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THE ARMY STANDS BY.

British and French forces keep watch in Port Said while they wait for the promised United Nations police force to take over their duties. Most of the time, all is quiet; the spectacular part of the Army's task is over, but the job of keeping order during an uneasy truce can be just as trying.

Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Stockwell, commanding the Allied task force in Port Said, outlines the situation to correspondents, with his R.A.F. colleague Air Marshal Barnett, at his side. The task force's orders, General Stockwell explains, are to stand firm in the present positions and consolidate. Units dig themselves in alongside the roadway which flanks the Canal itself - for the safeguarding of the Canal, so that it can be reopened at the earliest possible moment, is a primary objective of the whole operation.

In canalside villages, the Army carries on with the soldier's oldest fatigue - making himself at home wherever he happens to find himself. But the Army doesn't forget the plight of the civilians - many of whom are innocent victims of events brought about by leaders they did not choose. There is estimated to be a month's supply of food in Port Said; but the Army gives a helping hand to make sure everyone gets his fair share - and General Stockwell announces that a foodskip is on the way.

The rapid success of the Allied landings brings a rich haul of Russian arms; part of the huge supplies, valued at £150 million or more, part which Egypt has received from the Soviet Union in the past year or so. The booty includes everything from small arms, and their ammunition, to rocket equipment and artillery - some of every large calibre. And, of course, tanks not to mention supplies to the air force and navy.

Clearance of the Canal is likely to take a long time. The large vessels sunk in it by the retreating Egyptians are a major problem - and Naval frogmen have discovered a number of small craft, cranes and pontoons on the bottom which were not visible from the air.

In Port Said harbour, ships are taking aboard, the men who made the first assault - the paratroops and commando units. Their work is finished, and their place is being taken by infantry battalions of the same strength. It was these men who bore the brunt of the short but heavy battle which decided the issue - though thanks to the efficiency with which it was planned and carried out - Allied casualties were only about 25 killed and a hundred wounded.

The damage caused by that airborne assault on the morning of November the Fifth was localized, but a few blocks suffered badly in the first hours. Egyptians wander among the ruins - and find that the water supply, at least, is working again. To the children, it is something to stare at; but perhaps the older ones are thinking, - this is the price of Nasser's folly.....