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## The Boonie Hat

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, T. Gum, Site Admin.)

Each piece of a military uniform is designed with a purpose, conforming to a defined or identified need. An example of this is field caps, and related “covers.” The field cap serves many purposes, not the least of which include protection from the elements.



Photo of Daisy Mae denim cover.

The development of a wide brim cap to be worn with fatigues or working uniforms can be seen as early as 1937 with the Daisy Mae blue denim cover. This early version of the Boonie would lead to a OD green cloth style Daisy Mae, this would be the closest that such uniform item would come to what is commonly known as a Boonie Hat until Vietnam.

During the Vietnam War, the Boonie (Hat, Jungle) would become a standard issue item, in respective camouflage patterns. Though some distinction could be made in troop specialty, designation, or affiliation based on the size of the brim and camouflage pattern used.



Photo of narrow, or stingy, brim Boonie Hat.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other reconnaissance units that may not have official or steady supply lines relied on local indigenous business owners to produce versions of the Boonie Hat with what was known as a stingy brim, or rather, a brim on a Boonie Hat that is cut down and noticeably more narrow than the standard issue.



Photo example of standard Boonie Hat.

After the War was in full effect a common pattern being issued was the woodland, which would also incorporate a rip-stop material – known as the Hat, Camouflage, Type II. Each branch (Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force) would utilize some version and color/pattern of the Boonie by 1970.

For troops that had Boonie Hats issued in mass, individualization of uniform item was commonplace with pins, patches, words, and the like being affixed much like the helmets.



Today the hat is still in common use and issuance respective to branch and uniform regulation(s). This style hat is also commonplace in civilian use by those needing some protection from the elements.