

The Stranger in the Photo Is Me By Donald M. Murray [Pictured left] The author in England, 1944. I simply cannot re-create my snapshot innocence. There is a photograph of me on a tricycle before the duplex on Grand View Avenue in Wollaston I hardly remember; in another I am dressed in a seersucker sailor suit when I was 5 and lived in a Cincinnati hotel. And the picture that haunts me the most is one not in costume but in the uniform I proudly earned in World War II. I believe it was taken in England from the design of the barracks behind me. I have taken off the ugly steel-framed GI glasses, a touch of dishonesty for the girl who waited at home. My overseas cap with its airborne insignia is tugged down over my right eye, my right shoulder in the jump jacket is lower because I have my left hand in my pocket in rakish disregard for the regulation that a soldier in that war could never, ever stick a hand in a pocket. The pockets that are empty in the photograph will soon bulge with hand grenades, extra ammunition, food, and many of the gross of condoms we were issued before a combat jump. But with the accumulation of yesterdays and the possibility of shrinking tomorrows, I find myself returning, as I suspect many over 60s do, for a second glance and a third at family photos that snatch a moment from time. Vermeer is one of my favorite painters because of that sense of suspended time, with both clock and calendar held so wonderfully, so terribly still. —The Boston Globe, August 27, 1991 The people in the snapshots are all strangers