



Media Release

Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center

Public Affairs Office

36000 Darnall Loop

Fort Hood, Texas, 76544

mikaela.t.cade.civ@mail.mil Email

Telephone (254) 288-8005/286-7954

Web site: www.crdamc.amedd.army.mil

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Third rabies case discovered at Fort Hood

FORT HOOD, Texas – The Fort Hood Veterinary Center (VETCEN) was notified today, Friday, June 6, that a young fox found in the vicinity of the LV Phantom area and building 53905 near Clarke Road tested positive to rabies.

The fox, which was thought to be injured when found, was brought to the Fort Hood VETCEN where it began showing clinical signs consistent with rabies. After it was humanely euthanized it was submitted to the Texas Department of Health Services for testing.

This is the third identified case on Fort Hood since May 12. The first case involved a skunk that was sighted during daylight hours acting strangely in a motor pool on Motorpool Road. The second case, on May 16, involved a dark gray and white kitten that attacked a Fort Hood resident outside a home on Central Drive on post.

Public Health Command and the Fort Hood Veterinary Center strongly urge all Fort Hood Soldiers, civilians, contractors and residents to be aware and avoid handling wild or stray animals.

If you notice any wildlife or stray animals acting abnormally, or displaying neurologic or aggressive behavior please contact the Military Police at (254) 287-4001. If you believe you have already come into contact with an animal displaying any of these symptoms please go directly to the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center Emergency Department for immediate care.

“If you or your pets make contact with a stray animal or wildlife, contact your local veterinarian or health care provider immediately. Rabies is a deadly disease and currently present in this area. Please remain diligent for the health and safety of you and your family,” Dr. John Kuczek, officer in charge of the Fort Hood VETCEN said.

An animal that is infected with rabies may not show any signs or symptoms until late in the disease, often just days before its death. The animal can, however, still spread the deadly virus while appearing completely normal.

The rabies virus is transmitted to humans by the saliva of infected animals through bite wounds, contact with mucous membranes or broken skin. Humans can become infected and harbor the virus for weeks to months, and in extremely rare cases, years before becoming ill. During this incubation period, which averages between one and three months, rabies can be prevented with appropriate

treatment, including a series of vaccinations. Once symptoms occur, however, death is almost always certain.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, “the rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.”

Get more rabies information by visiting these Web sites: www.cdc.gov/rabies or <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/aid/Pages/Rabies.aspx>.