

A.E.F. MUST GROW LINGO OF ITS OWN

Men Have Already Taken Words From Tommy and Poilu

SHOP TALK IN EACH BRANCH

Infantryman, Engineer, Redleg, Marine, Each Speaks Indi- vidual Language

Has the A.E.F. in France a language of its own? That is, has it developed its slang to such an extent that an outsider would find it hard to understand a typical section of A.E.F. talk? Has its experience in France added to its already large stock of short cuts in language, or does it still employ the old slang of the Army and the slang of the parts of the States from which it hailed?

These are hard questions to answer, and we would like the help of our readers in answering them; for we have been asked them time and again. For our own part, we find that for all usual conversational purposes, the men of the A.E.F. continue to use the "plain United States" as it grows in their particular home town portions of that beatific region. What purely "Army stuff" they use has been handed on to them by the grizzled old veterans who took part in the 1916 tour of border duty.

"Get by," "get away with it," "bull," "bull-con," "beefing"—all the good old phrases are heard on every hand as one walks through an Adrian barrack building or back of a company as it stands at rest. Occasionally one hears a little Mex talk—a man referred

Doughboy Slang?

to as a good *hombre*, or an evening salutation of *buenas noches*. And, of course, interspersed with all these pieces of language there is a little left of the talk of the old Army; with prominently in the vanguard the old, old axiom, "You're out of luck!"

Borrowing From Tommy

"Crabbing," for grumbling or knocking, was perfectly good Americanese before that fateful day in April, 1917. It has not given way to "grousing," as employed by the Tommies. But from the Tommies has come "fed up," "carry on," and—in a few outfits more than usually exposed to British infection—such patent Anglicisms as "gawblyme" and—er, and the rest of them, including "not 'arf" and "strike me blind." Their use has not become general, however, nor is it apt to become so in the near future. The only really permanent acquisition thus far from the British linguistic treasure house is the expressive "dud,"—as applied to a bomb that won't go off, for example.

Perfectly good French, in the mouths of Americans, has passed for a sort of slang, if by slang one means a shortcut in expression, a handy way of describing something which cannot be tersely described any other way, a more pungent way of saying an old thing. *Allez-voes-en*, so much like "Arragh g'wan" of our Celtic neighbors, has sprung into favor in some localities, and is apt to spread. *Tout de suite* is quite as satisfactory as "in a jiff," and is so used now and again. But *allez-voes-en* and *tout de suite* are not French slang; they are dignified by enrolment in dictionary supplements, printed in good Italic type, as slang is not dignified. The poilu's *je m'en fiche*, which amounts to "I don't give a"—whatever one doesn't give—is about the only piece of real French Army slang that has been taken over bodily, or that is apt to stay taken over.