



AP photo

Ready to go home: Willie Watson and his wife, Delores, are all smiles Wednesday as they greet the press with their grandson, P.J. Allen, prior to leaving Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City.

Second to last child victim leaves Oklahoma hospital

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — One of the littlest victims of the Oklahoma City bombing smiled broadly as he left the hospital Wednesday, despite the tube in his throat that he needs to breathe and burn scars left by the explosion.

P.J. Allen, 22 months, playfully tossed his grandfather's keys at photographers during a news conference at Children's Hospital. Discoloration from the burns was visible on P.J.'s face and his breath was audible as he pulled air through the tube into damaged lungs.

"We were thankful that he was alive, but we knew he was in bad shape," said Delores Watson, the boy's grandmother. "I'm so happy to be taking him home."

P.J. was among the children in the second-floor day-care center of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building when the April 19 blast shattered windows and rained tons of concrete and metal down on them. Nineteen of the 168 people who died were children.

P.J. was one of the last two children hospitalized. Brandon Denny, 3, is undergoing rehabilitation at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

P.J. suffered burns to his arms, chest, scalp, back, shoulders and eyes. Both his eardrums ruptured and one of his arms was broken in three places, said Dr. Morris Gessouroun, medical director of the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit.

Shortly after the bombing, he developed Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome, which caused scarring to the lung tissue, Gessouroun said.

Despite the seriousness of his injuries, P.J. is expected to make a full recovery.

"His lungs are still injured, but over the course of six months to a year, most people with this condition return to normal," Gessouroun said.

He once thought the boy would be hospitalized at least until July 4. "P.J. is remarkable," Gessouroun said.

After the news conference, P.J., departed for his grandparents' home and a newly prepared room.

When asked what the boy would do on his first day home, his grandfather, Willie Watson, replied "anything that he wants to do."