Address till further notice:

6th E. Lancs Regt
B. M. E. F.

Trenches
Gallipoli Peninsula
vii -13 – 15

Dear Mother,

I can now give you an idea of my movements since my note to father from Alexandria.

We left there at 6pm on Sunday June 27th and picked our way through the Aegean islands to one which is used as the intermediate base, reaching it on the evening of the 29th. Next day we disembarked – the boat which brought another and half of my battalion was the first and any carrying the Division to sail, and was also faster than the rest of the transports so we reached the i-b [intermediate base] 2 days before another 2 Companies and had all the pioneer work of carting transport ½ a mile up from the pier and turning a piece of the sunbaked Greek wilderness into a more or less orderly bivouac. I was especially busy all day long in my double capacity of Adjt [Adjutant] and Quartermaster for our ½ battn and found the officers i/c of field arrangements very good fellows, especially Capt. Tomlinson of the Devons, the Camp Commandant whose father was a friend of my (Bp) grandfather. The rest of the Bde [brigade] gradually arrived and we expected to stay for some weeks. Suddenly in the middle of Sunday night, July 4th, were given 2 ½ hrs notice to move – we had to land here by night as at present the enemy only shell by day, and all the trenches are well within their range and are shelled regularly.

If you look at p798 of the Illustrated London News for June 16 you will see the exact place of our arrival – via the 'River Clyde' and the pontoons, one of the spots where the 29th div. made their assault on April 5th.

We marched 4 miles while day was dawning and settled into dugouts on the cliff side of one of the beaches. Since I last wrote to you we have been for 3 days and nights in the fire trenches and 24 hours in the reserve and 24 in support. This pm we go into the f.t. again. The sun is always shining, sky and sea bright blue; only 2 hours rain since April; and of course it is very hot. My men are pretty fit and we have had few casualties so far – one chiefly suffers from dysentery of a mild (usually) kind; I am gradually getting over mine by Dover powders.

The great difficulty is that we cannot get the food one wants – or buy anything whatever for that matter – and that one never gets any rest on the Peninsular because wherever one is, in trenches or out, one is always under or liable to shell fire. One eats and sleeps in and breathes sand – it is clean but one gets tired of it; and the flies are indescribable. They blacken my hands, food and mouth at meal times and are doing their best to dissuade me from writing this letter. I am lying in my dugout, bullets flying overhead, naval guns firing away on another part of the line and the Turks usual afternoon serenade on the move across me in the form of the sliding swish and white puff of shrapnel. I get on average of a rather disturbed 1 ½ hrs' sleep in 24 in the fire trenches, so you can guess that after 3 days it was a great relief to go into support for a day yesterday and to get the first home mail. It was the most welcome I have ever had and I could not read it dry-eyed. It brought letters dated up to June 20. Thank you ever so much for the holdall* now by my side, and for all the news, and please thank Father for his letters – how much I should have liked to go to Knoyle again with him. (As I wrote the above a shell burst just above our Coy headquarters and dropped a piece of metal (which I would send if it wasn't so big) into one of our teacups! You needn't worry about me, as the T shoot very badly and our dug-outs are a perfect safe ground). This is our life now probably for many weeks. I enclose a list of things I should like sent out at once – Punch is welcome so is Aunt Nell's 'Bystander'. I should also like the weekly Times as we get practically no news at all and I really know nothing of what has happened since we left. If you will send the W.T. from June 12th I shall be grateful.

What do you think of these snaps which I took at Eton? They might not be bad when enlarged. The pictures should by now have reached George Hamilton at the Club.

This note must send my dearest love to Father for his birthday. I look forward to news of the others' movements.

Please thank the B'mouth Aunts for their delightful letters and Alice Shrampton for hers, the charming letter case and socks, one pair of which I put on after my first wash for 4 days. I hope to write gradually to most people: at present I have little spare time not needed for sleep, as we are constantly receiving fresh orders and being moved about. I have now received 26 letters etc in 2 days. Please send mine round as far as possible. This first list of wants is large but remember that we literally can't get a thing - even a pencil – here, and have had to leave all but 35lbs behind at the base. I hope that perhaps your first parcel may reach me in a month.

Love

H

*Holdall – possibly a small cotton kit roll for personal items such as knife, fork, spoon, razor, shaving brush, toothbrush, button stick, comb, boot brush, hair brush.