



Dien Bien Phu: The Epic Battle America Forgot

By Howard R. Simpson

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The valley of Dien Bien Phu lies in a wild, mountainous region of northwestern Vietnam, alongside the border with Laos. As we can see, the valley is an exceptionally strategic place. Being surrounded by tens of miles of wild jungle-covered mountains, it is the only place in that far remote area where one can build and use an airstrip. The valley of Dien Bien Phu from air. It is perfectly parallel to the North-South axis. The valley is 12,5 miles (20 km) long and 3,5 miles (6 km) wide. The town of Dien Bien Phu lies on the northeastern edge of the valley. November 20 – 22, 1953: – Operation Cas Dien Bien Phu, a garrison set up 350 kilometers from Hanoi in a remote valley near Laos border, was the site of one of the most important battles of the 20th century. In late 1953, the French established a stronghold here, manned by 13,000 Vietnamese and North African colonial troops as well as the French Army’s top troops and its elite Foreign Legion—all of which were routed by the Viet Minh, sending the French packing from Southeast Asia. A great inspiration to the nations of the Third World, the battle at Dien Bien Phu showed that a determined peasant army could bring a major colonial power – [The battle of Dien Bien Phu] ranks with Agincourt, Waterloo, and Gettysburg as one of the great military engagements of history No American is better qualified to tell the tale of Dien Bien Phu and its significance than Howard Simpson. – Stanley Karnow, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of Vietnam: A History. -- Stanley Karnow Published On: 2017-06-02. I had known for some time that an epic stand had taken place in the hills of North Vietnam in 1954 by the French, who at the time occupied the country known as French Indo-China. It reminded me of Khe Shan in which the Marines had made a similar stand and I wanted to know more about it. The book was well written and full of historic facts concerning both sides of the conflict. The battle Of Dien Bien Phu is one of these battles that became quickly forgotten in military history . It is a battle that should never be forgotten . In an attempt to deal a decisive blow to the nationalist Viet Minh during the French Indo-China war the French forces built a base deep in the hills of Indo-China in 1954 hoping to cut off the VM supply lines and to use the base as an anvil where the Viet Minh would be hammered in to submission . Make no mistake this is big budget , epic cinema rarely seen in Europe and many of the battle scenes resemble those seen in the Du Long bridge sequence of APOCALYPSE NOW . The director spent the real life battle as a cameraman so he knows what the conditions were like and it shows . Dien Bien Phu, Battle of, 1954. Vietnam, 1954. Publisher. Washington : Brassey's (US), Inc.