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: a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Abstract
By the time that the 2nd New Zealand Division reached Italy in late 1943, many of the soldiers within it had been overseas since early 1941. Most had fought across North Africa during 1942/43 – some had even seen combat earlier, in Greece and Crete in 1941. The strain of combat was beginning to show, a fact recognised by the division’s commanding officer, Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg. Freyberg used the term ‘battle weary’ to describe both the division and the men within it on a number of occasions throughout 1944, suggesting at one stage the New Zealanders be withdrawn from operations completely.

Three key outcomes of battle weariness are examined in some detail. Exposure to long periods of combat meant that a large number of the New Zealanders were at risk of becoming psychological casualties. Indeed, casualties diagnosed and recorded as exhaustion and neurosis, consistently reached over 20% of those wounded during the period in Italy. Declining morale became an issue for the leadership of 2nd New Zealand Division. Internal censorship of outgoing letters within the division was summarised at the time and these summaries provide an insight into a widespread gloomy outlook that featured throughout 1944. Not only did the letter writers reflect on the poor conditions they faced in Italy, but news from home appears as a significant driver of frontline morale. Lack of discipline – both in and out of the line – caused real concern to senior officers, and at times reached levels that appear to have become institutionalised. Three topics are explored: looting, the use of alcohol, and cases of combat refusal.

This work then examines how the underlying issues driving weariness were addressed through the restructuring of the division, the replacement of long serving men, the use of new technologies, and a period of relief out of the line with an extensive training programme. Finally, the division's performance during the final offensive in Italy in April 1945, is examined, to gauge the success of the changes made.