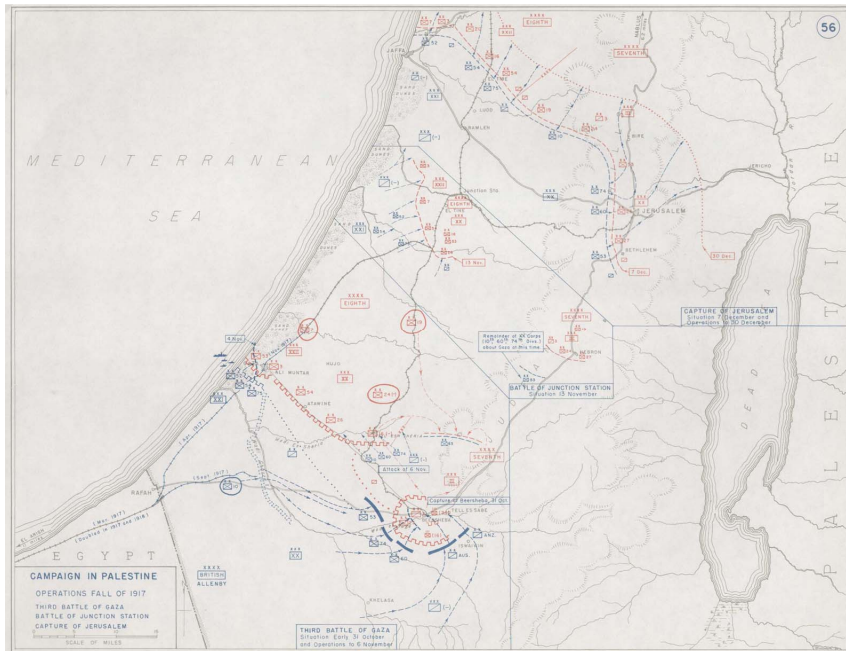


**From the official Report by Gaston Bodart (for Germany and Austria-Hungary), on the Fall of Jerusalem, 9 December 1917**



The British operations in Palestine began with the occupation of El Arish and the capture of Rafa. By March, 1917, the English had reached Gaza without any serious struggle. An attempt by General Dobell to take Gaza failed, the English suffering heavy losses, and a counter-attack made by the Turks on the following day likewise met with no success.

In a second battle for the historically celebrated place (April 17th), the British, although not successful in breaking through, secured to themselves positions from which the trench war against the powerful Turkish line Gaza-Beersheba could be conducted with greater hope of success.

After the opponents had remained for seven months in these positions, the new commander-in-chief, General Allenby, began the operations on October 31st, 1917, by capturing the strategically highly important point, Beersheba, the former chief halting-place of the Turks on their advance to Egypt, and now the chief station for the protection of Palestine.

The position at Gaza, in consequence of this victory, now became untenable. An immediate attack with his left wing and centre brought Allenby in possession of the entire Turkish line extending from the coast to Beersheba by way of Gaza.

The latter city was entered by the British on November 7th. The energetic pursuit which followed soon led to the capture of Ascalon, on the coast and to a nearer approach to the railroad between Jaffa and Jerusalem.

The British general finally succeeded in surrounding Jerusalem, and on December 9th, 1917, the city was captured with the cooperation of French and Italian contingents. The moral significance of this event was even greater than its military importance.

## **Sir Edmund Allenby's Official Proclamation Following the Fall of Jerusalem, 9 December 1917**

To the Inhabitants of Jerusalem the Blessed and the People Dwelling in Its Vicinity:

The defeat inflicted upon the Turks by the troops under my command has resulted in the occupation of your city by my forces. I, therefore, here now proclaim it to be under martial law, under which form of administration it will remain so long as military considerations make necessary.

However, lest any of you be alarmed by reason of your experience at the hands of the enemy who has retired, I hereby inform you that it is my desire that every person pursue his lawful business without fear of interruption.

Furthermore, since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore, do I make it known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer of whatsoever form of the three religions will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred.

Guardians have been established at Bethlehem and on Rachel's Tomb. The tomb at Hebron has been placed under exclusive Moslem control.

The hereditary custodians at the gates of the Holy Sepulchre have been requested to take up their accustomed duties in remembrance of the magnanimous act of the Caliph Omar, who protected that church.

Source: Source Records of the Great War, Vol. V, ed. Charles F. Horne, National Alumni 1923