



Bulletin No. 2  
January 23, 1981  
Rabies in Luzon, Philippines

On December 26, two Filipino civilians employed at Clark Air Force Base, in Luzon, Philippines, were attacked by a stray dog. The dog was noted to be acting abnormally and was very aggressive. One of the employees was bitten; the other was scratched. The stray dog, which had not been vaccinated against rabies, was sacrificed on December 26, and arrangements were made to have the head shipped by Air Force jet to California for examination for the presence of rabies. Anti-rabies prophylactic medication was instituted by military physicians in the Philippines on December 26. On December 29, the plane transporting the animal head was forced to land at Elmendorf Air Force Base with mechanical difficulties. Because of additional delays, a request was made of the Virology-Rabies Unit in Fairbanks to assist with the examination of the animal for rabies.

The head was shipped to Fairbanks on December 31. Laboratory examination proved the animal to be positive for rabies. This information was immediately transmitted back to Clark Air Force Base where medical treatment was continued on the exposed employees. We wish to commend all those persons who were involved in coordinating this international effort which allowed for optimal medical therapy of the two civilian employees. (Reported by Don Ritter, PhD, Chief, Virology-Rabies Unit, Fairbanks; Major James Howell, Veterinary Activities, USAF Hospital/SGV Elmendorf Air Force Base)

### **MEASLES IN ALASKA - AN UNWELCOME VISITOR IN 1980!**

Only six cases of measles occurred in Alaska in 1980 - all traced to importations. Four of the six cases occurred in active duty military personnel when the index case, infected during a large epidemic of measles at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, arrived in Alaska on temporary duty. The discovery of this imported outbreak resulted in prompt action by military physicians. All active duty personnel in Alaska who did not have a documented history of measles vaccination were immediately vaccinated - more than 2,200 people. No further cases occurred and no cases occurred in the civilian population. Our fifth case of measles was discovered in a teenage man who had recently arrived in Anchorage from Minnesota. He had been an employee of a pizza parlor near the University campus, where we presume he acquired his infection. The sixth case of measles occurred in a child who was visited in Anchorage by relatives from Great Britain. One of these relatives was a 4-year-old child who was ill with measles upon arrival in Anchorage.

Three separate importations of measles were documented in 1980. In spite of the occurrence of six cases, no further spread to Alaskans was documented. Epidemiologic investigation of each outbreak documented uniformly high levels of vaccination against measles in all childhood and school-age contacts. No spread of measles into our school-age population occurred. The identification of the importation of measles into the active duty military population resulted in prompt control measures being instituted by the military. This rapid vaccination of susceptible active duty personnel prevented further spread, and the outbreak was contained.

Alaska can expect future importation of vaccine preventable diseases. Only continued aggressive efforts to maintain our high levels of vaccination will prevent cases from occurring in Alaskans. We encourage the immediate reporting to the Section of Communicable Disease Control all cases of suspect or diagnosed measles or other vaccine-preventable disease so that immediate epidemiologic investigation can identify susceptibles and allow for rapid institution of control measures.