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 DUUGHBOYS DIGGMG TRENCHES AND PIACIMG GUNS ON HEECHITS DOMNNATMG NAZ ARYY BEOOW

LONDON, Feb. 19.-The Middle Eastern Command revealed today that the British Eighth Army had occupied Foum Tatahouine, southern outpost of the Mareth Line, and that its big guns were thundering 24 miles to the north, indicating the imminence of a big driv to crack the line in the center and flank it at the same time.

American forces consolidated new positions along the rugged Tunisian dorsal, 200 miles northwest of the Eighth Army's positions. Marshal Erwin Rommel was believed to have called off his offensive against the to have called off his offensive against the
Americans.to meet the threat of the Eighth

The Middle Eastern Command's communi que said Eighth Army artillery dueled yester day with enemy artillery in the area of M M
denine, central outpost of the Mareth Line denine, central outpost of the Mareth Line.
General Montgomery's Eighth Army's advanced units entered Medenine two days ago but its occupation by the British has not yet been announced. Apparently, British guns
were in range of fhe Mareth Line's pill-boxes. because all units of the Afrika Korps were be lieved to have withdrawn behind the line.
Axis reports. that the Eighth Army had a ready begun its assault were received with re serve. But it would soon be hitting the Afrika
the British wor Korps hard enough in southeastern. Tunisia to divert considerable pressure from the Ameri-

The weather prohibited extensive offensive air operations on the Mareth Line front yester day, and it might be that the Eighth Army was day, and it might e flying conditions to begin the final assault.
Meanwhile, planes from the Middle East continued to blast the Axis on other parts of the African front.

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