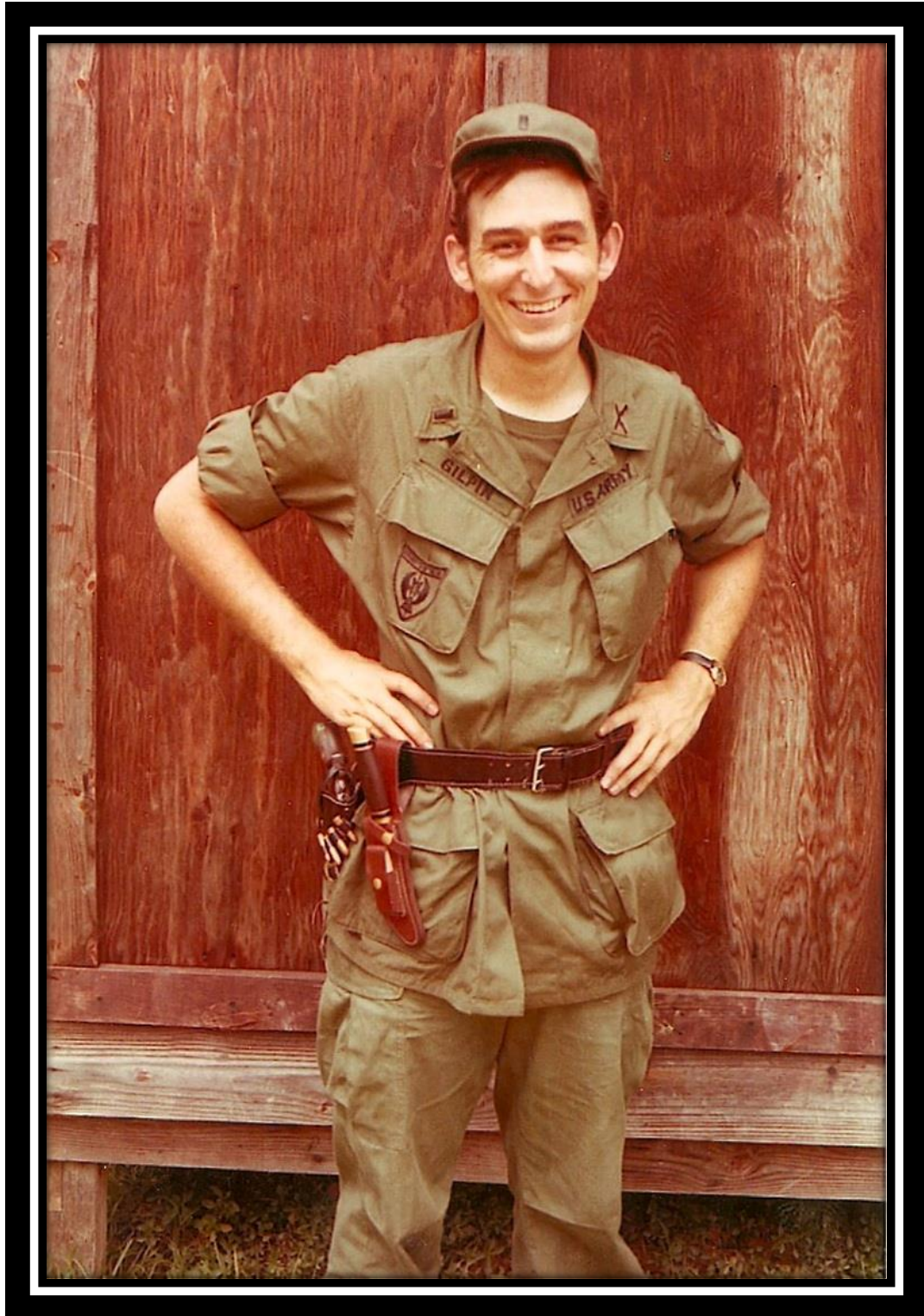




**Michael  
Gilpin**



1LT Gilpin arrives in Vietnam. Note leather, western style holster for .38 caliber pistol and knife



My assignment was with the 114th Assault Helicopter Company "Knights of the Air". The unit was located at Vinh Long in the Mekong Delta. The White Knight Hootch was my home. Note entrance



Monsoon season comes to the Hootch. Platoon mascot, Short Round, views the water.



Aviators had comfortable living quarters



Vinh Long Army Airfield located along the Mekong River.



My first aircraft, 036. SP4 Johnson, crew chief, and me



The distinctive aviator mustache is a rite of passage. Only aircraft commanders are allowed to wear a mustache.





ARVN soldiers in dry season, rice paddy pick-up zone.  
Vietnamese civilians harvest rice across the dike.



Loading another lift of soldiers in a pick-up zone



ARVN soldiers conducting operations in a non-hostile landing zone. Multiple medivac missions later. The area was booby trapped.



Aircraft is loaded for combat assault mission



Flight of five helicopters in staggered left formation. Flying above the clouds during monsoon season



Dry season in the Delta. Flight of five helicopters in trail formation. Mekong river shown in photo.



AK-47 small arms fire hit aircraft chin bubble. Trajectory missed my legs. One round lodged in radio compartment. It became a dog tag souvenir.



Typical outpost across the Delta. Located at canal intersections to interdict enemy sampan traffic. Canals also provided a means of transportation for non-existent roads.





Another outpost somewhere in the Delta



The Seven Mountain Range runs from Chi Lang to Chau Doc along the Cambodian Border. Helicopter is parked on Twin Sisters Mountain. Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain) in III Corp can be seen on the horizon.



Combat assault in U Minh (Forest of Darkness) on 2 Dec 71. Direct support of 16th Regiment, 9th ARVN Division. Mid-air collision occurred as flight lead's aircraft (Gilpin) was struck by wing man. CPT Gilpin aka Knight 25 egressed crashed helicopter.



Cobra gunships arrive on station. CPT Gilpin assists 1LT Jim Mac Kenzie, co-pilot.



POW Raid planning on 8 Nov 71 to rescue SSG Arroyo-Baez in U Minh. Captive since 24 Mar 69. Mission failed as POW had been moved. Soldier's remains were returned in 1985 without explanation



CPT Gilpin (center) with 1LT Jim Mac Kenzie (far left) and Cobra pilots prior to raid