

of Army slang expressions, however, has been «doing the scone» with its variant «doing the bun,» used for losing one's grip or one's temper.

«Wouldn't it rock you?» is also popular, this indicating astonished reaction, usually to the «Army way.» It has been fairly recently shortened to «Wouldn't it?» and may, like the Cheshire cat, soon fade away completely, leaving only the grin.

«Wouldn't it rotate you?» is, however, also common. This seems at first sight to be connected with flying, but several soldiers have solemnly explained that it comes from the fact that when the flanges of a tank become loaded with sand, it tends to spin the vehicle to one side, causing a «rotation» and confusion to the occupants. Judgment should be reserved on this explanation.

A very interesting expression with a definitely literary origin is «choco,» a term of genial contempt used by overseas men of a territorial or Temporary Staff man. This is short for «chocolate soldier,» and derives by way of Oscar Strauss' operetta «The Chocolate Soldier» from Shaw's «Arms and the Man,» in which Bluntschli, the cautious soldier, carried chocolate creams instead of bullets in his bandolier. The irony of the expression is, however, that, in Shaw's play Bluntschli is the only really practical man, the other soldiers being a lot of fanciful, romantic nincompoops.

Hardly less frequently heard than «doing the scone» is «bludger» and «to bludge.» This is a development of «bludgeoner» from «bludgeon,» a club (in turn, from Dutch *bludsen*, to bruise). «Bludgeoner» was originally a piece of thieves' cant and meant a harlot's bully or a bawdy-house chucker-out—that is, one likely to use a bludgeon. About 1850 the modification «bludger» is also found. It is not easy to discover how this piece of Cockney criminal argot found its way into the New Zealand Army. Yet today it is one of the most frequently used terms. The verb «to bludge» has also developed, and usually means «to cadge,» «to scrounge.»

The Middle East has provided us with a good selection of slang terms as well. The most attractive are SABU (self-adjusting b—s—up) and NAFU (untranslatable, meaning the opposite), with their cynical assessment of admin-

istrative tangles. «Sand-happy,» with its suggestion of «slap-happy,» may be compared with the Pacific «troppo,» both pithily indicating the impact of alien climes on some New Zealand temperaments.

Interesting, too, is «snarlers» for the inevitable Army sausages. «Growlers» is another form, «barkers» still another, the latter the oldest name, which is practically not heard in the New Zealand Army. «Bumph,» the schoolboy's rude word for toilet-paper, now applied to all useless Army files and documents, seems to have gained universal favour. When one is so busy that one doesn't know where to turn, Army as well as Air Force men are «in a flat spin,» and any one who gets in a «flap» (state of excitement) is warned with the phrase «Don't panic!»

After all this, it might not be inappropriate to quote a noted authority on slang, Frank Sechrist, and see how much he says can be truly applied to the slang of the modern New Zealand soldier. This is what Sechrist says of slang in «The Psychology of Unconventional Language»: «Slang ignores all that belongs to the routine duties of ordinary life; it does not characterise the humdrum and the commonplace. There is little in the vocabulary to suggest innocence and spontaneous playfulness. It is purely unsentimental. It castigates every kind of excess. . . . It prefers the abrupt and the shocking. It is superior to accepted use through its emotional force.»



Trombones were played in Germany as early as the 15th Century, usually by members of town bands at pageants, banquets and festivals. We don't know, but it may be that the unfortunate effect the sound of a trombone has on many people may have had something to do with the development of the strong streak of melancholia so characteristic of the German race. We advise you to point this out to your friend and advise him, for the sake of his pals, to choose some more soothing instrument.