

Child attacked by two pit bulls

**By Linda Stewart/For the Times Record News
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VERNON (Special) - A 2-year-old child was attacked by two pit bull dogs in the backyard of a home at 1307 Sherman St. about noon Tuesday, according to Police Chief Allan Metcalf.

The initial 911 call reported that a 2-year-old child at the home was not breathing. When a fire department ambulance arrived, emergency personnel found the boy suffering from massive facial wounds from a dog attack.

The child was rushed first to Wilbarger General Hospital for emergency treatment and then flown by Teddy Bear Air service to Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth.

Metcalf said the child was in stable condition at midafternoon Tuesday.

Investigators said the attack happened at the home of the boy's grandmother, where the child and his mother also live.

Becky Freeman, a neighbor who lives a few doors down from the family, said she was shocked when she heard about it. She said it was the first time that they knew the dogs were dangerous. She said children in the family were always out playing in the yard.

"You hear about things like this happening, but you never really think about it happening so close to you," she said.

Dee Freeman, a neighbor who lives across the street, said she didn't know the family had pit bulls, but saw the first person to arrive after the attack.

"I don't know who that man in the red pickup was, but he probably saved that baby's life," she said.

The man was an off-duty fire department lieutenant, Robert Pierce, who is also an EMT-I. He lives near the area and was on his way home when he heard the emergency call. He said he was only a few blocks away and went to see if he could help.

Pierce said the mother was standing in the front yard holding the baby when he arrived. He said he took the baby, saw that it was breathing, but bleeding badly. He held the baby until the ambulance arrived, then jumped in the back with the EMTs on duty and they headed for the hospital.

"There just wasn't much I could do," Pierce said. He said he didn't feel he did anything special, just what anyone would have done.

The two animals involved in the attack were scheduled to be euthanized and sent for routine rabies testing, according to Metcalf. The owner of the dogs also authorized two other pit bulls at the home that were not involved in the attack to be euthanized.

Dan Richardson, Jr., who owns a used car lot several blocks from where the attack occurred, said things like this are going to keep happening until laws are passed to control vicious animals. He feels that anyone who owns a pit bull should be required to take training on how to raise and treat the animals. He also thinks that young children should never be left unsupervised with dogs of any breed. "The risk outweighs any benefits of owning pit bulls," he said.

The incident is still under investigation by the police department, according to Lt. Peter Hall. He said officers still needed to talk to several other people before making final reports. He said no charges have been filed in the case.

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