

## Choctaw Who Foiled Germans in 1918 Wants to Go

# Tongue Twister Ready

### Hugo Man Hopes Divorce Makes Him Eligible to Serve

**HUGO**, Dec. 20.—(Special.) Even if the Germans had learned Choctaw, even an intelligent intelligence officer might have difficulty discovering that "twice big group" meant a battalion.

It was this ruse, suggested by a Hugo Indian during the first World war, that spoiled the plans of the kaiser's line-tappers. And this same Indian, James M. Edwards, believes Hitler's legions are no smarter than their predecessors; that he and a few other Choctaws can throw the enemy off guard as they did more than 20 years ago. Such troops are being trained on the basis of the first war experience.

Edwards, now 42 years old, was a corporal in Co. E, 142nd Infantry, 36th division, when the A. E. F. went to France. He already has offered his services, but was rejected because he was married. Since then, he and his wife have been divorced, and he believes severing of the marital bonds will make him eligible for service again, especially now that the United States has gone to war.

Edwards recalls that American officers were becoming alarmed at German wire-tapping. Every order



James M. Edwards

phoned became known to the enemy. Surprises were impossible.

"Maybe they can't talk Choctaw," Edwards told his commanding officer, Capt. E. W. Horner.

The more the captain thought of the idea, the better he liked it, and Edwards was instructed to carry out his plan. He picked several others of his tribe—Mitchell Bobb, Calvin Wilson, Solomon Lewis, Joe Davenport, Noel Johnson, all fellow students at old Armstrong academy near Bokchito—and they formed a relaying team.

First, they found it necessary to devise a code, since many of the army terms had no counterpart in the Choctaw tongue. Field artillery

### Kaiser's Men Were Baffled Once, Why Not Again?

became "big gun"; "fast shooting gun" meant machine gun; "eight group" was a squad, "big group" a company, and "twice big group" was a battalion.

Edwards was in charge of the relayers, and with Johnson, was stationed at division headquarters with the commanding officers. Lewis and Wilson were sent to the front line trenches while Davenport and Bobb manned phones at battalion headquarters. Messages were handed to them, translated, and the tongue of the American aborigine traveled across the battlefields of France.

Success was immediate. Secret orders remained a secret with those concerned. Word leaked back from the German lines that the kaiser's most expert linguists were stumped. And Edwards thinks they'd be stumped again with the same triple play: Edwards to Lewis to Davenport.

Edwards, a member of the American Legion's Lock Sanders post in Hugo, studies the international situation avidly. He thinks Germany's success is due to her intense preparation. "They wouldn't take me in 1939, but I've got my divorce now and I'm as healthy as I ever was." He taps his barrel-like chest with gusto. "Maybe they haven't learned to talk Choctaw, and they need us now," he added.