms such as shortness of breath and headaches.



## POLAR ADVENTURER CLIMATE CHANGE CAMPAIGNER TEENAGER

### Parker Liautaud - Polar Explorer

**Date of Birth:** 12 August 1994

**Birthplace:** Palo Alto, California

**Current Home:** Yale University, Connecticut, United States

Parker Liautaud is a young polar adventurer, environmental campaigner and motivational speaker from the United States who grew up in the United Kingdom. He is known for his work as an ambassador for young people promoting discourse on environmental issues.

*“People talk about creating solutions to climate change for the future generations - we are the future generation, so it's important that we're involved.”*

**- Parker Liautaud**

#### Early Years - The Ambitious Dreamer

Parker spent the first nine years of his life in Palo Alto, California, before moving with his family to the UK, where he grew up. He was an unassumingly ordinary boy who attended school and played football — but who also had an extraordinarily deep-rooted concern for the planet and its changing environment.

From an early age, Parker knew he wanted to find a way to share his concerns about climate change with the general public. This was when he started to dream of going to the North Pole. It seemed insurmountable at first, but Parker soon began to realise that he could make it happen.

## **The Arctic - The Teenage Adventurer**

After a 2009 Antarctic expedition at 14 years old under the guidance of legendary explorer Robert Swan OBE, Parker made an attempt to become the youngest person to walk to the North Pole at 15 years old. The arctic journey was fraught with disastrous weather conditions and fast drifting ice that forced Parker's expedition to turn back. He had been within 15 miles of the North Pole.

Humbled by the magnitude of the challenge and the arctic's unpredictable nature, Parker resolved to try again. By the age of 18, he had done three expeditions to the North Pole, each time partnering with leading institutions to conduct research on climate change.

## **Present Day - The Explorer**

Simply being known as a 'young' explorer was not enough for Parker. He knew that if he wanted to be taken seriously, he needed to earn a legitimate voice and gain a deep understanding of the science behind climate change. He now studies at Yale University where he plans to major in Geology & Geophysics.

But Parker's expedition gear won't lie in disuse for long. His upcoming trek to the South Pole will be his fourth polar expedition in four years and his greatest challenge yet. With modern advances in communication technologies and the support of Willis and other sponsors, the Willis Resilience Expedition will be the most publicly accessible polar adventure ever, capable of reaching an audience millions of people worldwide.

Parker hopes to obtain a Ph.D one day and become a leader in climate research, and continue to engage the public in environmental issues.

## **Parker's Desert Island picks:**

- ▶ The Book: "Collapse" by Jared Diamond.
- ▶ The Song: "Ten Thousand Hours" by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis. "Normally not the kind of music I listen to, but this particular one happened to be at the top of my training playlist, and I listened to it as I have become stronger and fitter over months of training. It keeps my mind focused on believing in my abilities because it reminds me of improvement through hard work."
- ▶ The Luxury Item: "A luxury item ... I don't have any, and I probably wouldn't bring one. I'd be too distracted! But I will try to bring an envelope of notes and messages from my family and closest friends. For me, personal items have an enormously positive mental impact."