

L. J. S. S. Thursday, Nov. 19/42.

In North Africa the trap is closing rapidly around the old desert rat, Field Marshal Rommel - the pincers movement of three prongs. The British ~~xxxxxx~~ chasing him from the east, Americans and British pushing through Tunisia against him from the west, and the desert column of Free French and Americans thursting up at Rommel from the south - Lake Chad, across the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Sahara. Rommel is a resourceful commander, but to escape the triple threat, he'll have to be a miracle man.

The British, driving ~~swiftly~~ from Egypt, have by-passed the Axis port of Benghazi. A desert column, taking a difficult short cut to get at the rapidly retreating Rommel, caught up with ^a ~~the~~ German force today. This was a thin rear guard left by Rommel to defend a position somewhat beyond Benghazi. Cairo says that the Nazi commander left this comparatively

minor force to cover his retreat. ~~halt the British advance as long as possible so the beaten Africa Korps could beat it and make a stand - or maybe just enable it to keep on retreating.~~ Last reports were that British ~~army~~ units were smashing at this rear guard - which presumably could not hold for long.

On the other side of Rommel, ^{the} a great British and American army was pushing through Tunisia today - three hundred thousand men, it is estimated. Their advance is being led by paratroops, and London today stated that British troops dropped by chute had captured additional airports in Tunisia. ^W Berlin states that the first battle between ^{Axis} ~~Nazi~~ and Allied forces has begun. Contact between the hostile forces occurred on the Tunisian coast. Berlin ^{says} ~~states~~ it was only minor fighting - preliminary.

There are reports of heavy fighting between the Trench & Germans in Tunisia. As the great force of American and British

move^s forward, the Nazi position in Tunisia seems to be complicated by the French there. These troops, formerly under the command of the Vichy Government of France, were supposed to defend Tunisia against our men. But they intend to do nothing of the sort.

Radio Morocco stated tonight that the Nazis sent an ultimatum to the French Commander-in-Chief in Tunisia - ordering him to evacuate his forces, take them out of the country. The French Commander rejected the command and advised the Germans that he is acting under the orders of Admiral Darlan and General Giraud. Darlan and Giraud have come over to our side, with Giraud the General in command of the French forces cooperating with us in the invasion of Tunis.

From their new African bases, General

Doolittle's bombers are hitting at the Axis everywhere.

BNd
The British Royal Air Force made another heavy bombing raid last night against Italy. The place blasted was the great industrial city of Turin.

Giant

~~Joint~~ R.A.F. planes dropped those two-ton bombs called

"block busters" - ^{smash} ~~they smashed~~ up a whole block. It

was bright moonlight over Turin and the bombers could

pick their targets accurately. One pilot reported that

his bombs hit the great Fiat Airplane and Motor Works

and did heavy damage. The British tell of flaming

devastation ^{at Turin's} and Rome admits ^{the damage =} ~~that the damage at Turin~~

was great.

Spain comes increasingly into the new Mediterranean picture - the new panorama of war and strategy produced by the American offensive in North Africa. Some violent counter-move by Hitler is expected, and the finger of Axis menace seems to be pointing at Spain. Nazi propaganda has started

suddenly to talk about Spain - which may be a harbinger of some move in that direction. And we have a report that Germany has asked the Spanish Generalissimo, Francisco Franco, to place Spanish naval and air bases at the disposal of the Nazis. Franco refused, they say.

~~TR~~ The importance of Spain with reference to Africa and the Mediterranean is obvious. The key word is - Gibraltar. Spanish territory is right next door to The Rock, and ^{would} provides a vantage point from which the Straits might be closed. And if the Nazis could seal up the Straits of Gibraltar, it would be a great disadvantage to our campaign in the Mediterranean.

~~TR~~ Suppose the Nazis should go into Spain? well, we would meet them there.

In Vichy, France - the appointment of Laval as virtual dictator is taken to mean that Vichy will go the whole way in joining Nazi Germany. The

aged head of the state, Marshal Petain, has granted the greater part of his power to Laval, and that arch collaborationist is expected to use it to sign a military alliance with Hitler. ^{He will} and try his best to procure a Vichy-French declaration of war against the United States and Great Britain. If Laval should get his declaration of war, few Frenchmen would support it. You can imagine how much stomach the French people have ~~to battle~~ for war against the United States.

They say that General Weygand has been arrested by the Nazis, and taken to Germany. ~~This word comes from Rome, which attributes it to what it calls "authoritative circles in Berlin."~~ Weygand is, ~~of course,~~ the famous French soldier who tried vainly to stem the tide of defeat in the fall of France. We are told that right after the opening of the American offensive in North Africa, Marshal Petain

asked Weygand to take command of the French army and direct the fight against the Americans. Weygand refused.

~~German sources are today reported as referring to General Giraud, who escaped from Vichy, and joined our side. "One Giraud is quite enough for us,"~~

~~say the Nazis. They are afraid Weygand might take the~~

~~same road to the camp of the United Nations and so~~

~~they~~ have arrested him and ^{taken} ~~carried~~ him to Germany.

The Russians are claiming a major victory in the Caucasus.
