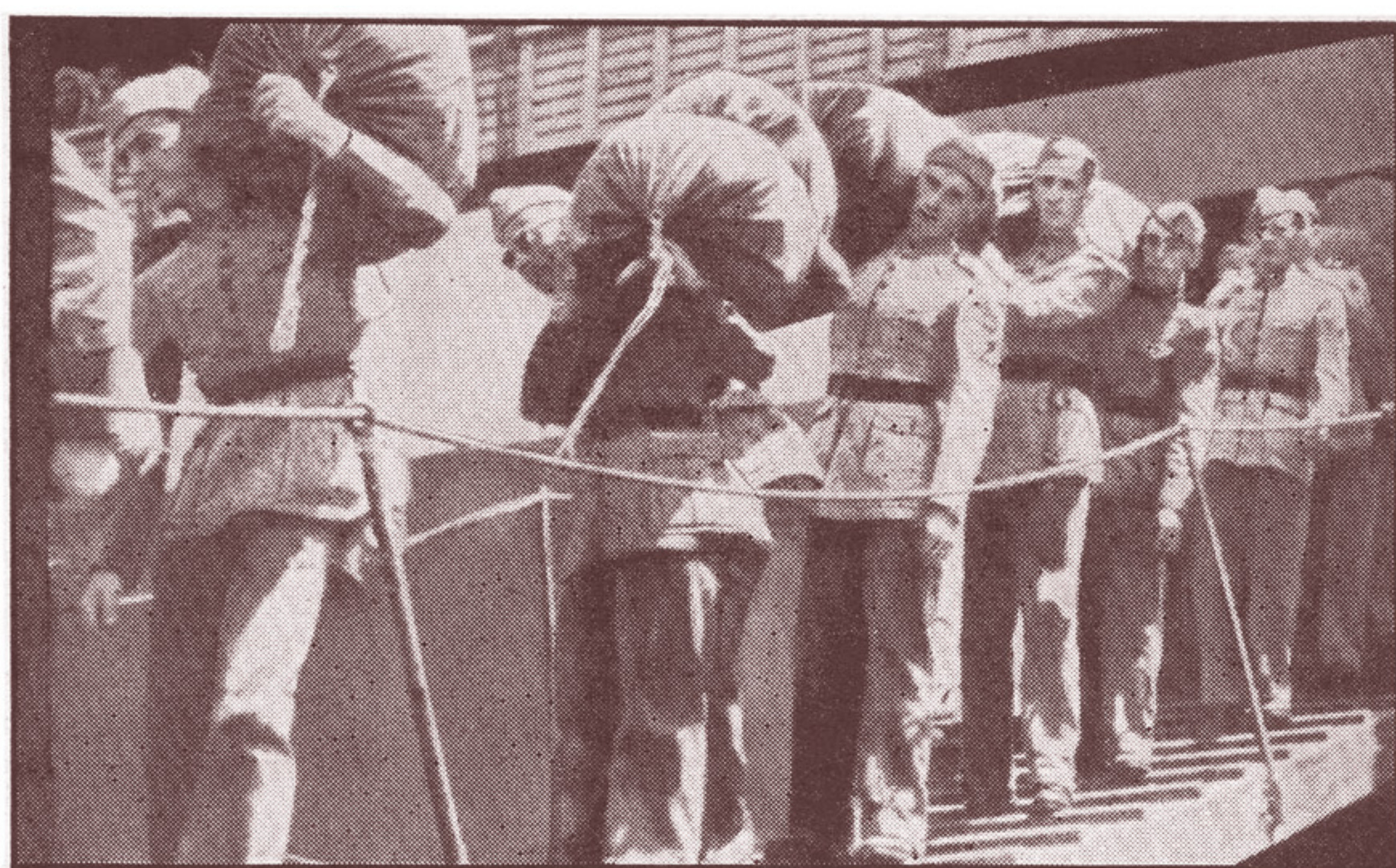


Newsweek

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Brazil: Prestige Up



Brazilian GI's: South America's first expeditionary force lands at Naples

World war had spelled opportunity to Brazil. Its wealth of war-vital raw materials and its strategic position in the South Atlantic had made it a key member of the United Nations.

Getulio Vargas, the shrewd President, had been quick to take advantage of the opportunity. He had opened every resource of his country to the United Nations. In return he had received credit, materials, expert advice, Lend-Lease arms, and a place in the councils of the Allies. Vargas had hoped that this war-time development of Brazil could be made to pay peacetime dividends. He and his ambitious associates had seen their country as a postwar great power. At the very least, it could be the leading power in South America.

Its prestige went up sharply last week. On July 16 a Brazilian Expeditionary Force arrived in Naples—the first Latin-American soldiers to go overseas under their own flag in this war. They were symbolic of Brazilian postwar ambitions, for Vargas knew that the voices of fighting nations would be heard loudest in postwar councils.

Neither the composition nor the size of the expeditionary force was revealed. It was said to include ground as well as air troops and to be considerably more than a token force.

Fighting Brazil: The Brazilian Air Force and Navy, expanded with United States help, have already struck blows against the Axis. Bases at Natal, guarding air and sea lanes across the South Atlantic, made possible the Allied invasion of North Africa. Brazilian fliers

Brazil

trained in the United States return home to become instructors and to fly the Brazilian planes which have bagged fourteen German U-boats. Warships of the new Brazilian Navy share patrol and convoy duties with United States forces. Brazil is becoming the best-armed nation in South America.

Wary Argentina: No one is more aware of this than Brazil's southern neighbor. Cut off from Lend-Lease aid by a policy of neutrality and isolated from European arms factories by the Allied blockade, Argentine militarists have watched with growing alarm the rearmament of their great, but hitherto militarily inferior, neighbor. Vice President Juan D. Perón's saber-rattling speech of June 10, the ostentatious display of Argentine arms in the July 9 Independence Day parade and the strenuous efforts to build up a domestic arms industry testify to a major preoccupation of Argentine leaders.

For Brazil is the greatest obstacle to Argentine designs of hegemony in Southern South America. And the stronger Brazil becomes, the greater the obstacle.

GIs FROM BRAZIL

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By Cpl. JUD COOK YANK Staff Writer



Troops from the 1st Division, Brazilian Expeditionary Forces, march through the streets of Naples. Their green uniforms with high buttoned collars differ from those worn by other soldiers of the United Nations.

WE had a hard time getting accustomed to the latrines on the ship. Back in Brazil a man going to the latrine would enter a cubicle that had a door to insure privacy. It was very difficult on the ship for the men, just sitting there looking at each other. But they're getting used to it."

The officer spoke for his men, and it was the primary complaint registered in behalf of Brazilian troops attached to the Allied Fifth Army. The Brazilians make up the first Latin-American outfit to fight Hitler in his own ring.

Their recent landing in Naples came two years after throngs of students and civilians milled about in the streets of Sao Paulo, begging for a chance to get even for the dirty blows struck at sea by the Axis.

The troops in Italy were the advance portion of the green-clad South American army that shipped overseas with the bitter memory of Hitler's early U-boats that destroyed so many ships and took so many Brazilian lives at the outbreak of war.

"The Brazilian army has developed amazingly in one year both in size and efficiency, and its striking power is great," said Vice Adm. Jonas H. Ingram, commanding the U. S. South Atlantic Fleet. He made the statement a year after Brazil had begun her mobilization and during the time the republic was preparing for retaliation. Brazil declared war on Germany and Italy on Aug. 22, 1942, but was fighting only near her coast line with a small navy. Her quick response to the Allied side at the war's outbreak provided the U. S. with bomber bases and supply stations such as the American base at Natal, the supply point from which troops in Africa were serviced.

Brazil had a lot to offer the United Nations at that time but her military strength and equipment had to await a period of reconstruction. The small navy did a rough job on German submarines that harassed her ports and took the lives of 1,000 persons in a matter of months after the Nazis struck. Twenty of her merchant ships were blasted to the bottom and Sao Paulo's popu-

GIs FROM BRAZIL

lation rose to do something about it. On Aug. 16, 1942, they filled the city's streets and begged President Getulio Vargas to declare war.

There are Brazilian soldiers now in Naples who were in that angered crowd.

The Brazilian trooper smokes a black cigar or cigarette because "Chesterfields taste like perfume" and he is ready for just about any kind of battle condition. His size belies the rugged physique he acquired in the jungles of his homeland. Others might call his jungles impassable but he trained in them. The Brazilian soldier is rated among the best of Allied infantry units.

While they are waiting for equipment and supplies to catch up with them the Brazilians are attracting a good deal of attention as the guys with the purple pants who like C rations. Those purple trunks do not mean anything frivolous. They have the combined value of underclothes and fatigues. The trunks are a vivid purple held in place with a white drawstring.

The five types of Brazilian uniforms vary in shade, but the color is always green. Everything is green. Web belts and packs are green. Blankets are green. Even the GI soap is green. The dress uniform is green and is similar to the German ground trooper's suit.

The cap is like the German "forage" type and is worn square on the head. Shoes are black and it is not uncommon to see holes cut in them to give freedom to a troublesome bunion or corn. So long as the Brazilian can have those holes, he's a good foot soldier who does from 9 to 14 miles a day in training. There are even cases where the men are wearing shoes regularly for the first time in their lives. Many of the soldiers come from jungle territories and look somewhat uneasy with an M1, but these backwoodsmen learned about rifles quickly and they fit in well with their more sophisticated countrymen.

Every type of South American racial strain is represented. This gives a squad the appearance of a capsule League of Nations except that there are no blonds.