

AIR FORCE SLANG

TO JUDGE from the vast amount of fan-mail I receive, this feature "Air Force Slang" is most popular. Both letters last month used plenty of slang when referring to me. Many correspondents asked for an article on SOOP. Being a teetotaler, myself, (any comments?) I hardly feel equal to the task, but, for the sake of science, I imbued

several bottles of "the real thing", and, still suffering slightly from the after-effects, I am sitting down to write these lines.

First, I looked up Webster's dictionary, which says, under the heading of SOOP: "mixture of water, methylated spirits, boot polish (black preferable) and Silvo. (If no Silvo available, use Brasso) drunk on Norfolk Island." A touch of lubricating oil is sometimes added as flavouring. Annual production 1939, 200 glns, 1944 2500 glns (estd.). See also under POISON."

The dictionary, of course, mentions only the main ingredients of this famous drink. All brewers have their secret recipes, carefully hidden from their best friends. The most you can get out of them is an occasional "buck-shee" bottle - "just been made, boy! Don't drink it at once. Let it work for a week or so - and then..." Here follows the familiar wink which makes your mind wander to that dreamland paradise where all soop-drinkers dwell, to be rudely awakened by one of the worse hangovers known to alcoholics.

I could mention some interesting case-histories -- the "pakeha-Maori" who performed a wild haka in the middle of the dance floor, the house-and-estate agent who stood on his barrack-box to get the leverage to open it, and many others. In one tent they still point proudly to the foot-marks where one of the inmates was dragged to bed one night. But, generally, after 28 days' Commando Course in Swanson, personnel stand up to the strain well.

Some sing of Alexander, and some of Hercules, but nobody has yet recorded the deeds of valour of those daring heroes of the Battle of the SOOP, 1945. "Sip up, Soaks!"