

ISRAEL USES FLIERS TO STRIKE IN NORTH; RETIRES IN OLD CITY

**Air Force's Initial Blow Hits
Samakh Area—Ground Unit
Enters Syria, Razes Depot**

JERUSALEM BATTLE RAGES

**Arabs Claim Control of 80%
of Walled Area—Egyptian
Troops Seize Beersheba**

By GENE CURRIVAN

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

TEL AVIV, Israel, May 20—For the first time Israeli Air Force planes went into action last night, attacking military objectives in northern Palestine, the Haganah reported tonight. They struck at a concentration of Iraqi and Arab Legion forces at the lower end of the Sea of Galilee, it was said.

[News of this development in the Palestine fighting came as press service reports quoted Arab Legion sources as claiming that their forces had cut deeper into the Old City of Jerusalem in desperate hand-to-hand street fighting. One report said they had won control of Zion Gate, a possible escape route for the besieged Israeli forces.

[Arab sources estimated that they controlled or had access to 80 per cent of the Old City.

[A Cairo communiqué reported the capture by Egyptian forces of Beersheba and also of Dier Suneid, south of Gaza.]

Air Force Strength Secret

The emergence of the air force had been expected for several days. Israel has had for some time a trained personnel, including fighter and bomber pilots, and ground crews. The planes have been in readiness, merely waiting for the signal to take off. The strength of the force is, of course, a military secret, but it is known that some of the pilots have been imported from several countries and have had considerable experience in warfare.

There were no details disclosed regarding the number or type of the planes in this initial action but a cryptic communiqué said: "All planes returned safely to their bases."

The target was the Samakh area where the Jordan river begins. Samakh itself is one of but three Arab-held towns left in the entire Jordan Valley from Galilee to the Dead Sea. The others are Naharayim which is near the Jordan Valley hydro-electric plant, and the biblical town of Jericho. Everything else in the valley is held by Israeli forces although even now many of these settlements are under Arab fire.

The Haganah claimed today that in Upper Galilee, Israeli forces destroyed a military supply camp of the Syrian Invasion army and exploded ammunition dumps.

The raid on the Syrian military camp occurred on Tuesday, the Haganah said. Israeli sources claimed that the raiders crossed the frontier at the Benot Yaacov bridge and entered the camp which is less than 200 yards inside Syria. They engaged units of the Syrian Army stationed there and, after driving them from the camp, set fire to all the huts and tents and destroyed armored cars, field guns and ammunition, the Haganah said. The returning soldiers said that the explosions of arms stores and ammunition dumps lasted for several hours.

Tel Aviv Bombed Again

There were more air raids on Tel Aviv today, but the damage was slight. Again the planes came over in pairs, but this time they had more respect for the anti-aircraft defenses and kept high until they made their runs at their targets. Late in the day three planes seemed to appear out of nowhere and the first that anyone knew about them they were skimming the rooftops. They roared across the center of the city in formation and, without firing their guns, zoomed sharply upward and continued southward toward Egypt.

The Irgun Zvai Leumi claimed to have shot down an Egyptian plane near Rehovoth, south of Tel Aviv.

It is assumed here by military observers that the planes in the recent attacks on Tel Aviv have come from near-by bases in Palestine and Trans-Jordan. This conclusion was strengthened when Spitfires, with full bomb loads, stayed over the city as long as half an hour, and many of them went in

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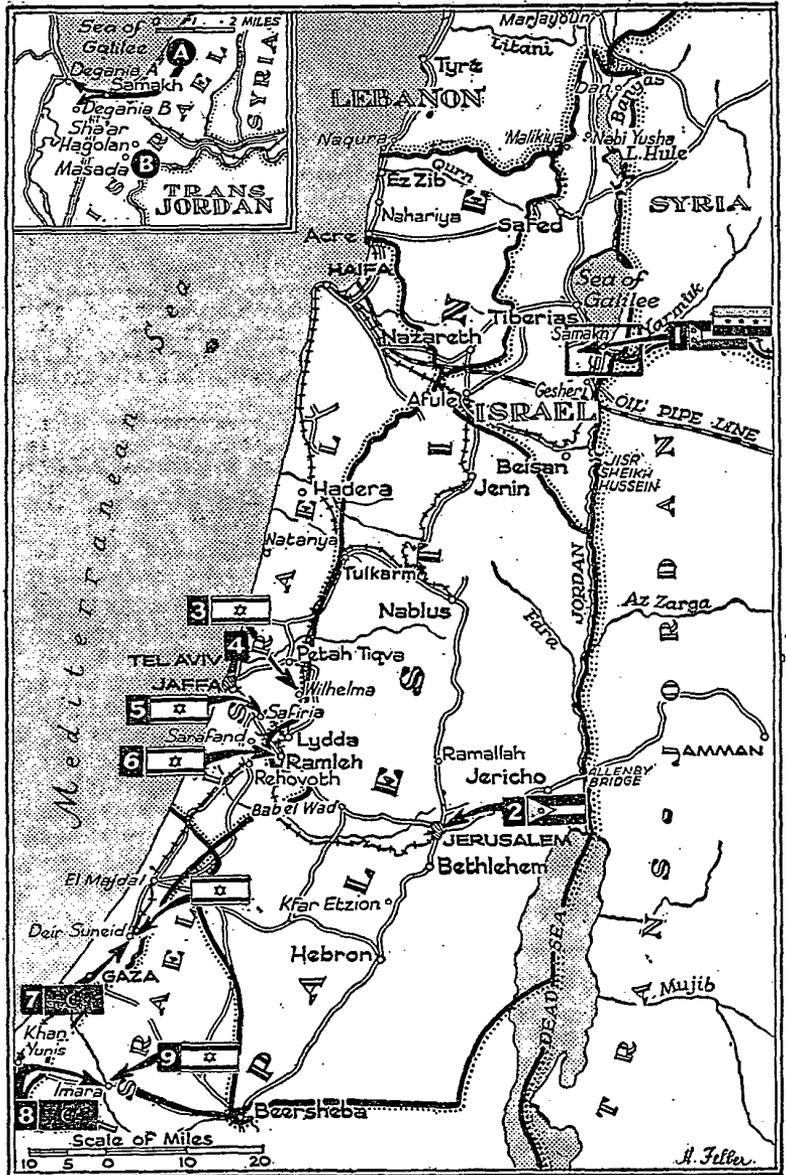
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for aerial acrobatic maneuvers with their bombs aboard.

Considering the distance from Egypt's main airfields, near Cairo, a matter of about 200 miles, the planes could not have enough fuel to come from there and stay aloft that long, it was pointed out:

In the Jerusalem fighting the Haganah reported that Arab shelling had destroyed a wing of Hadassah Hospital containing the operating theatre and the X-ray room. The Yugoslav Consulate was hit three times and six shells fell near the United States Consulate and others fell close to the French Consulate, it was said. The French monastery of Ratisbon in the center of town also suffered damage.

Other buildings shelled, the Haganah said, included that of the Workers' Sick Fund and the Nathan Strauss Health Center. The Haganah reported that the National and University Library on Mt. Scopus was under Arab artillery fire.



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Israeli planes, in action for the first time, struck near Samakh, in an area where Syrian and Iraqi troops were pressing forward (1). Arab tanks and armored cars attacked the settlements of Degania A and Degania B (A on inset map of this district) and Syrian artillery shelled Sha'ar Hagolan and Masada (B). In Jerusalem (2) the Arab Legion claimed control of or access to 80 per cent of the old city. While Tel Aviv (4) fought off new air raids, Irgun Zvai Leumi troops attacked Wilhelma (3) and Ramleh (6) and other Israeli contingents occupied Safiria (5). In the south Egyptian forces reported the capture of Deir Suneid (7) in a ten-hour battle and the seizure of Beersheba after an advance from Khan Yunis (8). Resistance was overcome at Imara (9).