

# Israelis Open Offensive in Central Galilee

## Seize Two Villages in Arab Nazareth Defense Ring; Tel Aviv Raided by Night

By Kenneth Bilby

*By Wireless to the Herald Tribune*

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TEL AVIV, Israel, July 14.—With the central Palestine front stabilized, Israeli troops went on the offensive in central Galilee today and Shafa 'Amr, largest Arab village of the Nazareth defense ring, fell after a brisk struggle.

The assault, which started in the early morning darkness, appeared to be the beginning of a drive against the Arab forces under Fawzi Kaukji, which have been engaged in marauding activities for weeks from their main base in the Christian holy city of Nazareth.

Shafa 'Amr, which is on the main highway from Nazareth to Acre-Haifa, was hit from the west while Ein Mahil, an Arab village east of Nazareth, was captured simultaneously by a separate Jewish force.

The two-pronged attack almost completed the ring around Nazareth, and the objective of the drive seemed to be seizure of the hills overlooking the greatest city of central Galilee. Because of its religious importance to Christianity, Nazareth has been spared from direct assault. It lies in a valley and control of its steep wooded hills would be as effective as total subjugation.

Tel Aviv had its first night bombing raid of the war tonight when Egyptian twin-engined bombers appeared over the city at 11 p. m. and struck heavily in the northern suburbs. The attack lasted forty-five minutes and was met by heavy anti-aircraft fire. The Israeli Army said there were no casualties and no damage in the raid.

Anticipating another cease-fire order—which Israel will accept if all Arab armies do—the Jews sought today to improve their positions in all sectors. Except for the drive in Galilee, all offensives were of a local character.

West of Jerusalem, the village of Zara was occupied, strengthening the Jewish hold on its own road to the Holy City south of Letrun. On the Syrian border, Israeli troops made a hit-and-run drive against Mishmar Hayarden, lone Arab bridge in eastern Galilee.

On the southern coast, Jewish sources said a commando operation had speared the main route to Negev by destroying an Egyptian battalion in the vicinity of the crossroads settlement of Negba.

Striking as usual during darkness, a large commando force fell upon an Egyptian concentration between Negba and the neighboring settlement of Julis. According to unofficial reports, 200 Egyptians were killed and 200 wounded. The commandos reportedly captured several Bren gun carriers, several artillery pieces and truckloads of ammunition.

### Isdud Struck in Darkness

Another strike during darkness was made at Isdud, the main advance base of the Egyptian armored column. Jewish mechanized vehicles raced into the city, hurling explosives and driving the Egyptians from several buildings, which the Jews blew up before they withdrew, according to Jewish sources.

Fighting patrols also probed into six Arab villages in the region, their jabs apparently designed to keep the Egyptians from mobilizing for another large attack.

Tel Aviv had four air raids, including that at night, bringing to fifteen the number it has received in three days. No more than four planes have participated in any one raid and damage has not been great, although at least twenty civilians have been killed and 100 wounded.

Fighting on the central front was concentrated around Beit Nabala, where the Arab Legion made its only show of strength against the Jewish push through Lydda and Ramle. Legion troops abandoned the village today, but occupied positions in the Judean hills which overlook it. Jewish Palmach troops were unable to occupy the village and fighting for it continues.

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There are increasing indications that one of the decisive battles in Palestine may break out before another truce deadline. Only one obstacle — Latrun — stands in the path of free Jewish access to Jerusalem. King Abdullah's forces, which are still marking time, might be pushed into a bitter defensive struggle there.

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## **Ben-Gurion Hails U.S. Zionists**

Dr. Emanuel Neumann, president of the Zionist Organization of America, announced yesterday at its headquarters, 41 East Forty-second Street, receipt of a cablegram from Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, of Israel, praising American Zionist activities for Israel and expressing hope that they will "increase and grow." "Without the active co-operation of American Jewry and Zionism, and without their political and constructive aid during the past few decades, we would not have attained our present position," the Prime Minister said.

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## **Haganah Observer Greeted Here**

Raphael Halpern, a twenty-four-year-old Palestine youth who was sent to the United States by Haganah, the Israeli Army, to observe American military methods and physical culture practices, was greeted yesterday at City Hall by Vincent R. Impellitteri, President of the City Council. Mr. Halpern is a former instructor of Haganah troops in Palestine.