



in Tours



1945

March 1945 – Japanese remove French from authority, imprisoning them.

September 2, 1945 – Ho Chi Minh announced Vietnam's independence before approximately 400,000 in Hanoi.

October 1945 - 35,000 French soldiers under the command of World War II General Jacques Philippe Leclerc arrived in South Vietnam to restore French rule. Viet Minh immediately began a guerrilla campaign to harass them. The French expelled the Viet Minh from Saigon.

1946

January 1946 – National elections were held, easily electing Ho as president of the DRVN and a congress made up of a wide range of political groups.

February 1946 - The Chinese under Chiang Kai-shek agreed to withdraw from northern Vietnam and allow the French to return in exchange for French concessions in Shanghai and other Chinese ports.

March 1946 - Ho Chi Minh agreed to permit French troops to return to Hanoi temporarily (five years) in exchange for French recognition of his Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Chinese troops left. His decision was controversial as other DRVN leaders preferred keeping fellow Asians—China—in the north.

May-September - Ho Chi Minh spent four months in France attempting to negotiate full independence and unity for Vietnam but could not get guarantees from the French.

June 1946 - In a major affront to Ho Chi Minh, the French high commissioner for Indochina proclaimed a French-controlled government for South Vietnam (**Republic of Chochinchina**).

November 1946 - After a series of violent clashes with Viet Minh, French forces bombard Haiphong harbor and occupy Hanoi, forcing Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh into the jungle.

December 19, 1946 - In Hanoi, 30,000 Viet Minh launched a large-scale attack against the French. According to Vo Nguyen Giap, "The resistance will be long and arduous, but our cause is just and we will surely triumph." French General Etienne Valluy: "If these [people] want a fight, they'll get it."

1947

October 7- December 22 – In a series of French attacks on Viet Minh guerrilla positions near the Chinese border, the Viet Minh suffered over 9000 casualties, but most of the 40,000 Viet Minh force escaped through the French lines.

1949

March 8, 1949 - France installed Bao Dai as head of state of French Vietnam.

July 1949 - France established the State of Vietnam in the French Union.

October 1949 - Mao Zedong's Chinese (communist) forces defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Army in the Chinese civil war prompting American anti-communist fears for Southeast Asia and contributing to the American foreign policy goal of "containment" of Communist expansion in the region.

1950

January 1950 - The People's Republic of China ("Red China") and the Soviet Union recognized Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam

China began sending military advisors and weapons (including automatic weapons (mortars, howitzers, and trucks, etc.) to the Viet Minh. Much was American-made and had belonged to the Chinese Nationalists before their defeat by Mao.

With the new equipment and Chinese advisors, General Giap shifted his forces from guerrilla to conventional fighting using both light and heavy infantry divisions.

February 1950 - The United States and Britain recognized Bao Dai's French-controlled Vietnam government.

February 1950 – The Viet Minh began an offensive against French outposts in North Vietnam near the Chinese border.

February 7, 1950 - Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin gave a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, claiming that the U.S. State Department harbored communists. During the years of "McCarthyism," Americans who appeared "soft" on communism were seen as unpatriotic and threats to the U.S.

June 30, 1950 - President Harry S. Truman ordered U.S. ground troops into Korea following Communist North Korea's invasion of the South. Truman described the invasion as an attack by Moscow-backed "monolithic world Communism."

July 26, 1950 - Truman authorized \$15 million in military aid to the French to help with its efforts in Vietnam.

American military advisors, tanks, planes, artillery and other supplies went to Vietnam. Over four years, the U.S. spent \$3 billion on the French war; by 1954, it provided 80 percent of the cost of the war.

September 16, 1950 - General Giap attacked French outposts near the Chinese border. The French lost 6000 men and large amounts of military equipment.

September 27, 1950 - The U.S. established a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Saigon to aid the French army.

1951

January 13, 1951 - 20,000 Viet Minh under Gen. Giap began a series of attacks on fortified French positions in the Red River Delta (from Hanoi to the Gulf of Tonkin). The open areas of the Delta made it possible for French troops (under the new command of Gen. Jean de Lattre) to strike back. Six thousand Viet Minh died while assaulting a town near Hanoi; the Viet Minh withdrew.



General De Lattre



with Bao Dai

March 23-28, 1951 - Giap attacked an outpost near Haiphong, withdrawing after being ounded by French naval gunfire and air strikes and losing 3000 men.

May 29-June 18, 1951 – Southeast of Hanoi, Giap tried again to break through the De Lattre Line. Thanks to French reinforcements, air strikes, and armed boat attacks, Giap lost 10,000 killed and wounded.



Among French casualties was Bernard de Lattre, the only son of General De Lattre.

June 9, 1951 - Giap began a general withdrawal of Viet Minh troops from the Red River Delta.

September 1951 - De Lattre went to Washington, DC, seeking more aid from the U.S.

November 16, 1951 - Gen. De Lattre tried to seize the momentum and lure Giap into a major battle.

November 20, 1951 - Stricken by cancer, Gen. De Lattre was replaced by Gen. Raoul Salan. De Lattre returned to Paris where he died two months later.

December 9, 1951 - Giap began a counter-offensive by attacking a French outpost on the Black River. Avoiding conventional warfare, he relied on hit-and-run attack—followed by a retreat into the jungles—as he sought to cut French supply lines.

By year's end, French casualties in Vietnam surpassed 90,000, including about 55,000 deaths.

Viet Minh deaths totaled about 500,000.

1952

January 12, 1952 - French supply lines to Hoa Binh along the Black River and Route Coloniale 6 were cut.

February 22-26 - The French withdrew from Hoa Binh back to the De Lattre Line aided by heavy artillery. Casualties for each side surpassed 5000.

October 11, 1952 - Giap tried to draw the French out from the De Lattre Line by attacking along the mountain range between the Red and Black Rivers.

October 29, 1952 - The French countered Giap by launching targeting major Viet Minh supply bases in the Viet Bac region. But Giap ignored their maneuvers and kept his position along the Black River.

November 14-17, 1952 - The French canceled Operation Loraine and withdrew back toward the De Lattre.

1953

January 20, 1953 - Dwight D. Eisenhower, former five-star Army general and Allied commander in Europe during World War II, was inaugurated as the 34th U.S. president.

During his term, Eisenhower will greatly increase U.S. military aid to the French in Vietnam to prevent a Communist victory. U.S. military advisors will continue to accompany American supplies sent to Vietnam. To justify America's financial commitment, Eisenhower will cite a 'Domino Theory' in which a Communist victory in Vietnam would result in surrounding countries falling one after another like a "falling row of dominoes." The Domino Theory will be used by a succession of Presidents and their advisors to justify ever-deepening U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

March 5, 1953 - Soviet leader Josef Stalin died. Possible successors jockeyed for power.

July 27, 1953 - The Korean War ended with an armistice that maintained the country's division at the 38th parallel. Some observers saw a potential model for resolving the situation in Vietnam.

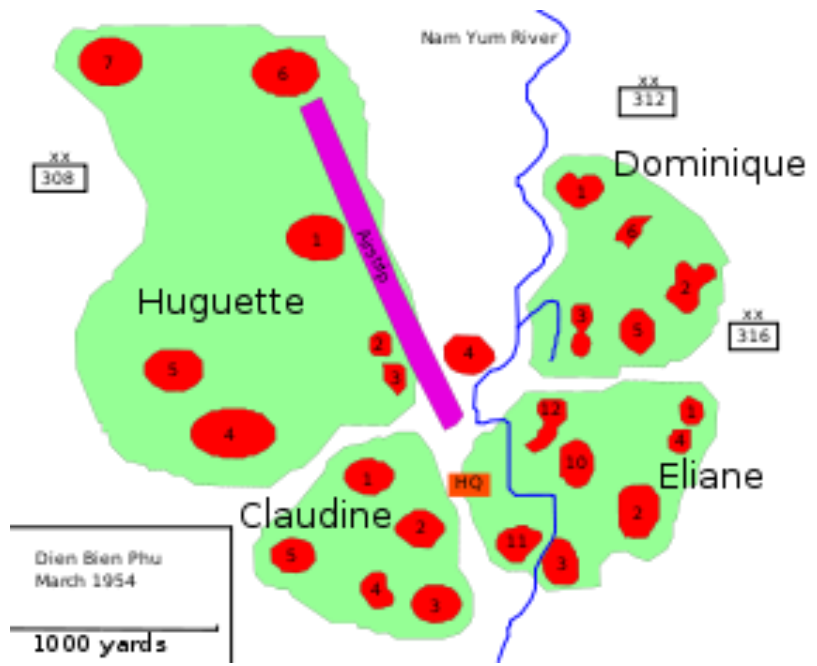
November 20, 1953 - The French under new commander Gen. Henri Navarre began Operation Castor, the construction of a series of entrenched outposts protecting a small air base in the isolated jungle valley at Dien Bien Phu in northwest Vietnam near Laos.

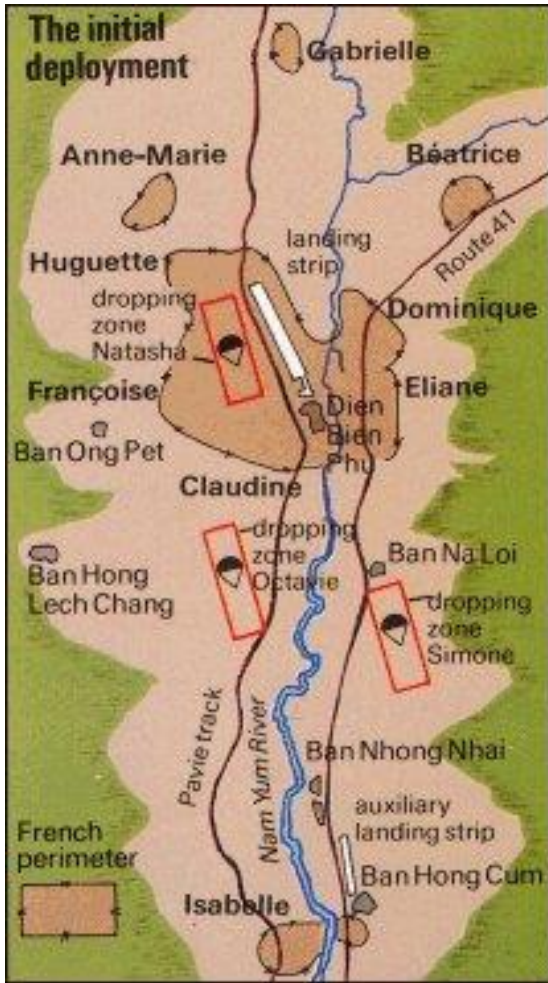
Gen. Giap immediately began massing Viet Minh troops and artillery in the area, sensing the potential for a decisive blow against the French. Giap's troops manually drag 200 heavy howitzers up rugged mountain sides to target the French air base. The French, aware of Giap's intentions, massed their own troops and artillery, preparing for a showdown. France underestimated the Viet Minh's strength as they used forced labor for transport of weapons and digging of trenches.

1954

March 13, 1954 - Outnumbering the French nearly five-to-one, 50,000 Viet Minh under Gen. Giap began their assault against the fortified hills protecting the Dien Bien Phu base, access to which was limited because of the 200-mile distance to Hanoi and the weather.

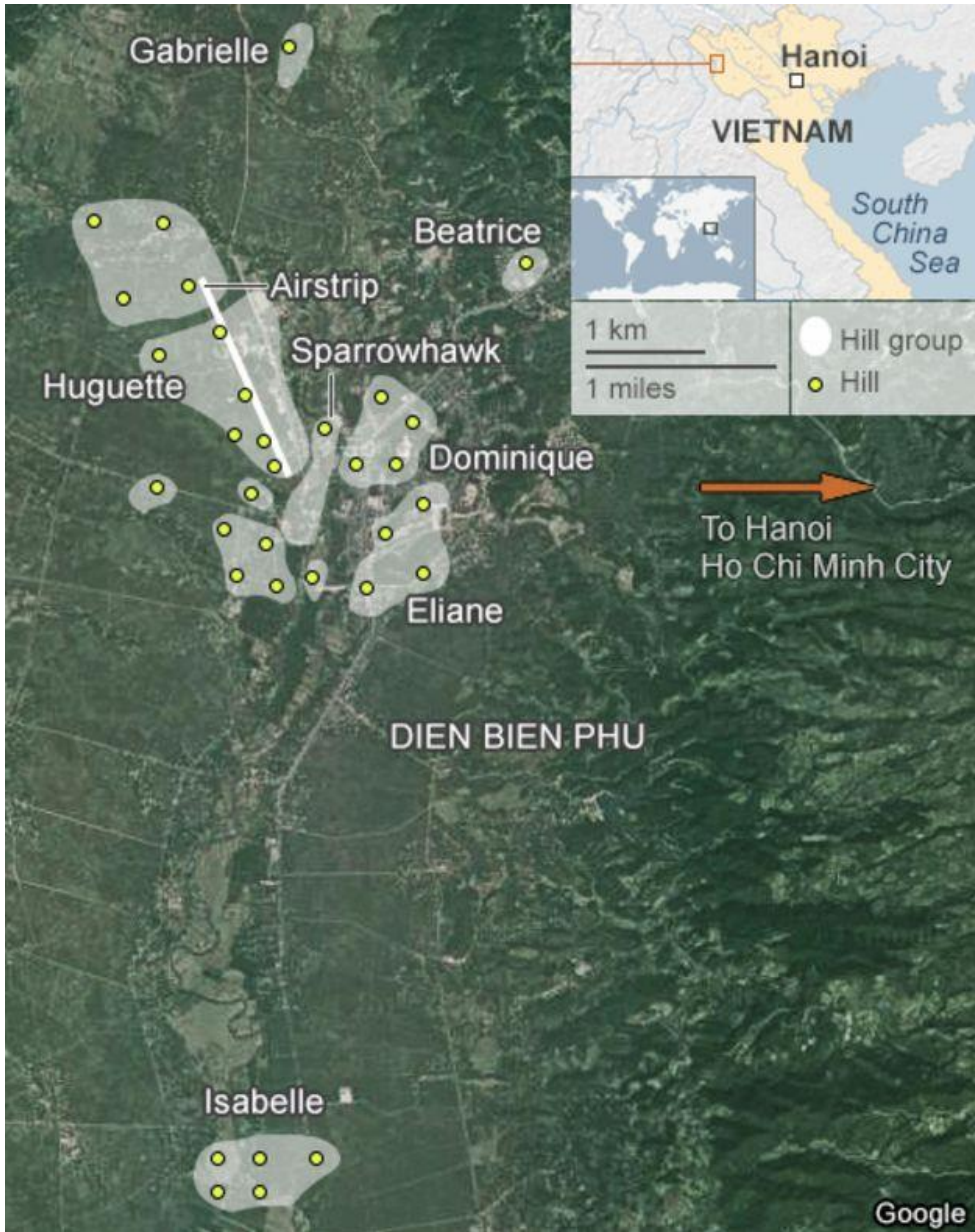






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Le Parisien 15
Libère
 LE PLUS FORT VENDU DES QUOTIDIENS FRANÇAIS DU MATIN
 17 ANSÉE - N. 2003
 Samedi 6 et Dimanche 7 mai 1954

VERNICRE
 dans les boîtes métalliques

Raymond

DIEN-BIEN-PHU EST TOMBÉ

Les Viets s'étaient rués à l'assaut du camp retranché durant 20 h. sans interruption

Depuis 56 jours les héroïques défenseurs résistaient à l'ennemi

DRAMATIQUE HOLOCAUSTE
 par ***

"Ils sont à quelques mètres...
 Ils se sont infiltrés partout"
 Tel fut le dernier message
 DU GÉNÉRAL DE CASTRIES

LIRE TOUT LES DÉTAILS À LA ONZIÈME PAGE

8 mai LA FRANCE SE SOUVIENT...
 et célèbre avec ferveur la mémoire des héros dont le sacrifice a permis, il y a 9 ans la capitulation allemande

DEMAIN, LE GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE ira se recueillir à l'Arc de Triomphe

LE BILLET DU PARISIEN
 par Marc BLANCHARD

Une passionnante enquête du Parisien

LA DÉCLARATION du gouvernement
 LES TROIS

Élection convoquée le samedi de dimanche dans U. S. A., cet après-midi en session extraordinaire voir à la page 3

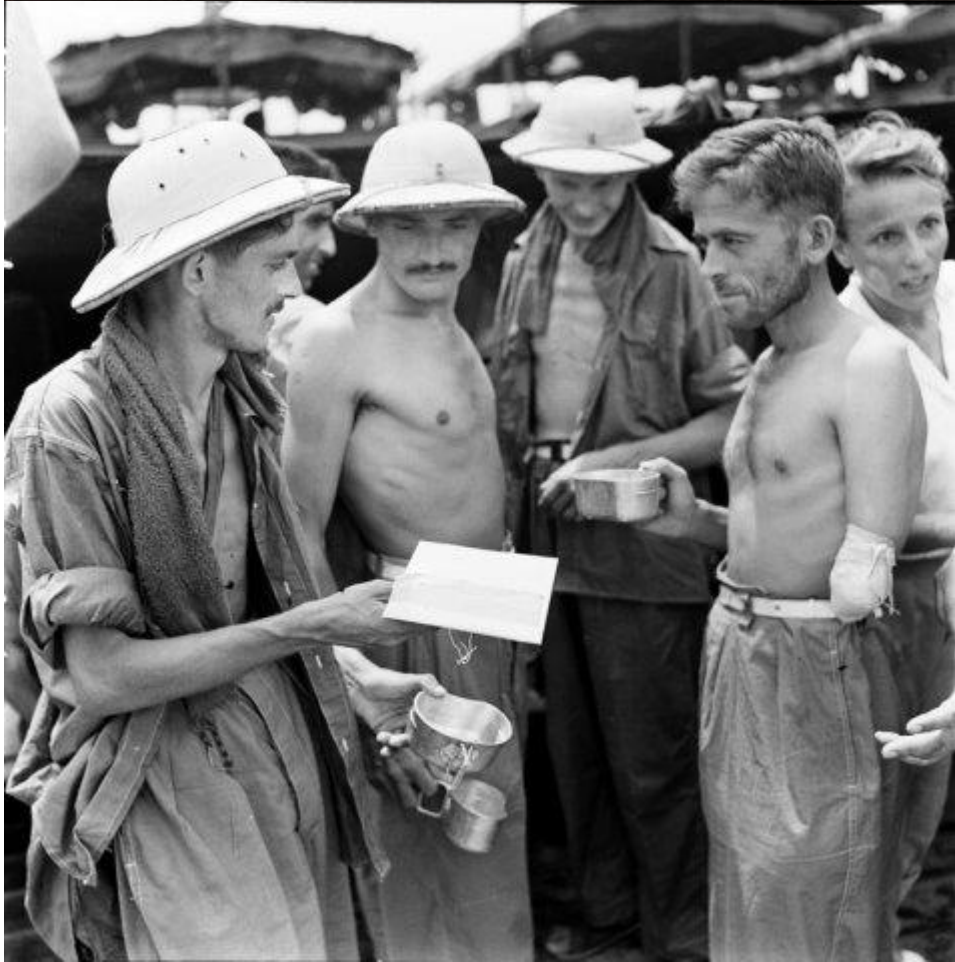
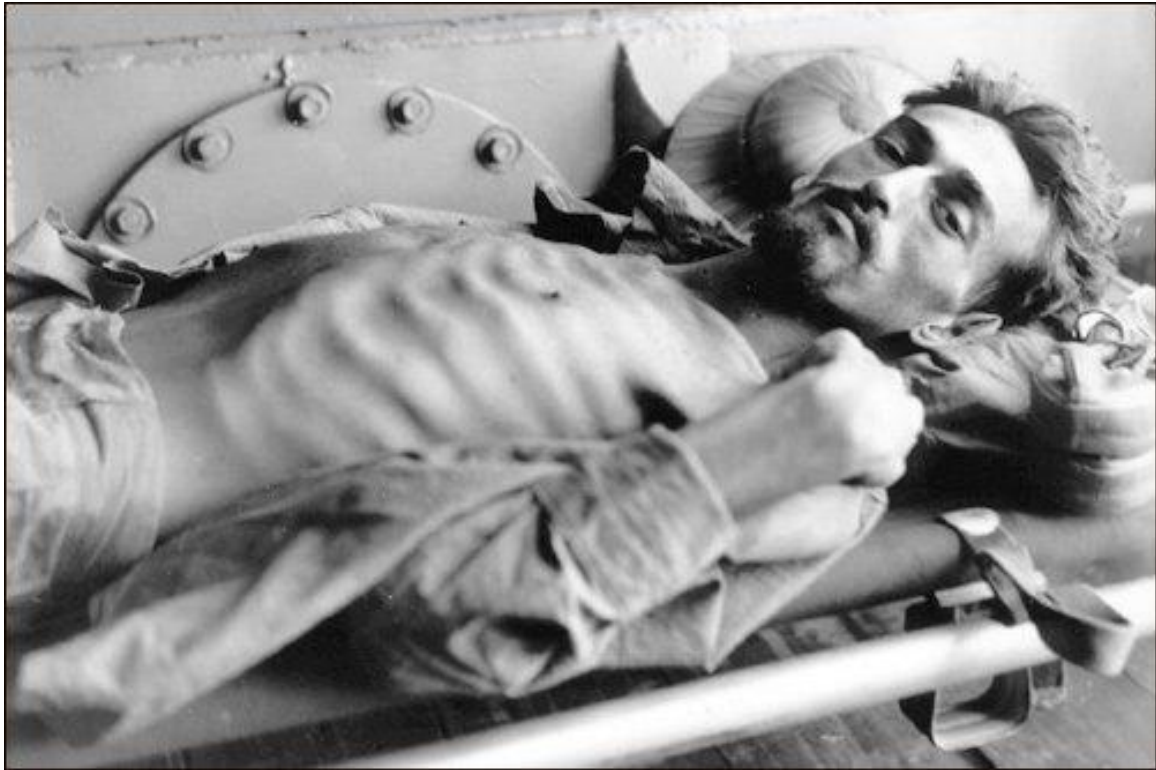
LE BILLET DU PARISIEN
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Une passionnante enquête du Parisien



1600 French killed; 8,000 captured and marched 500 miles, during which over half died.





released to Red Cross, July 1954



FRANCE'S LONELY VIETNAM MEMORIAL

By Anne Swardson

February 24, 1997

The only sound was made by the large tricolor snapping in the stiff wind. On a mild weekday afternoon, not a single tourist or bereaved relative was visiting France's memorial to its dead in Indochina -- chiefly Vietnam.

Every once in a while, ceremonies are held in these vast multistory rows of tombs, set in a raised half-circle overlooking a soccer field; just the other day a couple of American Marine veterans came by. Tour buses of veterans' groups occasionally roll in, as do klatches of senior citizens. All in all, however, only about 30,000 people pass through each year; the Vietnam Memorial in Washington is visited by an estimated 1.2 million.

The French were in Vietnam before the Americans were and learned its lessons first. Their losses were nearly as high, even though the population of France was one-fourth that of the United States. But this country is coming to terms with its "dirty war," as it was called then, even more slowly than the United States.

Only last December, 50 years after its Asian war began, did France inaugurate a wall of war dead here in this small, arid city on the Mediterranean. The 34,798 names are engraved on Plexiglas upon a bleached white wall, not the black marble of its model in Washington. The wall was added to honor those whose remains are elsewhere; an on-site necropolis holds the tombs of about 20,000 killed in battle and was dedicated in 1993 -- 11 years after the opening of the American memorial, which lists 58,202 names.

Frejus was chosen because it was the assembly point for troops being shipped to Indochina, where France fought from 1946 to 1954, attempting to regain the Asian colonial empire that had slipped away during World War II. That struggle culminated in the siege of Dien Bien Phu, where more than 3,000 French and 10,000 Vietnamese soldiers died, and ended in Geneva, where the French agreed formally to the partition of Indochina into Laos, Cambodia, communist North Vietnam and U.S.-supported South Vietnam -- setting the stage for U.S. intervention there.

About 55,000 French troops and civilians were killed in the fighting in Indochina, but for decades, those casualties went unrecognized. The Indochina war was quickly followed by France's Algerian debacle, a far more consuming conflict in which the French public was more involved -- and in which many draftees served.

It has long been said that Algeria was France's Vietnam, but in fact, Vietnam was also France's Vietnam. Stanley Karnow, author of "Vietnam: A History," and a journalist in Paris in the 1950s, points out that France's unsuccessful re-invasion of Indochina was undertaken to restore glory to a nation defeated by Germany. Others suggested that failure may have hardened France's resolve to keep Algeria.

"Being defeated twice in a row was a big blow," Karnow said. "Being defeated by the Germans -- well, they were big and tough. But being defeated by a bunch of guys in sandals was very hard to take. . . . They were unwinnable wars for France just as they were for us."

The French handled the defeat by erasing Indochina from public dialogue. Rene Desveaud, who parachuted into Dien Bien Phu in 1953 but whose unit was moved out before the fortress fell to Vietnamese guerrillas in May 1954, said his wife, who is seven years younger, had barely heard of Indochina before they met. "It was never discussed in France," he said.

As in the United States, veterans returning from Vietnam received no public welcome. "You avoided saying you fought there," said Desveaud, 63. "They reproached my red beret and my decorations. It was very hard to swallow."

There were some fundamental differences between the French and American experiences in Vietnam. Most notably, said Francois Godement of the French Institute of International Relations, a research center, the French fielded an army of professionals, not draftees, which muted public objections.

Still, by the time of Dien Bien Phu, political opposition to the expensive war was rising -- even though 80 percent of its cost was funded by the United States, according to Karnow's book. Not until 1986 were the last remains of French soldiers returned from Vietnam; two years later, the first stone for the monument was laid by Jacques Chirac, then prime minister and now president.

President Francois Mitterrand dedicated it on Feb. 16, 1993, just days after returning from Vietnam, the first Western leader to visit since the war ended. He surveyed the site of Dien Bien Phu, standing on the hills where guerrilla artillery pounded French emplacements, and dined in Hanoi with Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, whose tactics foiled the military of both France and the United States.

In his dedication of the memorial, Mitterrand stopped short of conceding the war had been a mistake. He praised the fallen for "executing the mission that had been entrusted to them by the government of the republic" and spoke of their "pain and their glory."

Dedicating the wall three years later, Veterans' Minister Pierre Pasquini detailed "all the suffering, all the sacrifices, all the legitimate bitterness before an unfinished task . . . in the indifference of public opinion, if not disapproval. The

dirty war,' the forgotten war.' Indochina was so far away, and the people's independence movement so strong."

The names on the wall show the nationalities of the career soldiers who died; along with French-sounding names are columns of Nguyens and Mohameds. Moroccans, Algerians and Senegalese fought for France; Slavic and German names are among those representing the Foreign Legion.

"There is no distinction, just as you have blacks and Indians on your wall," said the memorial's superintendent, Jean-Claude Thollet.

As the afternoon wore on, two visitors finally showed up, a husband and wife, both 60. No, she said, they didn't lose any relatives in the war. They were here because "everyone has a right to come, no?" But neither of them had any personal memories of the war, she said; they really didn't know much about it.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/02/24/frances-lonely-vietnam-memorial/c56b1528-b589-4892-b999-1f4b7974e4a6/?utm_term=.e26f68co86aa



DIEN BIEN PHU

about 8000 Viet Minh died;





Dien Bien Phu Victory Museum