

Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier

ABSTRACT

Commonplace in the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (FEB) historiography is a grievance towards the public, as it is acknowledged that most Brazilians ignore the deeds of the *pracinhas*. Through a comparative case study involving the FEB and the 2nd New Zealand Division, this paper sought to analyse the influences of the Italian Campaign on their literature and remembrance. It was observed that the sidelining of the Italian Campaign diminished the Home Front prominence of the Allied forces. However, this did not lead to a similar grievance in New Zealand's literature, nor is their division perceived as forgotten. The evidences reveal that the explanation for the contrasting roles of the two units within the national memories rests with the different post-war governmental approaches towards their war stories. In turn, the grievance towards the public is an outcome of the FEB's ordeal not being captured by the Brazilian collective memory.

Introduction

This paper will frame the 2nd New Zealand Division and the *Força Expedicionária Brasileira* (FEB) against each other, in an attempt to further our understanding of the Italian Campaign's influence on the memory of the forces that fought in that theatre and, particularly, on the memory and historiography of the FEB. The research question is outlined as follows: What is the influence of the sidelining of the Italian front on the memory and literature of the Brazilian division?

Initiated in September 1943, the conflict in continental Italy lasted until the very end of the war in Europe, the Allied armies going through, as characterized by Doherty (2007, p. 298), "a long, hard slog" to achieve ultimate victory. Born from the disputes between the British and Americans over the strategy to be deployed against Germany, the decision to start a campaign in Italy is seen by some authors as wasteful and unnecessary. Salun, for example, (2012, p. 22) claims that "the Allied campaign to conquer Italy was, in the opinion of many historians, a true fiasco".

And yet, this campaign was the main stage for the FEB in the Second World War. Thus, while it might have been a secondary theatre for British, American, and Canadian

soldiers, it was the one and only for the Brazilians. Through the two years of war in Italy, divisions from several distinct nationalities were employed in the region, some eventually leaving to join other theatres, others remaining until the very end. However, of the nations that fielded divisional-sized formations, New Zealand is one of the two¹ that mirrored the Brazilian experience by having the Italian Campaign as the theatre for its main fighting force, the 2nd New Zealand Division, which is described by Gordon (2014, p. 13) as the “country’s main contribution to the war”. Just as the FEB was the Brazilian Army in the Second World War, the 2nd New Zealand Division was the New Zealand Army, and “when the Division saw action all New Zealanders had a very direct interest in its outcome” (McLeod, 1980, p. 166). Given this similarity, the present paper is not the first study to place the two forces face to face, as Zirker (2010) previously detailed the interesting parallels between them during the war. However, there has been no discussion on how both are remembered since 1945.

The hypothesis to be tested on this paper is that the sidelining of the Italian Campaign led to a feeling of grievance from the soldiers in Italy, which was kept alive through the post-war period and remains entrenched within the literature. This hypothesis seeks to establish the grievance over being forgotten – like the one so commonly expressed in the FEB literature – as an outcome of the secondary importance of the Italian Campaign. This is approached through a comparative case study, where the FEB and the 2nd New Zealand Division are arranged against each other.

The paper is divided in two sections. The first section will briefly detail the creation and history of the FEB and the 2nd New Zealand Division, and this first step is complemented by an overview of the historiography of each division. In the second section, I seek to understand the specific influences of the Italian Campaign on the literature and on how both expeditionary forces are remembered since 1945. These steps led to a partial rejection of the paper’s hypothesis. It was found that the different ways in which the memories of the two units have been interpreted are more influenced by the post-war governmental approaches, towards their war stories, than by the strategic context behind the Italian Campaign.

The FEB and the 2nd New Zealand division during war and peace

After the United Kingdom declared war on Germany in September 1939, New

¹ South Africa, with her 6th Armoured Division, was the other.

Zealand held that the British decision automatically bounded them to join the conflict (McConaughey, Musgrave and Nexon, 2018). On September 5, 1939, Michael Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand, proclaimed that “[b]oth with gratitude for the past and confidence in the future, we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go. Where she stands, we stand (..)” (Jackson, 2011, p. 66). As New Zealand had no standing army, it initially relied upon the 10,000 citizen-soldier volunteers of the Territorial Force to form their expeditionary forces. By October 1939, enough men had volunteered to complete a division, and they left for the Middle East in three echelons (Stack and O’Sullivan, 2013).

The division was the main component of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Other forces were the non-divisional units, Base units, and those responsible for the line of communications (Halsey, 2005). In total, this expeditionary force had an average strength of 30,000 men and women (Morris, 2013). It first joined combat in Greece, in April 1941, and afterwards unsuccessfully defended Crete, where the New Zealander commander, Bernard Freyberg, took command of the Allied effort (Holland, 2015).

After a long period of rebuilding, the 2nd New Zealand Division joined the fighting in North Africa in November 1941, participating in several battles, such as Minqar Qaim, Ruweisat, and the Second Battle of El Alamein. After the latter, the 2nd New Zealand Division was made the vanguard of the 8th Army (Stack and O’Sullivan, 2013). First at El Agheila, then at Nofilia, and later at Mareth, the New Zealanders were employed as a left hook by the British, flanking the Axis’ positions near the coast (Stevens, 1962).

The 2nd Division rested and recovered after fighting in Tunisia. It first joined the Italian Campaign in October 1943, deploying alongside the 8th Army near the River Sangro (Fennell, 2019). From that point on the New Zealanders fought upward in Italy alongside the multi-national Allied armies, at certain times falling under American command as well. During the war, the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force received approximately 30,000 casualties, including 6,793 dead (Stack and O’Sullivan, 2013).

By August 1944, the New Zealanders had been joined in Italy by a Brazilian regiment. Consisting of three regiments and supporting units, the FEB reinforced the Allied armies in the theatre after several American and French divisions had been transferred away, to undertake Operation Dragoon in Southern France (Fisher, 1993). The deployment of Brazilian soldiers in Europe was an evolution of Brazil’s contribution to the Allied war effort, something that was already in effect in the strategic, trade and political arenas (Pinheiro, 1995). After several German attacks upon Brazilian shipping, in part as a reprisal

to the ever-closer relationship between Brazil and the United States, the Brazilian Government recognized the state of war against Germany and Italy in August 1942 (Cervo and Bueno, 2002).

For Cervo and Bueno (2002), Brazil's direct contribution to the war in continental Europe was primarily a result of the desires of the Brazilian government, as the United Kingdom was firmly against the deployment of the FEB, while the United States was wary of the logistical burden of training, equipping, and transporting the Brazilian troops. Through such a contribution, Brazil sought to improve the quality of its armed forces, to increase its voice in the peace conferences after the war, and to elevate the country's status in South America and the international system (Moura, 1982). Since the Vargas Government had so strongly advocated for Brazilian participation in Europe, an Allied refusal would entail the loss of face, with significant domestic consequences. The FEB started being formed in early 1943, and the initial plans had its strength ranging from three to four divisions. One proposed theatre for its deployment was the two Portuguese archipelagos of Madeira and Azores, but this was rejected by Britain and Portugal, and by the end of 1943 the FEB was in danger of receiving a premature death. However, in early 1944 a new agreement was made between Brazil and the United States, and the US Government accepted the FEB's departure to Europe (Moura, 1991). With five separate echelons departing from Brazil, the Brazilian strength in Italy, led by Mascarenhas de Moraes, reached 25,334 individuals (McCann, 2018).

Under the American 5th Army, the Brazilian division started its training in Italy and joined, in October, limited offensives initiated by the US IV Corps. During the spring of 1945, the Brazilians advanced alongside the two Allied armies, and throughout their campaign the FEB had nearly 2,500 casualties, including 451 dead (ZIRKER, 2010).

Once the war was over, the paths of the Brazilian and New Zealander soldiers, that had no doubt been similar during their forays into northern Italy, started to diverge. Despite some issues in supporting veterans with psychological traumas, New Zealand's Government improved and extended the rehabilitation program that had been in effect after the First World War (Jenks and Wanhalla, 2020). To match the post-war needs with manpower, the Government started setting up training schools towards veterans as early as 1941. Furthermore, in addition to the granting of pensions, loans were offered to ex-servicemen and women for houses, businesses, farms, and education. By 1955, over 65,000 veterans lived in state houses or had received loans for purchase or building, while 12,000

had been settled in farms, with suitable land, by the Rehabilitation Department. Therefore, though the return to civilian life was not easy for many, New Zealand's rehabilitation effort can be considered a success (Carlyon and Morrow, 2014).

Meanwhile, upon returning to their country, the Brazilian veteran faced a struggle that would last for most of their lives (Ferraz, 2015; Oliveira, 2011; Rosa, 2010). Despite several legislations being enacted to grant them benefits, some already in 1946, many *pracinhas* only began to receive state assistance in the 80s (Rosa, 2010), and in general there was a relative abandonment of the veterans by the civilian and military authorities (Ferraz, 2015). One factor of influence was the dearth of previous experiences: Whereas New Zealand, as with most Allied nations, had their post-First World War experiences to learn from, Brazil's only large-scale attempt in social reintegration had happened a century earlier, on the aftermath of the Paraguayan War (Ferraz, 2014). However, perhaps the greatest difference was in the role that each expeditionary force would play for their respective national identities in the post-war period.

Already in 1945, the War History Branch was created within New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs, which gave birth to the Official History project. In the hands of professional historians, journalists, and military officers, the project was intended to meet the "needs and expectations of the people of New Zealand," and "(...) at the same time establish in countries overseas the facts of New Zealand's war effort" (Kippenberger, 1946, cited in McGibbon, 2003, p. 60). In general, New Zealand's Government deliberately used its World War II stories to strengthen the nation's unity (Brown, 2020). With most of them released before 1967 (Bell, 2012), New Zealand's Official War Histories eventually entailed the publication of 48 extensive volumes and 24 short booklets, and they involved "just about anyone in New Zealand capable of writing military history, and some that were not" (McGibbon, 2003, p. 61).

Most notably, there were 21 unit histories and 23 campaign and service volumes. Not only were they intended to pay tribute to the soldiers, record their experiences, and describe in detail their many campaigns and battles, but it was also sought to embed them into the national memory (Bell, 2012). Thus, despite there being no evidence of censorship taking place (McGibbon, 2003), heavy criticism towards the soldiers and the division's leadership was undesired (McLeod, 1980). One historian in the project would comment that it "was really impossible for any historian in New Zealand to dare voice criticisms of the General [Freyberg]" (McGibbon, 2003, p. 61). This was primarily an outcome of the contemporary

nature of the project, and not of its official status. The project was also quite inclusive (Bell, 2012), and unit committees had an important role on their respective histories (McGibbon, 2003).

According to Harding (2008, p. 28), “If national identification is a process rather than a primordial fact, it may not always go smoothly; it may sometimes fail”. Far from being a failure in New Zealand’s case, the Second World War stories were captured by the collective identity. In turn, the myth of the ANZAC spirit and the New Zealander soldier, already surfacing after Gallipoli, grew and helped to forge the Kiwi identity, reaching a point where the legend of the 2nd Division and its soldiers is almost an extension of New Zealand’s nationalism, and “adverse comments on the New Zealand soldier's reputation are howled down with a vociferous anger” (McLeod, 1980, p. 2). The Official Histories had a major part to play in this phenomenon, as they established firm grounds for a national tradition of the war, one that was to be a source of “cohesion and strength rather than division and discontent to the nation” (Bell, 2012, p. 253). In order to saturate the public with the official narrative, schools, organizations and many individuals were given copies of all the volumes (Brown, 2020).

On the other side of the world, it would be a mistake to call the state-led process of mingling the story of the *pracinhas* with the Brazilian identity a failure, for there was no attempt in the first place, and the closest thing the FEB has to an Official History is Mascarenhas de Moraes’ *The Brazilian Expeditionary Force by its Commander*, a volume first published in 1947 (Ferraz, 2016). Nonetheless, even this tome portrayed an experience that did not entirely resonate with the Brazilian soldiers, leading some FEB veterans to publish together their own experiences in 1949, which were intended to offer a counterpoint to Mascarenhas’ quasi-official narrative (Ribeiro, 2019). Therefore, despite this abandonment from the state, or rather because of it, a social movement related to the *pracinhas* materialized just shortly after the war, which was directed towards increasing their recognition across society and ensuring that their rights were upheld (Silva, 2012). Additionally, many cities that had one of their citizens joining the FEB are rich with memorial sites in remembrance of their stories. Plazas, busts, and plaques in celebration of the FEB are common sights in the Brazilian city landscape (Calikevstz and Monastirsky, 2018). Indeed, Rosenheck (2008) notes that the Brazilian World War II soldier is celebrated in 192 monuments across their country, a not insignificant number, while Rodrigues (2013) argues that the memory of the FEB is very much alive within their localized communities.

Despite these efforts, for Maximiano (2010) the FEB is not in any way established within the Brazilian national memory, and in his opinion only military enthusiasts, researchers, and the veterans and their families, are interested in the Brazilian experience in the Second World War, a conflict that seems as distant as the Brazilian Independence for younger generations.² According to Ribeiro (2013), this has its roots in 1945, when the FEB was dismantled still in Italian soil. After just a short prominence during the Victory Parade in Brazil, the Brazilian soldier increasingly became invisible to the public (Amorim, 2017). Consequently, being abandoned by the state is said to slowly have led to a second abandonment, this time by most of society (Flores, 2020).

In turn, one established trend within the literature is a grievance towards the Brazilian public – those that, supposedly, still do not acknowledge the deeds of the Brazilian soldier. Braciak (2017) comments that the FEB has been forgotten by the very society that it defended; Barone (2018, pp. 7-8) claims that “95% of the Brazilian population ignores that our country took part in the Second World War”, something that, for him, is “incomprehensible, unacceptable”; and Pereira (2015, p. 2) states that “even in History courses the epic saga of the *pracinhas* is rarely presented to students in a detailed manner and free of ideological biases”. In some extreme cases, the perceived ignorance of the FEB’s exploits is used to construct a portrait of the Brazilian public as decadent and fraught with flaws.

Considering how the story of the 2nd New Zealand Division has blended with the Kiwi identity, this tendency is not noticeable in that unit’s literature. Nevertheless, there is one trend that is roughly observable in the literature of both expeditionary forces: The laudatory narrative. In Brazil’s case, it is necessary to mention that this trend has been diminishing, as the quality of the literature increases through the years and more balanced views take the fore (Ferraz, 2016). Similarly, in New Zealand the laudatory narrative can be said to have weakened, in part due to a slowly growing academic interest. And yet, this tendency is not completely gone.

Curiously, in the case of the Brazilian literature this is partly because of its sheer size. For Ferraz (2016, p. 210), “quantitatively, the bibliography on the country’s participation in the war is much more expressive than what is usually believed”. From 1945 to 2015, over a thousand publications were released about the Brazilian participation in the Second World

² Offering a different point of view, McCann (2018, viii) instead claims that “[t]oday in the United States World War II is ancient history, in Brazil it is almost yesterday”.

War, with more than half regarding the Italian Campaign. Most notably, since the 60s the number of releases per decade has increased substantially. Additionally, the civilian production surpasses that of the military institutions. The size of the literature sharply contrasts with the idea, which has become commonplace among FEB enthusiasts, that the unit has been forgotten by Brazilians (Ferraz, 2016). In a surprising turn of events, the variety of academic approaches to the topic has led Maximiano (2010, p. 17) to criticize what he sees as the “political correctness’ influence”, which has supposedly led to a neglect of the “experience of war” and, instead, opened room “for fashionable subjects such as (...) ‘representations of masculinity among the conscripted’”.

It appears that the FEB’s literature is quite more extensive than that of the 2nd New Zealand Division.³ In part, this is because military history has been neglected in New Zealand for most of the post-war period, and there is no substantial scholarly treatment (McGibbon, 2003; McLeod, 1980). It is important to highlight that, for McLeod (1980, p. 14), the Official Histories are, in fact, “most professional” and “a valuable launching pad for further research”. Bell (2012, p. 12) goes even further, stating that “the War Histories were at the cutting edge of historical theory as it was at that time”. Nevertheless, outside of them there has been little study on the topic (McLeod, 1980). From the turn of the millennium onwards, some academic interest in the Official Histories themselves has started to appear (Bell, 2012), but military history is still far from being a focus point. Therefore, partly due to this general lack of scholarly interest in the subject, the study of military history in New Zealand has been greatly influenced by the Official Histories (McGibbon, 2003).

However, despite the strength and popularity of the myth of the New Zealander soldier, the huge number of Official Histories, and the fact that two campaign volumes were exclusively dedicated to Italy, in New Zealand’s collective memory the Italian Campaign may very well have the same role that it has for Brazilians – very little influence. In the following section I discuss whether the secondary role of the Italian Campaign, in the

³ If Google Scholar Citations is any metric, the difference is substantial. Of the campaign and service Official History volumes, only four have more than 10 citations, ranging from 22 to 52 citations. Interestingly, these are the volumes on prisoners of war, the Royal New Zealand Navy, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and War Surgery and Medicine. The four separate The New Zealand People at War volumes – War Economy, the Home Front volumes I and II, and Political and External Affairs – also have between 40 and 50 citations each. Lastly, of the 21 unit histories, only two have more than 10 citations: The volumes of the 28th Maori Battalion, with 29 citations, and the Divisional Artillery, with 13 citations. In contrast, Mascarenhas’ *quasi*-official history has more citations than any of the aforementioned volumes, while several recent articles or books on the FEB have over 40 citations, such as Ferraz (2015).

The Italian Campaign: A forgotten theatre for forgotten soldiers?

First and foremost, it should be noted that there is no consensus over the Italian Campaign being unnecessary or, more precisely, a mistake. According to Agarossi (2013, p. 843), “different opinions continue to divide historians trying to evaluate it from both a military and a political point of view”. Suffice to say that one should be wary of using Allied tactical and strategic blunders in specific engagements, no matter how important they were, as an argument for framing the entire campaign as a wrong course of action. In this perspective, other historians⁴ emphasize the lack of alternatives and the profound impacts that Italy’s exit from the Axis had on both the Allies and Germany, which allowed the Mediterranean to be opened for shipping, forced Germany to deploy many divisions in Italy itself, and created a need for them to capture and replace the Italian garrisons in the Balkans and elsewhere. In this sense, one should not underestimate the assistance that the Italian Campaign gave to Operation Overlord and the Soviet efforts in the Eastern Front.

Be that as it may, for Zirker (2010, p. 232) the “Italian Campaign is a forgotten war”. Agarossi (2013) argues that the Italian Campaign is only briefly exposed in general histories of the Second World War, many studies not even dedicating a chapter for that theatre. When the campaign is at least discussed, the debate usually only goes as far as the capture of Rome, as D-Day placed every other theatre, and Italy in particular, in the background. This seems to have happened with the 2nd New Zealand Division as well. According to Morris (2013, p. 7), “[t]he view that the people in New Zealand were not taking the war seriously once the Americans had nullified the threat of Japanese invasion, and therefore tended to marginalise the men in Italy, began to take hold in 2NZE”. Though at first glance this seems to be only connected with the Pacific Theatre and the security of New Zealand, it may very well be a combination of several factors, including the fact that “[t]he Italian Campaign’s sense of mission – the liberation of Europe from the Axis yoke – (...) also dissipated with the Normandy invasion” (Agarossi, 2013, p. 842). The landing in Normandy seems to have conquered the attention of the very soldiers that were pushed further away from the public’s gaze: “The British and Commonwealth Armies took little joy in their victory (in Operation Diadem); they were focused far more on the ordeal being faced by the men in Normandy

⁴ For a discussion on the topic, see O’Reilly (2001, pp. 8-10).

Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095> than on their own great success in Italy” (Fennell, 2019, p. 432).

The fact that some New Zealanders in Italy felt that they were being forgotten, by their own population, did not create a general grievance towards the public in the literature. As previously noted, the 2nd New Zealand Division and its soldiers have a privileged position in the national identity of New Zealand, and they are highly celebrated by the public, while the literature abounds with laudatory narratives. However, this may suggest that fighting in what was perceived as a secondary stage, overshadowed by the Western Front, is even more impactful than otherwise conceived. After all, the soldiers of the 2nd New Zealand Division can be established as a least likely case study for this paper’s hypothesis.

As mentioned, though the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force had an average strength of 30,000 soldiers (Morris, 2013), over 100,000 New Zealanders joined the unit through the course of the war (Stack and O’Sullivan, 2013). Given that New Zealand’s population was of 1,633,645 in 1940 (Álvarez et al, 2011), this meant that “virtually every person in New Zealand had a relative or friend serving with 2 Division” (McLeod, 1980, p. 166). Additionally, soldiers from the same region frequently knew each other (Morris, 2013), and this influenced their behavior. The proportion of soldiers in the division to the country’s total population was so high that they had a substantial influence on New Zealand’s 1943 general election. With the civilian votes counted, the Labour Government was being defeated, but it survived by a thread when the votes from the armed forces were finally added (Fennell, 2019). This led Peter Fraser, Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1940 to 1949, to proclaim that “it was not only North Africa that the Second Division had saved” (Gamlen, 2015, p. 4).

The special role that conflict has for New Zealand also supports the least likely case study characterization, for war has played an important role on the development of the national character (McLeod, 1980). Unlike most nations, New Zealand is defined by male heroes and, particularly, the soldier, who is seen as a personification of the nation itself. The very identity of New Zealand has been built by its contributions to foreign wars, and battles are the defining moments in New Zealand’s nationhood. It is no coincidence that rugby is the other nation-building exercise for New Zealand, for on both the male tests his mettle against other nations, and through these performances New Zealand projects its image across the world (Harding, 2008). In sum, if ever there was a military body of 20,000 individuals that would be difficult for its respective nation to forget or ignore, it is the 2nd New Zealand Division.

Therefore, even in this unlikely scenario, there is some evidence that the splendor – or lack thereof – of the Italian Campaign managed to diminish the *glory* of the 2nd New Zealand Division efforts from late 1943 onwards. The problem with the Italian Campaign was twofold: not only it was eventually sidelined, but since its inception the pace of the Allied advance was slow, while the attrition was high. For the New Zealanders, there would be no advance that reminded them of the impressive left hook around Mareth, and this not only influenced their morale, but may also have impacted the public's interest in the *glory* of their soldiers. Appleton (2015, p. ii) dedicates his thesis, a study of battle weariness and the New Zealanders in Italy, to the “unsung, the unknown, the lost, and the forgotten”. One cannot help but think that such a comment would not be out of place in the literature of the FEB.

Regarding the soldiers themselves, Morris (2013) catalogues some enlightening comments reported from soldiers' letters, all in early 1944:

(...) “that there are too many people in NZ who do not know there is a war on” and “who are not pulling their weight”; people at home are labelled as “smug complacents” and the only ones who are considered to realise that “there is a war on, are those with husbands, sons and brothers serving overseas” (Morris, 2013, p. 84).

Given what was established above, one might begin to wonder, if the 2nd New Zealand Division was somewhat susceptible to the lack of attention given to the Italian Campaign, both during the conflict and decades after its end, what hope did the FEB have of not suffering an even worse fate?

It is important to mention that the FEB is not the only Allied unit in Italy that is having difficulties joining public consciousness. Additionally, the Italian Campaign is far from being the sole theatre that was overshadowed by other fronts. The Normandy Campaign has dominated not only the Canadian image of the Second World War, but also the historiographical debates over the capabilities of the Canadian forces in the conflict. For Granatstein (2019), assessments of the Canadian Army fighting capabilities commonly generalize the qualities and deficiencies initially presented by the First Canadian Army, during the three months of battle in Normandy, to all Canadian forces. Meanwhile,

Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095> according to Bird (2013, p. 167), “[f]or many Canadians, D-Day is emblematic of Canada’s cultural memory of World War II”. One outcome is that the Canadian soldiers in Italy have been largely forgotten, and the Juno Beach Centre, in Normandy, suffers from some challenges when trying to attract visitors for exhibits that deal with the Italian Campaign (Bird, 2013).

This experience from the Canadians in Italy, the so-called D-Day dodgers, is similar to the experience of the 14th Army. Nicknamed as the Forgotten Army, the 14th Army in Burma was thought to have been left to fend for itself, as it had a low priority for resources and, perhaps more importantly, was undertaking campaigns that few were interested (Borton, 2002). As with the FEB, one can observe that the feeling of being forgotten remained long after the war. For Marshall (2017), the manner in which the VE Day celebrations so commonly overshadow the celebrations of the victory over Japan suggests that the latter is “a half-hearted afterthought, an echo of the wartime feeling that the Fourteenth Army was the Forgotten Army” (Marshall, 2017, p. 15). Therefore, there is some bittersweetness, from the Commonwealth veterans of the Pacific and South-East Asia theatres, over the separate commemorations (Marshall, 2017). The grievance over being forgotten is exemplified by the Burma Star Memorial Fund:

By rights it should be one of the most celebrated stories of that cataclysmic global conflict. Yet the 14th Army is known as the ‘Forgotten Army’. The long, hard, heroic slog of the Burma Campaign was overlooked at the time and is still very much in the shadow of the better-known campaigns fought in Europe, Africa and elsewhere (BSMF, 2021).

However, it would be wrong to assume that a soldier was destined for oblivion by fighting in Italy. It is true that most, if not all, of the nations that joined the Italian Campaign had other theatres and battles that better captured their collective memories of the conflict. For Canada it was Juno Beach and Normandy (Bird, 2013); for New Zealand it was Crete and North Africa (Bell, 2012), and this was no mere accident. In the opinion of McLeod (1980, p. 164), “every nation has its days of glory and days of disaster. The glorious days are remembered and those of a lesser quality are either glorified or conveniently forgotten”.

New Zealand is not an exception, and certain events, such as the Furlough mutinies⁵, are forgotten. Meanwhile, through war-time propaganda, a need to recover the morale of the division after the Crete debacle (McLeod, 1980), and a post-war stipulation (Bell, 2012), the battle for the island has become just as important as Gallipoli for New Zealanders (McLeod, 1980).

Through stipulation, the emphasis on some events to the exclusion of others, works of history can mold memory. In the case of the Official Histories, this was present in the very allocation of volumes: One campaign volume was exclusively dedicated to the 12-day Battle of Crete, while five volumes covered the two-year campaign of the 2nd New Zealand Division in North Africa. In contrast, *only* two volumes were dedicated to the two years of war in Italy (Bell, 2012). Even the division's leadership attempted to emphasize North Africa or Crete in detriment of Italy, with Freyberg writing that "our greatest contribution to New Zealand's war effort was made in the North African Campaigns, a class of warfare for which New Zealanders were ideally suited" (Freyberg, 1961, cited in Bell, 2012, p. 222). Meanwhile, stipulation was also present within the volumes themselves, with the book on Crete marginalising the other Allied forces and transforming it in a New Zealand battle (Bell, 2012).

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the 2nd New Zealand Division would necessarily have a similar status as the FEB had it only fought in Italy. Had this been the case, it is not difficult to imagine that stipulation still would have occurred, though now through a different set of events, all part of the Italian Campaign. After all, despite Gallipoli being a secondary theatre aimed at defeating a secondary opponent, where both New Zealand and Australia were the junior partners in this Entente enterprise that resulted in a "strategic fiasco and a tactical disaster" (McLeod, 1980, p. 5), it holds perhaps the most privileged space in New Zealand's history. Of course, it was not necessary to frame the Italian Campaign in a different manner: Better, instead, to focus on the *glorious* defeats, such as Crete, or on the *heroic* and adventurous gallops in North Africa against a renowned enemy.

At this stage, the only conclusion that one can arrive at is that the legacy of the

⁵ The Furlough mutinies occurred when the First Echelon volunteers, after three years of duty, were allowed a three-month leave in New Zealand. Arriving home, they were shocked by the thousands of eligible men that had kept their jobs in the industry by appealing conscription. After a successful mutiny, only a small portion of the men on leave returned to Italy, while from 1943 to 1945 around 19,000 men in the industry were released towards the armed forces (Fennell, 2019).

pracinhas was not significantly enhanced by the theatre of their engagements, as the context behind the Italian Campaign – and the very nature of the warfare in the region – affected the prominence of the Allied divisions. In an alternative scenario where the FEB joins the Allies in France instead of Italy, it is likely that the unit would have a much stronger presence in public consciousness, but this would not necessarily change the FEB's struggles at home. Therefore, fighting in Italy left a more challenging duty in the hands of the Brazilian governments since 1945: To embed the FEB into the national memory. Unlike the veterans from New Zealand, the *pracinhas* were left gravely disappointed, but it was the state that failed them, and not their people.

Furthermore, the laudatory narrative in the Brazilian literature often appears together with this grievance towards the public. One possible interpretation is that, by giving high praise to the FEB, it is sought to establish it as a unit worthy of being remembered and receiving a predominant role in the Brazilian memory, similarly to what has happened in New Zealand. The question that emerges is, if the FEB, for several understandable reasons, had a weak fighting record, would it not still be worthy of remembrance? This notwithstanding, since a nation-wide praise is acknowledged as not having occurred, some authors then proceed to heavily criticize the Brazilian population. As nationalistic overtones are not exactly rare, an actual interest of a good portion of the population and the academy may very well be meaningless for some FEB enthusiasts.

This paper's hypothesis has been partially rejected. Though there was a grievance related to the public interest – or lack thereof – of the Italian Campaign by New Zealand's soldiers, this is not substantially replicated in the literature, even though the campaign itself was kept in the shadows of Crete and North Africa. In turn, no matter how many monuments are unveiled or how many books are published, the story of the *pracinhas* has not mingled with the Brazilian national identity, which significantly contrasts with the intimate relationship between the 2nd New Zealand Division and the small island nation. Despite the similarities between the two expeditionary forces during the war, they have been worlds apart since then.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Italian Campaign's many peculiarities affected the morale of the Allied soldiers and their prominence in the Home Front. When the Normandy landing occurred, it captured the eyes of the media, the public, and the decision-makers, pushing

the armies in Italy to the sideline. This is perhaps most evident with the Canadian divisions, but they are not the sole case. Given how commonplace the complaint against the public's ignorance of the FEB is in the Brazilian literature, this paper sought to understand the influences of the sidelining of the Italian Campaign on the memory and literature of the Allied forces that fought in that region. For this, the 2nd New Zealand Division and the FEB were analysed in a comparative case study.

Though the campaigns of the two expeditionary forces might have been similar, their stories diverged after the war, and effectively they have taken opposite characteristics since then. Firstly, New Zealand's soldiers were welcomed home with an eventually successful rehabilitation program, while the Government quickly started what is possibly, at least in proportion to the size of its armed forces, the largest Official History project of the Second World War. This project intended to give tribute to the veterans and their families, professionally detail their campaigns, and establish their stories into the national memory. All objectives were accomplished. Meanwhile, the Brazilian veteran returned home to a second struggle, and there was a long period of abandonment from the authorities. While the 2nd New Zealand Division was embedded into the national identity, the FEB has been kept mostly away from the public arena since 1945.

Secondly, there is a contrast in the size of their literatures. Far from being insignificant, the Brazilian literature on the FEB is extensive, while the quality also increases through the decades. In turn, New Zealand's Official Histories are paramount precisely due to a neglect of military history. Therefore, though it is acknowledged that the Italian Campaign, for several reasons, did negatively impact the Home Front prominence of both the FEB and the 2nd New Zealand Division, it is the opposite governmental approaches that explain not only the different roles that each unit has taken since VE Day, but also the main trends within their literature. Ultimately, condemning the population for forgetting the FEB, something that is so commonplace in Brazil, is a misplaced criticism, one that may very well work towards transforming the *pracinhas* into a symbol of division rather than of unity.

References

AGAROSS, E. (2013) 'The Italian Campaign' in ZELLER, T. and DUBOIS, D. (ed.) *A Companion to World War II*. [S.l.]: Blackwell Publishing.

ÁLVAREZ, J. et al. (2011) 'Agricultural institutions, industrialization and growth: The case

- Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095> of New Zealand and Uruguay in 1870-1940', *Explorations in Economic History*, 48(2), p151-168.
- AMORIM, M. (2017) *Patrimônio histórico, memória e turismo: o legado da Força Expedicionária Brasileira. Uma reconstrução possível?* Masters Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.
- APPLETON, I. (2015) 'As a matter of fact I've just about had enough': Battle weariness and the 2nd New Zealand Division during the Italian Campaign, 1943-45. Masters Thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- BARONE, J. (2018) *1942: O Brasil e sua guerra quase desconhecida*. [S.l.]: HarperCollins Brasil.
- BELL, R. (2012) *Memory, history, nation, war: The Official Histories of New Zealand in the Second World War*. 2012. PhD Thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- BIRD, G. (2013) 'Place identities in the Normandy landscape of war: touring the Canadian sites of memory' in WHITE, L. and FREW, E (ed.) *Dark Tourism and Place Identity: Managing and interpreting dark places*. [S.l.]: Routledge.
- BORTON, N. (2002) 'The 14th Army in Burma: A case study in delivering fighting power', *Defence Studies*, 2(3), p27-52.
- BRACIAK, E. (2017) *Soldados brasileiros na II Grande Guerra: um estudo da memória dos combatentes do município de Getúlio Vargas (RS)*. Monography, Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, Erechim.
- BROWN, M. (2020) *Politics of Forgetting: New Zealand, Greece and Britain at War*. [S.l.]: Arden.
- BSMF (2021) *History: The Story of the Burma Campaign* [Online]. Available at: <https://burmastarmemorial.org/history> (Accessed: 4 April 2021).
- CALIKEVSTZ, V. and MONASTIRSKY, L. (2018) 'O Nacionalismo e a construção da identidade cívica e simbolismo da Força Expedicionária Brasileira (FEB)', *Patrimônio e Memória*, 14(2), p533-559.
- CARLYON, J. and MORROW, D. (2014) *Changing Times: New Zealand since 1945*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- CERVO, A. L. and BUENO, C. (2002) *História da Política Exterior do Brasil*. Brasília: Editora UNB.

Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliانا: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095>

DOHERTY, R. (2007) *Eighth Army in Italy: The Long Hard Slog*. [S.l.]: Pen and Sword.

FENNELL, J. (2019) *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FERRAZ, F. (2014) 'Demobilization and social reintegration of Brazilian and American troops of World War II: A comparative study', *Antíteses*, 7(13), p467-492.

FERRAZ, F. (2015) *A guerra que não acabou: a reintegração social dos veteranos da Força Expedicionária Brasileira*. [S.l.]: EDUEL.

FERRAZ, F. (2016) 'Considerações historiográficas sobre a participação brasileira na Segunda Guerra Mundial: balanço da produção bibliográfica e suas tendências', *Revista Esboços*, 22(34), p207-232.

FISHER, E. (1993) *Cassino to the Alps*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army.

FLORES, R. (2020) 'Memória e espaço público: a construção da memória da FEB em Juiz de Fora', *Revista Latino-Americana de História*, 9(23), p146-163.

GAMLEN, A. (2015) 'The impacts of extra-territorial voting: Swings, interregnums and feedback effects in New Zealand elections from 1914 to 2011', *Political Geography*, 44, p1-8.

GORDON, J (ed.) (2014) *A Job to Do: New Zealand soldiers of the 'The Div' write about their World War Two*. [S.l.]: Exisle.

GRANATSTEIN, J. (2019) 'Why Did First Canadian Army Not Get the Acclaim of the Canadian Corps?', *Canadian Military History*, 28(2), p1-12.

HALSEY, G. (2005) *The Greek Campaign: Freyberg's circus enters a Balkan imbroglio*. Masters Thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.

HARDING, N. (2008) *Composing the War: Nation and self in narratives of the Royal New Zealand Air Force's deployment to the 1991 Gulf Conflict*. Masters Thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2008.

HOLLAND, J. (2015) *The War in the West: The Rise of Germany 1939-1941*. [S.l.]: Atlantic Monthly Press.

JACKSON, A. (2011) 'The Empire/Commonwealth and the Second World War', *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 100(412), p65-78.

Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliانا: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095>

JENKS, T. and WANHALLA, A. (2020) 'Psychological Casualties: War Neurosis, Rehabilitation, and the Family in Post-World War II New Zealand', *Health and History*, 22(2), p1-25.

MARSHALL, P. (2017) 'Remembering A Year of Anniversaries, 2015', *The Round Table*, 106(1), p9-22.

MAXIMIANO, C. (2010) *Barbudos, sujos e fatigados: soldados brasileiros na Segunda Guerra Mundial*. [S.l.]: Grua.

MCCANN, F. (2018) *Brazil and the United States During World War II and Its Aftermath: Negotiating Alliance and Balancing Giants*. [S.l.]: Palgrave Macmillan.

MCCONAUGHEY, M. and MUSGRAVE, P. and NEXON, D. (2018) 'Beyond anarchy: Logics of political organization, hierarchy, and international structure', *International Theory*, 10(2), p181-218.

MCGIBBON, I. (2003) 'Something of them is here recorded: Official History in New Zealand' in GREY, J. (ed.) *The Last Word? Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth*. [S.l.]: Praeger.

MCLEOD, J. R. (1980) *The New Zealand Soldier in World War II: Myth and Reality*. Masters Thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.

MORRIS, P. (2013) "Their nerves were shot to shreds – our own weren't too steady either": *Attitudes Towards Psychological Casualties in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1939 to 1945*. Masters Thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

MOURA, G. (1982) *Brazilian foreign relations 1939-1950: The changing nature of Brazil-United States relations during and after the Second World War*. PhD Thesis, University of London, London.

MOURA, G. (1991) *Sucessos e Ilusões: Relações Internacionais do Brasil durante e após a Segunda Guerra Mundial*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Fundação Getúlio Vargas.

O'REILLY, C. (2001) *Forgotten Battles: Italy's War of Liberation, 1943-1945*. [S.l.]: Lexington Books.

OLIVEIRA, D. (2011) 'Reintegração social do ex-combatente no Brasil: o caso da Secretaria de Assistência da Legião Paranaense do Expedicionário-SA/LPE (1946-1970)', *Militares e Política*, 9, p8-23.

Lemes, J. Historiography and remembrance: The return home of the Brazilian and New Zealander WW2 citizen soldier . *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25160/bjbs.v14i1.134095>

PEREIRA, D. (2015) *Operação Brasil: O ataque alemão que mudou o curso da Segunda Guerra Mundial*. [S.l.]: Editora Contexto.

PINHEIRO, L. (2015) 'A entrada do Brasil na Segunda Guerra Mundial', *Revista USP*, 26, p108-119.

RIBEIRO, F. (2019) 'Os febianos: experiência, consciência e agência dos trabalhadores brasileiros convocados para a guerra na Força Expedicionária Brasileira – FEB (1943 – 1945)', *Revista Mundos do Trabalho*, 11, p1-30.

RIBEIRO, P. (2013) *Em Luto e Luta: construindo a memória da FEB*. PhD Thesis, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro, 2013.

RODRIGUES, P. (2013) 'Monumento aos Pracinhas: narrativa histórica e memorialística sobre a Força Expedicionária Brasileira', *Antíteses*, 6(12), p551-576.

ROSA, A. (2010). *A reintegração social dos ex-combatentes da Força Expedicionária Brasileira (1946-1988)*. Masters Thesis, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba.

ROSENHECK, U. (2008) 'Entre a comemoração do passado e a construção do futuro: os monumentos da FEB em seus contextos', *Militares e Política*, 3, p7-16.

SALUN, A. (2012) 'A Itália e a guerra no Mediterrâneo entre 1940-1943', *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos*, 3, p12-23.

SILVA, M. (2012) *Os Veteranos da Força Expedicionária Brasileira: História, Memória e Patrimônio no Estado de Mato Grosso do Sul* [Online]. Available at: http://www.uel.br/grupo-estudo/processoscivilizadores/portugues/sites/anais/anais14/arquivos/textos/Workshop/Trabalhos_Completos/Marcio_Silva.pdf (Accessed: 10 May 2021).

STACK, W. and O'SULLIVAN, B. (2013) *The New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War II*. [S.l.]: Bloomsbury Publishing.

STEVENS, W. (1962) *Bardia to Enfidaville*. Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs.

ZIRKER, D. (2010) 'Brasil e Nova Zelândia na Segunda Guerra Mundial', *Tensões Mundiais*, 6(10), p213-239.