

For L.I. Wife of P.O.W., Dawn Comes at Midnight

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WESTBURY, L.I., Jan. 29—Carol Baker, wife of Air Force Capt. David E. Baker, remembers the exact minute the telephone call came. "It was five minutes to midnight Saturday night," she said.

Her husband had been missing in action since last June, when the plane he was piloting was shot down — "somewhere in Indochina," the Pentagon said. His name had never appeared on any prisoner-of-war list, but Mrs. Baker and the captain's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Baker of Huntington, L.I., were sustained by a report that his parachute had been seen opening after his plane was hit.

Saturday night there was confirmation from the casualty assistance officer at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, and as soon as the call to Mrs. Baker had been completed, she phoned her in-laws, Gordon and Ernestine Baker, at their home and told them the news.

None of the families of prisoners of war or of men missing in action who were reached on Long Island today had any real plans for homecoming welcomes, other than "seeing him as soon as pos-

sible," as Mr. Baker said. Neither did the governments in any of the hometowns of the men. For the present at least, it appears they will simply return quietly to their communities.

"If somebody wants to organize a parade or a welcome, that's up to them, not me," said Dr. Peter Zuhoski of Riverhead, L. I., who was informed Saturday that his son, Navy Lieut. Comdr. Charles P. Zuhoski, whom he has not seen for nearly six years, would be coming home.

A 'Great' Feeling

"We don't know where he's coming from or when," explained the Riverhead Town Supervisor, John Leonard. "His wife lives in California. We sure would like to make a day for him."

Huntington Town officials were not even aware that Captain Baker was from Huntington and was returning.

But the lack of formal celebrations was not detracting from the joy in the households of those who throughout the weekend, but particularly on Saturday night, were receiving word that their sons or husbands would be returning, in some cases after years of absence.

"We knew he was a prison-

er, that he was alive," said Dr. Zuhoski, a dentist. "But the confirmation made us feel great." His son, who is now 31 years old, was shot down on an air mission over Vietnam.

"The first years were the hardest," Dr. Zuhoski said. "We knew nothing for two and a half years—he was simply missing in action. Then we got a letter from him."

But since November, 1971, the letters, too, stopped. His wife, Patricia, who now lives in San Diego with her parents, received a couple of letters last year, but each was only about four lines long.

But within the next two months, Dr. Zuhoski said, he expects to receive word that his son is being transferred to St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens, and there he, his wife and their three other children and one grandchild of seven weeks will go to visit him.

Eventually, the dentist said, he believes his son would like

to return to college. He received a bachelor's degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute before he entered the Navy six years ago.

"He said in one letter he'd like to go back and get his master's—his field was mathematics," Dr. Zuhoski said, adding: "We have no plans as yet. We never know what it's going to be like, the shape he'll be in."

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph McManus of Babylon, another family of a prisoner of war, were among the least surprised of any. They had received a letter from their son, Air Force Capt. Kevin J. McManus, less than a month ago, and he had reported that he was well.

Saturday night they heard the telephone ringing when they walked in the door shortly before midnight on their return from taking their younger son to a roller derby. The news that their older son was coming home was "very welcome indeed."