

Arabs Battle Jews Near Haifa, Block Highway From Tel Aviv

By The Associated Press

TEL AVIV, July 6.—The main Tel Aviv-Haifa highway was blocked tonight by a heavy battle between Jews and Arab troops. The clash occurred as Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations Palestine mediator, traveled from Tel Aviv to Cairo in an attempt to extend the uneasy Palestine truce.

Few details of the fighting ten miles south of Haifa were available here. Two American marines driving U. N. truce-team trucks were turned back by Arabs who fired on them for forty minutes before they waived a white flag to end the shooting.

Private Charles Phalen, nineteen, of Bluefield, W. Va., and Private Lewis Taylor, nineteen, of Jackson, Miss., said they were forced to pull their trucks into a ditch and crawl for cover under rifle and machine-gun fire from Arabs dominating the road between Tireh and Jaba. This occurred about noon.

An Israeli communique said tonight three Jews were wounded by Arab rifle and machine-gun fire from Em Ghazal and Jaba.

It said, "The Arab fire continued until silenced by a Jewish armored car." It indicated the action was continuing and said, "Israeli armed forces are taking appropriate action."

The communique described the two villages as "Arab pockets on the slope of Mount Carmel within the Jewish area."

Private Phalen said he saw more than 100 armed Arabs on both sides of the main road.

"We'd been told by a Jewish military policeman the road was clear, but when we got about seventy-five yards from a bus, two trucks and a car burning on the road, the Arabs opened up," he told reporters.

"Taylor and I drove our trucks into a ditch and jumped for cover, but heavy firing continued for forty minutes."

He said the firing died down and he waved a white flag which had been mounted on the truck. An English-speaking Arab leader finally agreed to let the trucks turn around and return to Tel Aviv, he said.