Drive Penetrates Gaza
By HOMER BIGART Special to The New York Times.
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Associated Press Radiophoto

ISRAELI TROOPS IN EGYPT move up a barren hill on Sinai Peninsula. Picture was released Wednesday in Tel Aviv by the Israeli Army, which did not detail the action.

Drive Penetrates Gaza

By HOMER BIGART

Special to The New York Times.

TEL AVIV, Israel, Friday, Nov. 2—The Army announced this morning that Israeli forces had entered El Arish, main depot for Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

They were reported mopping up the last pockets of resistance in Sinai.

The Army also announced that Israeli troops had penetrated the outskirts of Gaza, major city in the Egyptian-held Gaza Strip on the Mediterranean.

The Israelis had reported already yesterday that they had sealed off the Gaza Strip. Their forces were pressing closer to the Suez Canal, it was added, a brigade of Egyptian armor had been destroyed or captured and the headquarters of an Egyptian corps had been isolated.

Maj. Gen. E. L. M. Burns, chief United Nations truce supervisor, asked the United States Sixth

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EGYPTIANS' ROUT IN SINAI REPORTED

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Fleet to evacuate United Nations personnel from Gaza.

Since Wednesday night a United States destroyer has been cruising off Gaza ready to lower boats for the withdrawal of fifteen truce observers and six members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency stranded in the strip.

As the battle for Sinai entered its fourth day yesterday Israeli armored infantry columns reported slackening resistance while they sought to trap and destroy the remaining Egyptian units.

Israeli aircraft dominated the sky, strafing fleeing Egyptian troops. Not one opposing aircraft was seen over the peninsula.

"We have conquered the bulk of Sinai," Lieut. Col. Moshe Pearlman, an Israeli Army and Government spokesman, said last night.

The Gaza Strip already was sealed off early yesterday, the Israelis said, when an armored column, in a classic encirclement, captured Rafah, on the coast east of El Arish and just inside the Sinai frontier.

The fall of Rafah, it was said, trapped about 8,000 Egyptian troops. Mostly second-line units, they consisted of a national guard brigade and elements of the so-called Palestine Liberation Army.

150 Tanks Captured

Of much greater importance, it was said, was the crushing of an Egyptian armored brigade between Bir Gifgafa and Bir Rod Salim, on the middle road crossing the peninsula. Pockets of tanks were still reported being mopped up last night, but the battle was virtually over.

Destroyed or captured since the Israeli jump-off Monday night were said to be about 150 tanks, many of them Russian T-34's. The Israelis put several into action against the Egyptians.

It seemed from the nature of the Israelis' deep swift encirclements that the prisoner bag would run to several thousand.

"We have been too busy to count them," Colonel Pearlman said.

Also captured, he added, were "very considerable quantities of vehicles, armored cars and weapons."

There probably were about 30,000 Egyptian troops in Sinai and Gaza when the Israeli invasion began.

Early last summer, it was said, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser had 60,000 troops east of the canal. But he pulled out 30,000 and the bulk of his armor after he nationalized the canal's operating company July 26.

As for Israeli casualties, Colonel Pearlman would say only that "our losses are a minute fraction of those claimed by the Egyptians."

The destruction of Egyptian units in Sinai took precedence in the Israeli battle plan over the race to reach the line set by the British and French ten miles east of the canal.

The Sinai battle was probably the most fluid action since the desert fighting in North Africa.

Three swiftly moving columns were launched from the frontier Monday night. The northernmost column was said to have reached Quseima without much opposition.

The central column encountered heavy fighting near Kuntilla, it was added, where armored units were engaged in a sixteen-hour fight.

The southernmost column crossed near Elath, met no opposition, coasted into the crossroad village of El Themed and raced on to extricate paratroopers dropped Monday west of Nakhl. The paratroopers had blocked Egyptian reinforcements of battalion strength that were sent across the canal soon after the invasion began, it was reported.

At Nakhl, part of a column was said to have struck northward to contain Egyptian units retreating toward the canal.

Meanwhile, the northernmost column drove to Abu Aweigila. There, it was added, it encountered and put to rout yesterday the main Egyptian force. In this decisive action, several T-34 tanks were captured intact by the Israelis and put to use.

An Egyptian corps headquarters was said to have been encircled at Gebel Libni by an armored column that trapped a full brigade and large quantities of materiel.

Ahead of the lunging columns, Israeli planes attacked enemy armored and transport concentrations. In central Sinai the Israelis said they destroyed "large numbers of vehicles."

Egyptian fortifications along the Gaza strip also were bombed.

Trapped in the strip were about 250,000 Arabs, most of them Palestinian refugees, Israeli planes dropped pamphlets advising people to remain indoors and warning that all movements by roads or across fields would be bombed and strafed.

"Do not hold or touch any weapon of war," the pamphlets said. "Let each man remain in his hut or tent. Do not go outdoors."

Israel has never recognized Egyptian occupation of Gaza. The pamphlet said "Egyptian authority" in the Gaza Strip had reached its end.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry sought to assure Jordan, Syria and Lebanon that Israel harbored no aggressive plans. "Israel takes the opportunity to assure other Arab countries with which she shares borders that she wishes, now as in the past to live with them in peace and quiet," the ministry said.

"If attacked by another Arab state, she will strike back, but she will not be the first to attack."

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, General Burns was preoccupied with the evacuation of United Nations personnel from Gaza. United Nations observers assigned to fixed posts on the Israeli side had withdrawn to Beersheba.

In another development, air raid sirens sounded in Tel Aviv last night as Colonel Pearlman briefed newsmen. The all clear was heard ten minutes later. There was another brief alert after midnight.

Raids From Gaza Reported

Special to The New York Times.

TEL AVIV, Nov. 1—Israeli Army headquarters announced today that Egyptian commando units operating from bases in the Gaza Strip had struck behind the Israeli lines.

These actions "resulted in the deaths of two Israeli civilians," the report said. According to the Army, all was quiet along the rest of Israeli's border.

The Army also said that "an enemy convoy was attacked from the air along the main axis road west of Bir Gifgafa and suffered losses." No details were available, but the Egyptian convoy was presumed to have been moving from the direction of Abu Aweigila, where a garrison was resisting a heavy Israeli attack upon the town dominating the strategic crossroads.

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