

Napalmed Girl Recovering in Saigon

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 8 (AP)—Two months after napalm dropped by a South Vietnamese plane sent Phan Thi Kim Phuc, who is 9 years old, screaming in pain and panic down a highway northwest of Saigon, she has nearly recovered from her burns.

At the Barsky Center, a hospital for plastic and reconstructive surgery in Saigon, Vietnamese surgeons trained in the United States have planted a patchwork of stamp-size skin grafts over her burned back, neck and arms.

Kim Phuc was among five women and children and half a dozen South Vietnamese soldiers badly burned when the plane mistakenly dropped the flaming napalm.

Going Home Soon

More than 50 children and adults are at the Barsky Center, their faces and bodies scarred by war, accidents, disease and congenital defects.

There are burned ones, victims of war and home mishaps; people disfigured by mines and shell fragments; babies recovering from operations for cleft palates, a common birth defect in Vietnam; and the victims of noma, a still-unexplained disease that swiftly eats away facial tissue and bones.

Compared with the other patients, Kim Phuc is lucky. But her fame arising from newspaper pictures of her

pain and flight have caused some consternation among the doctors and nurses. "I don't understand why she gets so much attention," says a plastic surgeon. "She is among the least seriously injured here and she will be going home soon."

Kim Phuc's home is a modest house among fruit trees in Trangbang, 25 miles northwest of Saigon. As for the others, their families are dead or lose touch as the patients' stay in the hospital lengthens; some stay a year or more.

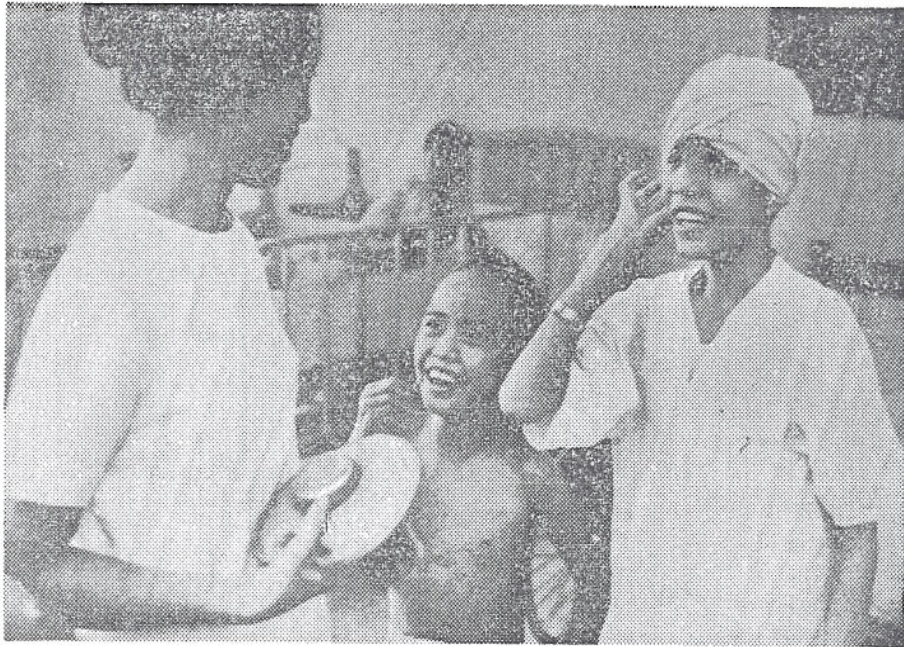
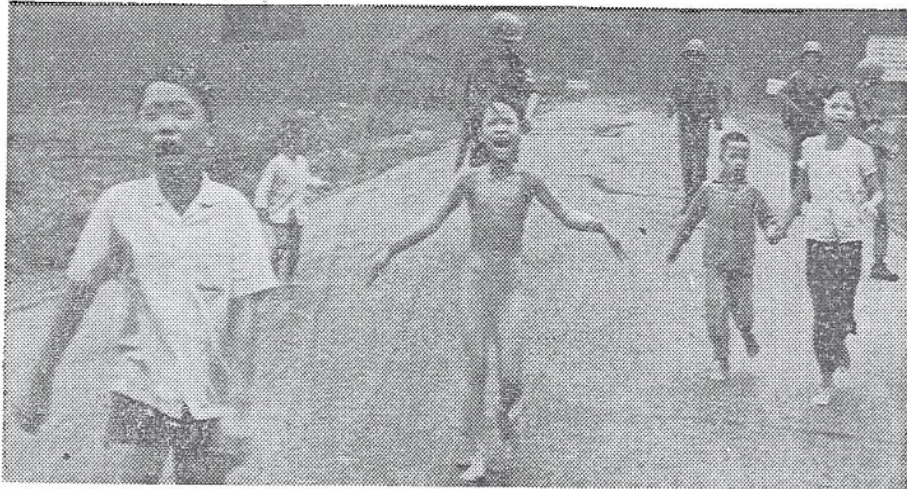
The Barsky Center, which began in an apartment in 1968 and moved into the present clinic at Cho Ray Hospital in 1969, has treated

more than 3,000 persons. Patients now come at the rate of 100 a month.

The center is sponsored by the Children's Medical Relief International, Inc., based in New York and headed by a plastic surgeon, Dr. Arthur J. Barsky.

Most of its financial support comes from the United States Agency for International Development, but its funds have been cut back as have other foreign programs. Children's Medical Relief International has begun a major money-raising effort to get private funds for the hospital.

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Associated Press

TWO MONTHS AGO, top, 9-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc tore off her burning clothes as she and other victims of a misdirected napalm strike ran down a road in South Vietnam. Since then, she has been treated at the Barsky Center in Saigon, where she is shown, at center in the lower photo, with a nurse and another patient. Details, Page 4.