

TIMES 14 NOV 1917  
**5,894 PRISONERS IN  
PALESTINE.**

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**GEN. ALLENBY'S REVIEW  
OF OPERATIONS.**

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**SUCCESS ACCORDING TO PLAN.**

According to the latest information which has reached the War Office the number of prisoners on the Palestine front which had passed through the collecting stations up to the night of November 11 was 5,894, including 286 officers.

The following account of recent operations up to November 8 is based on a telegraphic summary received from General Allenby:—

The attack on Beersheba was fixed for October 31. Seven days before this date the railway was begun from our railhead at Shellal (14 miles south of Gaza on the Wadi Ghuzze) towards Karm (six miles south-east of Shellal on the road to Beersheba), and a light line from Gamli (3½ miles south of Shellal) to El Buggar (eight miles east of Gamli on the Beersheba road). Detachments were developing water at Asluj (16 miles south of Beersheba).

On October 27 the Turks made a strong reconnaissance from the direction of Kawukah (three miles



sance from the direction of Kawukah (three miles south-west of Tell el Sheria) against Karm, employing two regiments of cavalry and 2,000 or 3,000 infantry. A London Yeomanry Brigade holding the outpost line covering railhead made a gallant fight against greatly superior numbers, enabling our infantry to get up in time, the Turkish attack being repulsed with great loss.

On the same day the bombardment of the Gaza defences commenced, and on October 30 British and French Naval Forces commenced to cooperate by firing on the Gaza defences, and on the road and railway bridges and the railway junction at Dir Sineid [eight miles north of Gaza]. The shooting was very accurate.

On the night of October 30/31 General Allenby's forces were disposed as follows:—Mounted troops at Asluj, Khalasa, and about Shellal. Infantry at Esami and on the Fara-Beersheba road, the extreme left forming a defensive flank towards Abu Irgeig (six miles from Beersheba on the Beersheba-Gaza road).

#### FRENCH, ITALIAN, AND WEST INDIAN TROOPS.

To the troops immediately before Gaza was attached a composite force consisting of West Indian and Indian troops, with detachments from the French and Italian contingents.

On the night of October 30 the Mounted Troops made a night march, and at daybreak on October 31 had reached the north-east of Beersheba. Meanwhile the infantry, who had also made a night march, arrived at dawn on the 31st opposite the south-west defences of Beersheba between the Kalasa-Beersheba road and the Wadi Saba. At an early hour London troops, and dismounted Yeomanry, attacking with great dash, had gained the whole of the first-line defences, while our mounted Yeomanry on their right kept touch with the Australian and New Zealand mounted forces east and north-east of Beersheba.

Fighting lasted all day. In the evening the Turkish

ENEMY TRENCHES EAST AND NORTHEAST OF BEERSHEBA.

Fighting lasted all day. In the evening the Turks still held trenches a mile east of the town. The 4th Australian Light Horse Regiment charged these trenches, which were 8ft. deep and 4ft. wide, and galloped over them. This ended all resistance.

On November 1 infantry moved forward to Ain Kohle (nine miles north of Beersheba), and mounted troops pushed up the Hebron road to within four miles of Dhaheriyeh. While the water supply at Beersheba was being organized the remainder of our infantry moved into a position north-west of the town facing Kawukah on a north-east-south-west line about Abu Irgeig.

On the morning of November 2 Scottish and East Anglian troops captured Umbrella Hill (some 500 yards due west of the Dir el Belah-Gaza road), and the whole of the Gaza first-line defences thence to the sea, including Sheikh Hassan. In this attack Tanks cooperated with success.

There was no further important action until November 6, the intervening time being occupied in bombardment and raids, and in the redistribution of troops.

#### ENEMY CASUALTIES ENORMOUS.

On the morning of November 6 our infantry, already mentioned as being at Ain Kohle, captured Khuwelifeh (some two miles farther to the north), and in conjunction with mounted troops were heavily engaged in beating off repeated counter-attacks made by at least two hostile divisions with the object of cutting us off from our water supply at Beersheba and thereby stopping our turning movement. Our troops, which included Welsh and English county regiments, behaved splendidly, and the Turkish casualties were enormous. Meanwhile, dismounted Yeomanry and Irish and London infantry had advanced from their positions about Abu Irgeig, and before nightfall had taken the whole of the Kawukah and Rashedi systems of defences up to Abu Hassan.

and Rushdi systems of defence up to Abu Hareira. Tell el Sheria was also captured, and our right in this zone connected by mounted troops with our forces at Khuwelifeh. At nightfall the Turks were beaten and retreating, and mounted troops, supported by infantry, were sent north *via* Sheria to pursue them towards Jemnameh and Huj (11 and nine miles respectively east of Gaza).

At midnight an attack was launched against the very strong works covering Gaza, which was captured with very little opposition, and infantry was pushed forward on the morning of the 7th towards the mouth of the Wadi Hesi [nine miles north of Gaza]. Some Turks still held on in the Atawina position (six to seven miles from Gaza, on the Beersheba road), but by the morning of November 8 these works were also in our possession. On this day (7th) Scottish Infantry, after an exhausting march through the sand dunes, reached the mouth of the Wadi Hesi. Australian and New Zealand mounted troops, supported by Londoners, pushed forward from Sheria, meeting with opposition from strong rearguards, which was finally overcome by a gallant charge made by the Warwick and Worcester Yeomanry. On our extreme right the troops were still opposed by 4,000 to 5,000 Turks.

At nightfall the general position was as follows:— Our mounted troops held the Hebron road with infantry at Tell Khuwelifeh and mounted troops connecting up with our forces at Sheria. Other mounted troops were on the line Jemnameh-Huj, while mounted troops from Gaza were in contact with strong bodies of the enemy about Beit Hanun, and our infantry had reached the mouth of the Wadi Hesi.

#### RAPID MOVEMENT AND ADEQUATE SUPPLY.

During the night and the morning of November 8 good progress was made, and by 6 p.m. on this day our mounted troops had reached the upper course of

our mounted troops had reached the upper course of the Wadi Hesi, north of Tel el Hesi (five miles north of Jemmameh), and had possession of Huj, where stores of all sorts were on fire. A smart action was fought near Beit Hanun, where Indian Imperial Service Cavalry captured prisoners and a heavy howitzer, while the Scottish troops, now on the right bank of the Wadi Hesi, had captured Herbieh (8½ miles from Gaza), and commanded the coastal railway.

Throughout these operations the Flying Corps has done excellent work, has established complete mastery in the air, and harassed with machine-guns and bombs the retreating columns.

All troops have shown a determined fighting spirit, and the marching and fighting of the infantry have been admirable. Good staff work has ensured harmonious working, rapid movement, and adequate supply; while the cooperation of the naval forces has been of the greatest value.

Owing to the extended nature of the operations and the rapidity of our movements it has not been possible yet to estimate captures of war material, but these are known to be large.

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