

Clock Ticks Away But Bell Has Tolled

By DONALD WEINBRENNER

Danny Maguire was 21 last Friday and his family left their Bronx apartment to visit him in Long Island City. Tomorrow they will probably visit him again. But they won't see him— even though his room awaits his return.

At 3050 Bainbridge Ave. in the Bronx, his small green carpeted room has not changed. To the right as one enters are bottles of men's cologne on a bureau. On the floor, an overturned pair of slippers that might have been hastily kicked off by their owner. Daniel Maguire, Jr. seemingly awaits re-use. Even the sharp ticking of the little white clock on the windowsill near his sofa-bed make one feel he will soon be home from work this evening. But Danny won't ever be back.

His father, Daniel Sr., and his mother, Gwen, commemorated his twenty-first birthday at his gravesite in Calvary Cemetery, Long Island City. Danny was killed in Vietnam Dec. 11th while helping a wounded GI, an act among others that won him a posthumous Silver and Bronze Stars.

In the same grave is the body of Daniel Jr.'s twin sister who died at the age of 4 ½ of a bronchial ailment. She was buried Dec. 20, 1951. Her brother was buried alongside her, on the same date, Dec. 20, 1967, exactly 16 years apart.

"I had a premonition I would never see my boy again," said Danny's father. "don't ask me why, I just knew it and no one could have told me otherwise." He then remembered his son as his wife Gwen listened intently.

"I was a Golden Glover. Won the middleweight championship. It was 1939 and it was in Madison Square Garden. I won three-fourths of the 20 professional fights I was in. Danny was like me."

A Wiry Kid

"He was the nicest kid in the world. We worked out together. I taught him to use his hands. We got a little gym together. Punching bag, boxing gloves, athletic devices. He grew tall and strong. A wiry kid."

"He was popular and had many interests," added Gwen. "He loved to sing and impersonate famous people. And he was responsible. When he graduated DeWitt Clinton High School he went to work as an accountant during the day to pay his tuition at Pace College," she said.

"He was drafted March of '67," Daniel said. "He couldn't finish school then. When he left I told him not to volunteer for everything, but to do all expected of him.

That August Gwen and me and his girl friend Barbara saw him for the last time at Kennedy Airport."

Had Omen

"I knew I wouldn't see him ever again," the father repeated. "He left Kennedy for Oakland and on Aug. 11th they flew him to Bong Son, Viet Nam. He was with the 12th Cavalry in the Infantry."

He pushed a letter across the kitchen table. "This can best explain the rest," he said. It was from his son's platoon leader, Peter Watkins, Jr. It read in part:

"Your son was probably the most liked man in the platoon. He had a mature attitude and a sense of responsibility. He was promoted to sergeant and was made squad leader, the best squad in the platoon because he made them that way. They were given the mission of securing an area...a night defensive position. We met some resistance...your son flushed out an enemy soldier (killed) from a bunker.

"As we moved out ...receiving sniper fire...one of the men in your son's squad was wounded. I have put your son in for the Silver Star, which is the fourth highest award [actually the third for valor] in the Army...

On January 8, Sp4 Daniel J. Maguire posthumously was awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding meritorious service, initiative, zeal, sound judgement and attention to duty.

Four days later, Danny received the Silver Star. His room still bears a mirror to his versatility—two oil painted landscapes, a surrealistic etching, a home made hi fi speaker constructed into the shelves he made, and a collection of various awards.

Colleen, 18, has the room next to her dead brother's. She leaves the door open at night. She can hear the tick tock from within the silent room as the clock, and the clock alone, continues.