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From the Archives

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Another Campaign Commences Far from Home

Early in 1847 General Winfield Scott collected his invasion army on a small speck of land just off the Mexican coast, called the Isle of Lobos. The 2d Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers formed part of that force. At 9:30 a.m. on March 3, the regiment set sail for Vera Cruz. Six days later, at ten o'clock in the evening, the 2d Pennsylvania Volunteers landed on the beach, as part of Gideon Pillow's brigade of Robert Patterson's division.

Company C of that regiment was a uniformed militia unit known as the Columbia Guards, and it hailed primarily from Danville, Columbia County, Pennsylvania. Second Lieutenant Edward E. Le Clerc of that company recorded his impressions of what followed the landing in a letter to his parents:

Camp Washington, near Vera Cruz, March 28, 1847.

The day after we landed, our company had a smart skirmish with the enemy, without sustaining any loss upon our side. After receiving their fire, and giving them ours in return, the order to charge was promptly and cheerfully obeyed, and the enemy were completely routed. Our Company is the only one of the second Pennsylvania Regiment that has had an opportunity to test its bravery with the enemy. Columbia County will not be ashamed of her boys. We have not had our clothes off for nearly three weeks, and day after to-morrow will be three weeks since my boots have been off my feet, yet never did I enjoy better health. We have not had a tent since we landed. We sleep upon the sand, with a knapsack, a log, or an exploded shell for a pillow. I send in this letter a flower for each of the girls, which I pulled from a grave in a beautiful cemetery just without the city, placed there perhaps by the hand of love, and plucked from their stems to be love's messenger. In a few days we leave here for Jalappa and thence to the halls of the Montezumas.

Adieu.
L.

Source: Richard J. Sommers, ed., *Vignettes of Military History, Volume III* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army Military History Institute, February 1982), Vignette No. 151, contributed by Randy W. Hackenburg, drawn from *The Danville Intelligencer*, May 7, 1847.

Reviewed 20 November 2001. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil