

# Why One POW Wasn't Freed

## Lakewood, Ohio

Suzanne Wideman had waited nearly six years for the release of her POW son, Navy Lieutenant Robert E. Wideman. He was supposed to have been released in Hanoi yesterday—but he wasn't.

Wideman, one of 20 POWs scheduled for a flight from Hanoi to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, was scratched when American officials requested the North Vietnamese release Navy Lieutenant James W. Bailey of Carthage and Kosciusko, Miss., because of an illness in his family.

Officials did not immediately disclose exactly why Wideman stayed back, but his mother, a nurse, said, "It was just plain common sense."

"Although I can't say for sure, Bobby probably volunteered to let the other man go in his place because it was an urgency that the other man get back home," Mrs. Wideman said. "I was told the reason why Jim was coming home and it was just plain common sense to make the switch."

Mrs. Wideman, whose son



UPI Telephoto

ROBERT WIDEMAN  
Waiting goes on

was shot down May 5, 1967, said Pentagon officials telephoned her Saturday and told her that her son would not be coming home now.

"How do I feel? She asked. "Do I have a choice?"

"Right now, I'm just thinking of my boy," she said. "He almost made it home today. I guess a few more days...."

United Press