

Israelis Take Two Towns in Fierce Battle

HAIFA, May 30 (AP)—Israeli army sources tonight said Jewish forces had captured the Arab towns of Lajjun and Megiddo, overlooking the plain of Armageddon, after a fierce battle.

Meanwhile a dispatch from Joseph C. Goodwin, A. P. correspondent with the Arab Legion in Central Palestine, said allied Arab forces appeared to be grouping for a drive on Tel-Aviv.

The towns captured by the Israelis are about eight miles southwest of Afule, the first large Jewish town north of the Arab-controlled Nablus-El Jenin-Tulkarm triangle.

A Haganah, Jewish army, source said the two towns were taken "after a fierce, seven-hour battle."

EVACUATION

The source added: "The local Arabs had been evacuated and Iraqi troops were entrenched in the towns. The Iraqis were driven off and they left their casualties behind."

These victories indicate Jewish forces are moving southward from the Plain of Esdraelon toward the central part of Palestine allotted to the Arabs under the partition plan.

Megiddo was founded 3500 years before Christ. For centuries it was considered of prime military importance in Palestine because it commands a pass between the plain of Armageddon and the coastal plain of Sharon.

Correspondent Goodwin said armor and artillery of Trans-Jordan's Arab Legion moved up to the crescent-shaped front, which has its eastern end tied to Jerusalem's old city and has formed patrols probing west to Hartiv. Hartiv is less than 20 miles east of Tel Aviv.

IN ARAB TERRITORY

(Available maps do not indicate the location of Hartiv, but it must be inside Arab territory, for Israel in the Tel Aviv sector is only about 15 miles wide.

(Thus talk of a drive on Tel Aviv seemed to be premature.)

Goodwin also said Iraqi forces moved out of the Arab town of Tulkarm and conducted patrol raids into Israel territory against the Jewish settlements of Kfar Yona and Nahalat Shavim, five miles east of the Jewish diamond-cutting center of Natanya. Natanya is about 25 miles north of Tel Aviv.

Israel Lebanon