



The Battle of Ap Bac, Vietnam: They Did Everything but Learn from It (Contributions in Military Studies)

David M. Toczek

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Toczek provides the first description of the entire battle of Ap Bac and places it in the larger context of the Vietnam War. The study thoroughly examines the January 1963 battle, complete with detailed supporting maps. Ironically, Ap Bac's great importance lies in American policymakers' perception of the battle as unimportant; for all their intelligence and drive, senior American government officials missed the early warning signs of a flawed policy in Southeast Asia by ignoring the lessons of the defeat of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) on 2 January 1963.

The outcome of Ap Bac was a direct reflection of how the U.S. Army organized, equipped, and trained the ARVN. With all the ARVN officer corps's shortcomings, the South Vietnamese Army could not successfully conduct an American combined arms operations against a smaller, less well-equipped enemy. American leadership, both military and civilian, failed to draw any connection between ARVN's dismal performance and American policies toward South Vietnam. Although certain tactical changes resulted from the battle, the larger issue of American policy remained unchanged, including the structure of the advisory system.

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