The D.E.M.S.

No it isn’t in the papers - and you do not always know

Where to find the D.E.M.S. - you just address them “C/O - G.P.O.”

For today you can’t be certain, where tomorrow they may be.

For yesterday they were “somewhere” – and the day before “at sea.”

You have seen him on the streets, rolling groggy on his feet,

You have seen him grab the pavement for support.

You have watched him arm in arm with a dame of doubtful charm

Who was steering “Johnny” safely into port.

You shudder with disgust as dead drunk he hits the dust.

You scorn when you see him on a spree:

But you never see the trip on that dark and lonely ship,

Ploughing furrows through a mine- infested sea

You cheer your air force lads, in their well-armed ironclads,

You give a cheer to the boys in khaki too;

You tremble in a funk when you read D.E.M.S. sunk,

But you never give a dam about the crew.

You moan about the cost of the vessels that are lost,

It puts you in a pessimistic mood;

You forget to say “well done” or congratulate the one

Who brings the wives and kiddies home their food.

He had brought the old tramp home thru’ the sub- infested zone,

He had braved the channel with the troops for France.

He fights the lurking Hun with a four point seven inch gun,

Yet – you don’t consider that he takes a chance.

You’ll find the DEMS where the big ships come in from sea

With “WHEAT AND MEAT AND FIGHTING MEN”- and sugar for your tea;

They bring their cargoes from far across the rolling main

A brief few days they stay in port – then off to sea again.

For him no flag you wave, he’s not tho’t of with the brave,

But he’ll help to beat “Old Adolf” at his game;

Yes – you hate him when he’s drunk and no one cares if he gets sunk;

He’s the kind that puts the “Great” in Britain’s name.

Author unknown. Believed to have been adapted from a poem

about the Merchant Navy.