

# BAE NLF

Department of Broken Arrow Events Impression Guides

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## Handbook for National Liberation Front Impression Kits



*Department of Broken Arrow Events Impression Guides*

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# Introduction

The National Liberation Front (NLF), also known as the Viet Cong (VC), were a guerrilla force who fought the Southern Vietnamese government and the United States during the Vietnam war. Originally formed in December 1960 and made up of Viet Minh fighters formerly from the south, they were intended to foment insurgency against the Southern government.

As a guerilla resistance movement with minimal logistics support, the NLF took full advantage of equipment and weapons captured from their opposition, as well as that which was left behind from previous conflicts. Civilian clothing and survival gear was also widely used as available. While standard uniforms did exist, it was not at all uncommon to see a mixture of the black NLF uniform with civilian clothing or PAVN uniform pieces.

At Broken Arrow Events, we take this aspect of reenacting as seriously as the GIs. However, due to the difficulty of acquiring certain kit pieces, we would like to keep this kit list general and welcoming to new attendees. We encourage you to explore deeper into the NLF / VC reenacting sphere and improve your impression beyond these basic guidelines. As always, a sincere representation of NLF forces throughout the Vietnam conflict is of utmost importance.





## 1-1. Uniform, Primary

### **Black Uniforms (Primary)**

Though the NLF and Viet Cong are often portrayed dressed in civilian clothing, the NLF Main force did have a uniform, a black cotton uniform in a similar cut to those of the PAVN K58. The top was a long sleeve button-up shirt with an open collar, two pleated breast pockets with pointed button-down flaps, and button cuffs. The pants had a button fly and button-cinched ankles. These uniforms are currently reproduced by Nhat-Mil.

### **Khaki PAVN Uniforms**

Some NLF also utilized the khaki PAVN uniform, often mixing it with the black main-force uniform. It is highly recommended to use Squadron Sew Shop for reproduction uniforms, or to make your own. Other reproduction uniforms may be found on ebay or other marketplaces for relatively inexpensive. Be cautious of these and inspect the quality and cut closely. If an attendee finds another, well-made PAVN uniform reproduction, that is acceptable, as long as it follows the standard cut.



## 1-2. Uniform, Alternative

If you're looking for a cheaper alternative to a reproduction PAVN or NLF uniform, Dickies work-cut uniforms are a reluctantly accepted but still serviceable choice. They are available in both khaki and black.

Pay attention to pockets, sleeves, and buttons, as there are slight variations in materials and styles from this brand. All external tags **MUST** be removed and it is highly recommended that you dye these to a more appropriate color. Other stand-ins can be found online and in-stores. If you're having trouble finding something appropriate or wish to get our opinion on a certain piece, please reach out to a BAE staff member.

### Notes:

While other colors of NLF cut uniforms were available, for organization purposes, we are limiting it to black and tan.

Also, Pajama style uniforms, while seen, are also only allowed if an accurate reproduction and pre-approved by BAE PAVN staff. No other exceptions.

**Preferred: Reproduction NLF Uniform in Black**

**Acceptable: Khaki PAVN Uniform, Modified Dickies**

**Not Acceptable : Standard Pajamas, non-standard cut uniforms, USGI clothing**



## 1-3. Uniform, Headwear

The primary headwear for NLF forces was the PAVN style boonie hat. French style bush hats were also popular, with some being surplus from the French occupation and others being tailor-made. The boonies can be in khaki or green, but please ensure it is the correct style and not a GI type. These typically were made of triangular panels that formed a dome, had 2-3 drainage holes on the side, and used a wider brim. You may also see severely worn civilian felt fedoras, though this must follow reference-seen styles if used.

White plastic pith helmets, commonly used for general outdoor labor by Vietnamese civilians, were popular among the NLF. Their bright color is highly visible, so they were covered in the field. A cover made of US parachute material, drab fabric, or rubberized fabric will do the trick.

Woven piths, as used by the Viet Minh, are also an acceptable option. These can be hard to source, but can be made at home with the proper materials and know-how. Woven Piths should also be covered.

The standard Sedge hat (Pith Helmet) was rarely seen in use by the NLF, and will be reluctantly accepted. If not using an original, covering your modern, green reproduction, with a khaki helmet cover, US parachute material, and/or camouflage netting/scrap is required. Japanese-style netting is strongly recommended. Please avoid any cloth-type nets seen on ebay. These are fictional items.

**Required: Pith Helmet / Sedge Hat w/ appropriate covers**

**Approved (Soft Cover): PAVN style boonie hat**

**Not Acceptable: Rice hats, GI Headwear, Cloth netting**

**\*\*All items worn should be period-correct originals or accurate reproductions\*\***



# 1-4. Uniform, Accessories

## Undergarments

No undershirt is acceptable. However, if one must be used, use a neutral tone such as khaki, white, blue, or green and preferably low-cut. Alternatively, U-neck tank tops are also acceptable.

## Trouser Belt

No belt is necessary, though a standard khaki brown with silver clamp buckle is acceptable. There are also leather versions and Web-style belts that can be used. Civilian trouser belts are also approved for the kit.

## Footwear

PLA Type 65 Liberation boots are preferred as a basic boot. Alternatively, high-top Palladium “Pampa-Hi” style boots are easily obtainable. The deep, black sole is preferred, but the standard sole is acceptable. USGI Jungle Boots or “Dép Râu” tire sandals can be used, although we do not recommend using these over the harsh terrain for safety reasons.

## Camouflage

It is highly encouraged that you create a scarf or cape from US camouflage parachute material. The capes are quite effective and very commonly seen in use by the NLF. Camouflage rings are another great way to help keep yourself hidden in the field. Pre-made metal/wire rings can be found online. Alternatively, these can be made with brush at home or in the field. It may be a good idea to make your ring at home before the event, to save time and trouble in the field.

Undershirt: None, Dull T-Shirt

Belt: None, PAVN Roller style, leather web belt, etc.

Boots: PLA Type 65 Boots, Tire Sandals, Jungle Boots

Camo: Parachute cape, rucksack rings, etc.



## 2-1. Equipment, Load Bearing

Primary Load Carrying Equipment is the cotton Type 56 AK pattern chest rig. This three cell rig can be in any color except reed green, though tan/brown is highly preferred to any greenish type color. Depending on weapon selection, one may opt to use a type 56 SKS chest rig in the same color options. Attendees may also find Chicom SMG and stick grenade pouches particularly useful. These are accepted at our events, as are their Vietnamese made copies.

Belts kits are also commonly seen being used by the NLF. These were often carrying Vietnamese-made AK-Magazine pouches at the hip, pouches cut from Chicom rigs, and captured USGI magazine pouches. The base belt can be captured USGI M56 (Horizontal weave preferred), French TAP50 Web belt, or a PAVN belt. It is common that you will see grenades tied and/or hung off of web equipment.

Type 81 chest rig or any new-production versions will not be accepted.



Required: Type 56 Chicom Chest rig, AK (Preferred), SKS version, or Belt w/ magazine pouch.

Not Acceptable: Type 81 Chest Rigs, modern chest rigs.



## 2-2. Equipment, Rucksack

The preferred rucksack is the NVA type rucksack. This can be in either the early war-time khaki, or later / post war green. The three or two outer pocket versions are acceptable. please ensure it is a high-quality replica or an original.

Broken Arrow Events **STRONGLY** advises against the commonly available ebay replicas, as these are made of paper-thin material. Usually, these are found painted or marked with North Vietnam flags.

Another option is a homemade rucksack, commonly made from burlap sacks or similar as pictured here. **SOME** USGI rucksacks are acceptable as well.



Preferred: NVA Rucksack in Tan or Green

Acceptable: Homemade Bag, US M1945 Pack, M956/61 Buttpacks, ARVN Rucksack

Not Acceptable: USGI Lightweight and Tropical Rucksacks, Modern bags, "Close-Enoughs"



## 2-3. Equipment, Survival

BAE requires a minimum of two period-correct ponchos per attendee. USGI versions and other Combloc versions are okay, although PAVN-style rain ponchos are preferred. Originals are very rare, but opaque plastic ponchos are readily available. This is non-negotiable for the safety of participants. East German chemical ponchos can be easily modified to make a great PAVN rain poncho. A video detailing the process can be found on the BAE youtube page.

For sleep, using a basic hammock, either “jungle-made,” USGI, or PAVN issued style is recommended. Otherwise, a USGI-style tarp/sleep system is acceptable for safety reasons. Regardless, bringing a soviet-era plash palatka rain cape / shelter half is strongly recommended.

Cold weather “warming vests” are available and can be used when temperatures drop. Again, for emergencies, USGI cold weather gear is accepted.



Required: Two ponchos (USGI or PAVN style), Hammock or Ground-based sleep system

Accepted: USGI sleep and cold-weather equipment, cold weather quilted vest



## 2-4. Equipment, Weapons

The primary weapon is the Type 56 AK; however due to the rarity, participants may use other variants such as the AKM or AKMS. Alongside these, standard metal 7.62 magazines and tan/green Chinese slings should be used.

NLF forces were known to use a wide variety of weapons from around the world. Small arms such as the SKS, PPS-43, PPSH-41, M1 Thompson (Not the M1928 “Chicago Typewriter”), M1 Carbine, MAT-49, M1 Garand, and M3 Grease Gun are common and preferred. M16s, M14s, MP-40s, and Mosin Nagants are acceptable but not encouraged.

Light machine guns such as the RPD, M1918 BAR, M1919 Browning, and ZB-26 are a great way to increase firepower. MG-34s, though usually used as anti-aircraft weapons, are also acceptable.

Appropriate support weapons include various US, Chinese, and Soviet 60mm & 81mm mortars, as well as more man-portable weapons like the RPG-2 and RPG-7. The M79 “Thumper” is acceptable as well. While these all make great props, they should only be taken into the field if they fire approved simulation ordnance.

Preferred: Type 56 AK or AKM / AKMS

Accepted: SKS, Mosin, RPD, etc. (see above)

Not Acceptable: USGI type weapons, modern rifles

For other weapon types, please check first with BAE PAVN/NLF Cadre. There are many other options used by NLF, but these rules are put in place to avoid cells full of unicorn weapons.



## 2-5. Equipment, Sustenance

Water and food is non-negotiable. Participants are expected to bring enough sustenance for themselves for the duration of the event. Broken Arrow Events will heavily stress hydration, so attendees must ensure they have at minimum a 1~2 gallons of water per day.

For carrying water, PAVN participants are required to have at least one canteen on them at all times. An additional canteen should be in the ruck, and extra water stored at camp. The PLA Type 65 canteen is your primary option. This can be carried in either an NVA pouch, NVA shoulder sling, or USGI canteen pouch. Please avoid the type 87 canteen.

For food, a Vietnamese rice bowl is preferred. However, period style Soviet, German, and French mess tins are approved for use as well. At worst, a USGI mess tin can be used.



Required: 2x 1Q Canteens, Type 65 or USGI, Rice bowl

Accepted: Period mess tins, USGI canteens

Not Acceptable: Modern dishware



## 2-6. Equipment, Captured Items

As is very clear in this guide, there are many points where you'll see USGI equipment being allowed. Factually, a number of captured items can be seen in use with NLF forces.

Some of the more popular of these items include angle head flashlights, boots, M56 web belts w/ some pouches, mess equipment and canteens, as well as rain and sleep gear. Many attendees like to wear the captured parachute scarves as well, which are encouraged at Broken Arrow Events.

Researching captured items is necessary prior to using them. While they can be cool, there is some nuance and glorification of these pieces. When in doubt, ask a BAE staff member.





## 3-1. Helpful Reference Photos

Reference photos are going to be the most important documents to use for your impression.

This guide, being only meant to serve as a starting place, should give you a good idea of what to look for in these photos.

See Helpful Photos [HERE](#)

