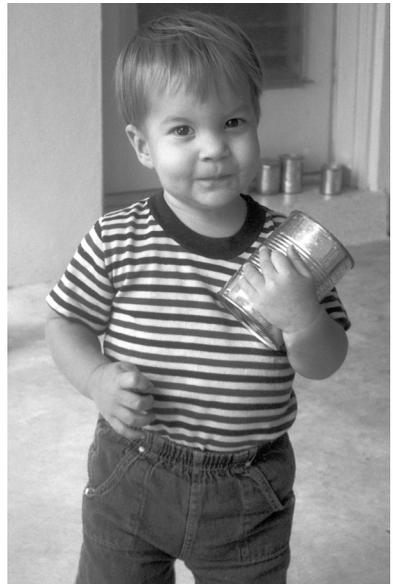




This is the picture of Patience I had with me in Vietnam. She is twenty, my true love, and the mother of our son, Jack.



Jack is one and a half. He and Patience will wait for me in Naples, Florida.



Catching a nap before a night training mission at Fort Benning. We're forming up the First Air Cavalry, the world's first combat airmobile division.



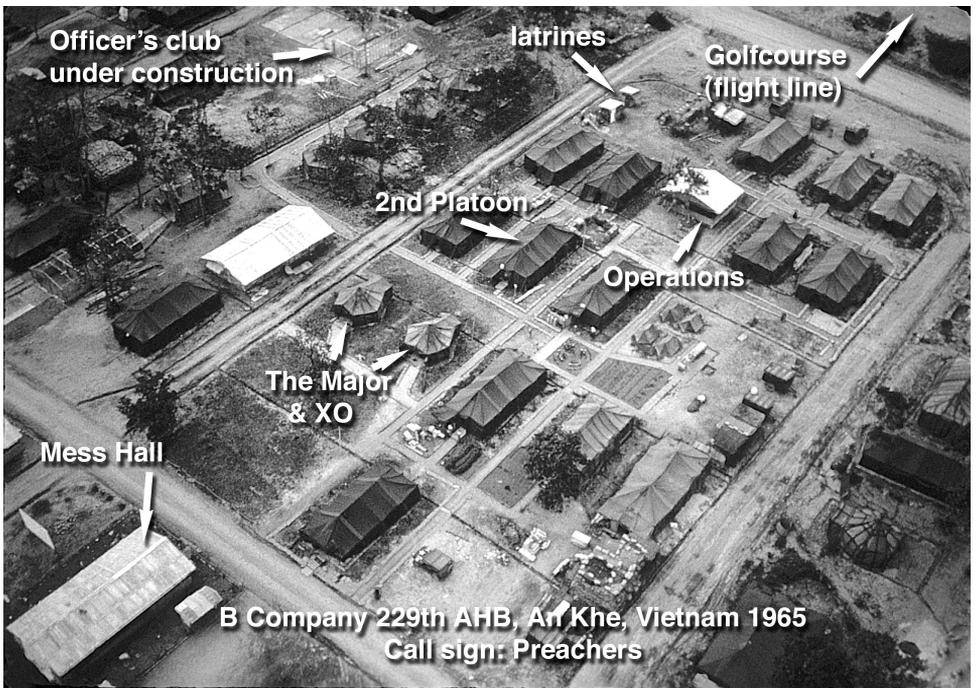
Patience takes a final snapshot of Jack and me. I'm on the way to join my battalion to board a ship for Vietnam.



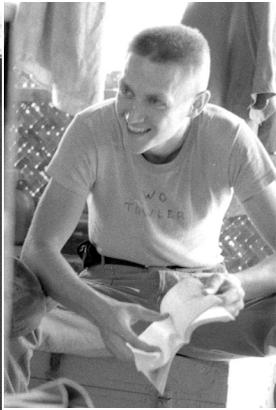
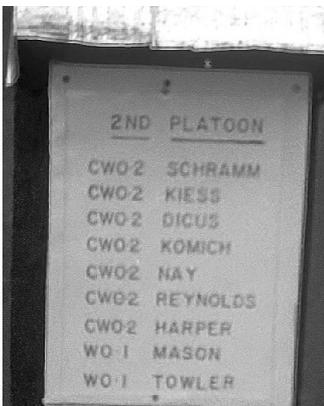
On the deck of the USN Croatan, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.



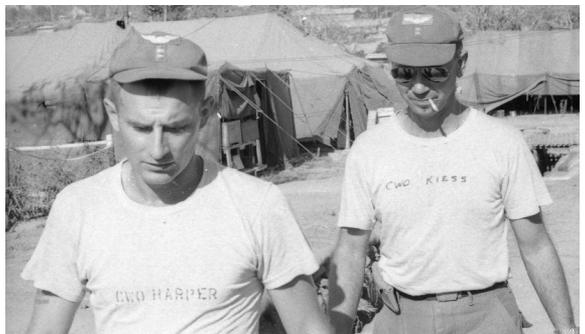
Gerald Towler (Resler), brand-new aviator like me, boarding the troop carrier Darby.



In An Khe, Vietnam, we set up a camp for us and our 400 helicopters. By January 1966, this was the layout of B Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion. I lived in the 2nd Platoon tent with these guys.

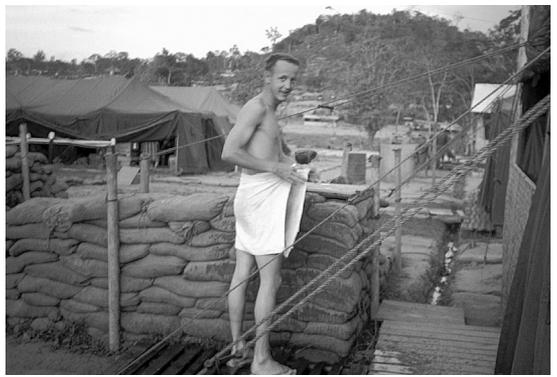


Clockwise in this group, Gerald Towler (Resler), Walt Schramm, Lee Komich (Connors); Don Reynolds (Kaiser), Dallas Harper (Banjo), and Bob Kiess (Leese).





Ken Dicus (Riker), in his cube in the 2nd Platoon tent.



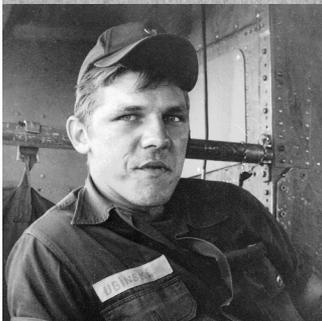
Chuck Nay (Nate) at our posh bathing facilities.



From front to back, my platoon leader, Robert Stinnett (Shaker), Captain Gillette (Gill), and Hugh Farmer practicing his golf swing.



Jack Armstrong and Tom Shall (T. Shaw), from the 1st platoon.



Door-gunner Ubinski (Rubinski) during Happy Valley.



Preachers laager in a rice paddy.



Crewchief Bill Weber (Red).



Crewchief Gene Burdick (Reacher) retrieved a Jeep drivers foot, one of five soldiers we tried to rescue.



Howard Phillips (Morris) and Woody Woodruff (Decker) were always together.



A field briefing where I look for my lighter.



Low-level run up Happy Valley.



Dallas Harper, Neal Parker, and Lee Komich back from a mission.



Gasmasks were a bad idea.



Washing out the blood at the end of a busy day.



Extraction.



Doorgunners started out using bungie straps to hold their M-60 machine guns. Later, they were given mounts.



From inside the cockpit at a sandy LZ in Happy Valley.



Kiess, Towler, and Mason in the cockpit.

Dropping troops off on a hilltop in Bong Son valley.



Looking happy with my new M-1 carbine.



Towler and I in our hex-tent at Dak To. We shared these quarters with Stoney Stizzle (Stoopy Stoddard).



Dawn preflight at Pleiku. I don't think I was awake without a cigarette.



Lang, the Cola girl.



Waiting to crank up at Dak To.



We spent a lot of time waiting between troop lifts and evacuations.



Towler in custody of the company's mascot, Mo'fuck the Mongoose.



Kiess has coffee with a pilot on a picnic table made from ruined rotor blades, Happy valley.



Towler battles a sandstorm on the beach at Tuy Hoa. That lone figure by the tent in the background is Stoney Stizzle who is heroically trying to anchor our tent.



Before I made the transition home, I made this swell ammo-box chair.



First day home. I'm at the kitchen table trying to look normal.



We moved to Camp Wolters, Texas, where I became a flight instructor. A few months later, Patience and Jack and I posed by our first family Christmas tree. Home at last.