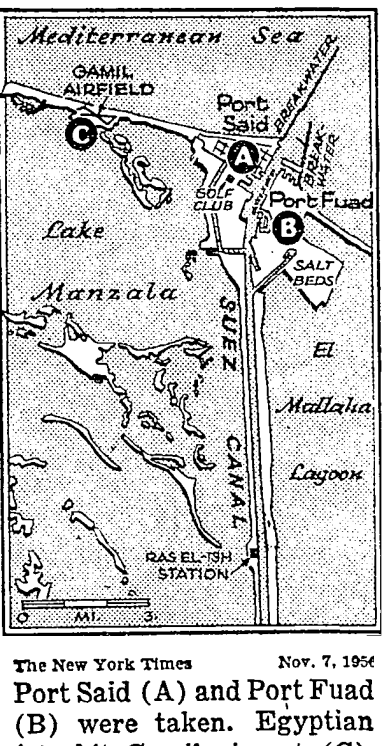
INVADERS TIGHTEN SUEZ CANAL GRIP
By LEONARD INGALLS Special to The New York Times.The New York Times Nov. 7, 1956
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The New York Times Nov. 7, 1956

Port Said (A) and Port Fuad (B) were taken. Egyptian jets hit Gamil airport (C).

INVADERS TIGHTEN SUEZ CANAL GRIP

Claim Control of the Zone—Take Port Said and Drive South Before Deadline

By LEONARD INGALLS
Special to The New York Times.

LONDON, Wednesday, Nov. 7—Britain and France claimed control of the Suez Canal Zone early today as the hour passed for their cease-fire to take effect in Egypt.

Port Said and Port Fuad, at the northern entrance to the canal, fell to the allied forces after intense fighting early yesterday. The task of clearing the canal of nine blockships and the wreckage of the Firdan bridge began as British-French mechanized units sped south toward Ismailia.

The French Defense Ministry announced a short time before the cease-fire was to become effective—at one minute before midnight London time (7 P. M., Eastern standard time)—that the allied forces had occupied the greater part of the canal zone. No details of the extent of British and French holdings in the zone had been given up to 5 A. M.

International Regime Set Up

The French announcement said that the British-French troops had completed their mission and that a regime of international law had been established in the Canal Zone. Egyptian units in zone have been destroyed or dispersed, it was said. It was estimated that 95 per cent of the Egyptian Air Force had been destroyed and that the Egyptian Navy had suffered serious damage.

Observers in the Israeli-held Sinai Peninsula reported that the glow of fires in Ismailia, the center of canal operations, indicated that it had been under attack by British and French forces.

There were conflicting reports of the action at Port Said. Street fighting and a tank battle were in progress early in the day. By afternoon the French Defense Ministry in Paris said that the fighting had become sporadic. The Egyptians described the street engagements as fierce.

Egyptian Air Raid Cited

Royal Air Force pilots returning to Cyprus told of a "heavy" attack on Gamil airfield at Port Said by Egyptian M. I. G. jet fighters, indicating that the Egyptian Air Force was not completely destroyed as the British and French had reported. A British-French Army spokesman said later there was no confirmation of the M. I. G. attack at Gamil airfield.

British troops concentrated on the capture of Port Said. The French occupied the smaller city of Port Fuad. Then allied mechanized units moved south along the canal causeway toward El Qantara.

Eyewitness reports from correspondents who accompanied the British parachute troops that landed at the Port Said airfield gave impression that the initial Egyptian resistance had been heavier than anticipated. Soviet-built tanks in the town held paratroopers pinned down with withering fire, the reports said. They added that the British battalion commander said

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"there are many more tanks than we thought."

During the day the Egyptians said trenches were being dug in Cairo, Alexandria and Suez Canal Zone towns in preparation for a determined resistance campaign. An Egyptian military spokesman in Cairo reported high explosive and incendiary bombs had caused extensive damage to houses in Port Said and that casualties among the civilians, particularly women and children, had been heavy.

The British and French began pouring troops ashore at Port Said and Port Fuad after the Egyptians at first accepted and then rejected terms for the surrender of Port Said.

The conditions made by the allies for the surrender of Port Said were:

¶Egyptian troops must give up their arms.

¶They must regroup unarmed at places designated by the allied command.

¶They must hand over the town intact with vital installations in good order.

Twelve hours after the surrender negotiations had failed and fighting was resumed, French troops debarked at Port Fuad. At dawn reinforcements of British men and material were landed by sea at Port Said and entered into action.

Throughout the day Egyptian newspapers and the Cairo radio repeated impassioned appeals to the Egyptian public to resist the British and French. The Egyptians have reported the wide distribution of small arms and, despite the cease-fire, unorganized guerrilla attacks may become a problem.

The British Admiralty said that during the offensive against Egypt, British and French naval forces had flown 2,000 sorties from carriers. Targets hit by naval aircraft included tanks, self-propelled guns, anti-aircraft positions, troop concentrations, motor torpedo boats, aircraft hangars and aircraft on the ground.

The British Fleet Air Arm was reported to have set afire three Egyptian torpedo boats during the day at Suez. This was the first report by the allies of action at the south end of the canal.

Allied headquarters on Cyprus said that in an attempt to block the canal at its southern end the Egyptians had sunk three more ships at Suez.

A British-French communiqué said "slight damage" had been done in Port Said during the fighting. Minesweepers crisscrossed the entrance to the city's harbor during the day, but no mines were found.

The Egyptians reported that explosive and incendiary bombs had caused extensive damage to houses in Port Said and that casualties among the civilians, especially women and children, had been heavy.

The Admiralty said that in the action against Egypt more than 100 ships of different types had been involved. Naval operation cost one British life and the loss of two naval aircraft, the Admiralty stated.

The Admiralty's plan for the action included the dispatch to the Eastern Mediterranean of salvage vessels and recovery equipment in anticipation of damage to Suez Canal equipment and the blocking of the canal.

Among the British naval vessels listed by the Admiralty as among the 100 ships used in the operation were the carriers Eagle, Albion and Bulwark with operational aircraft aboard and the Ocean and Theseus carrying helicopters and Royal Marine Commandos, and the cruisers Jamaica, Ceylon and Newfoundland.

French ships in the force included the aircraft carrier Arromanches and the fast battleship Jean Bart.

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