

D-Day: Stories from the Walls



The Loss of the Train Ferry HMS Daffodil

During the Maritime Archaeology Trust's National Lottery Heritage Funded D-Day Stories from the Walls project, volunteers undertook online research into topics and themes linked to D-Day, Southampton, ships and people during the Second World War. Their findings were used to support project outreach and dissemination.

This Research Article was undertaken by one of our volunteers and represents many hours of hard and diligent work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our amazing volunteers.

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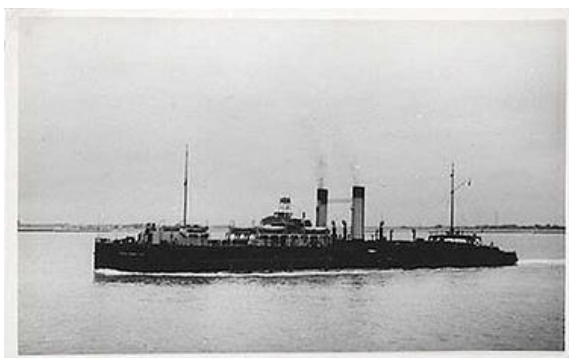


The Loss of HMS *Daffodil*

(Note: Some sources refer to HMAV but naval-history.net and other websites refer to the ship as HMS)

The First World War

Launched on 16 August 1917 and completed in November 1917 as *Train Ferry No 3*, or *TF3*, this was a steel hulled Rail Ferry ship built by the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd. of Govan for the Army War Office. Sister ships, *TF1* and *TF2* were built in 1916 and 1917 respectively by Armstrong Whitworth & Co. of Newcastle who designed all three [Scottish Shipbuilding Database]. The background to the three ships was that they were ordered to start a boat train service to convey war materials from England to French ports whence they would continue to where needed. These boat trains would be for road vehicles and train wagons but not engines (unless replacement locomotives) utilising the ports of Richborough in Kent whence two of these trains would leave, and from Southampton. Appropriate facilities were built at the two ports and at Dunkirk, Calais and Cherbourg. The first service left Richborough Military Port on 10 February 1918 and from Southampton on 11 April 1918 [Railway Museum]. The frequent services continued through until late 1919, when the ships were laid up. On 1 February 1919, *TF3* assisted in rescuing American and British soldiers from the American Transport *Narrangansett* which had grounded on rocks at Bembridge Point, Isle of Wight [Wikipedia].



SS Train Ferry 3 (Before Conversion in 1944)

Source: http://www.simplonpc.co.uk/LNER_Harwich.html#anchor1625655 CC BY-SA 3.0

SS *TF3* was first registered [Clip] with ON145234 at London on 6 June 1921, owner being Port of Queensborough Development Co. Ltd., 2 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, London who also owned the other two ships. *TF3* was 106.8m long, with 17.83m beam, 4.7m deep and the grt was 2,672. Powered by the shipyard's twin 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engines developing 410nhp, it had twin screws capable of 13.3kts [Wrecksite EU]. The Harwich and Dovercourt website includes the following additional detail for all three ships: "*They had a loaded draft of 10'6"* (3.2m), *had four oil fired boilers, were equipped with two screws and rudders, and had a cruising speed of 12 knots and a maximum speed of 14 knots. The hull was divided into ten watertight compartments. Forward ballast tanks were equipped with 158 tons, at the stern of 132 tons (and on each side of 45 tons). The side tanks or heeling tanks were never fitted. With these tanks the boat was trimmed during loading and unloading. They had a single open deck which were equipped with four tracks: the two inner of 95 meters each; beyond two tracks of 72 metres each. This gave 334 metres effective length suitable for 54 two-axle wagons. Initially there were two high funnels on each side that were connected at the top with a lattice support. At the back was a 'docking bridge' (with which the boat was controlled at the dock). The docking bridge was used to allow an officer positioned aft during berthing to assist the Master handling the ship from the Navigating Bridge. It was also equipped with wheel and telegraphs*

for handling the ship in an emergency should the navigating bridge become unusable” [Harwich and Dovercourt].

Interwar

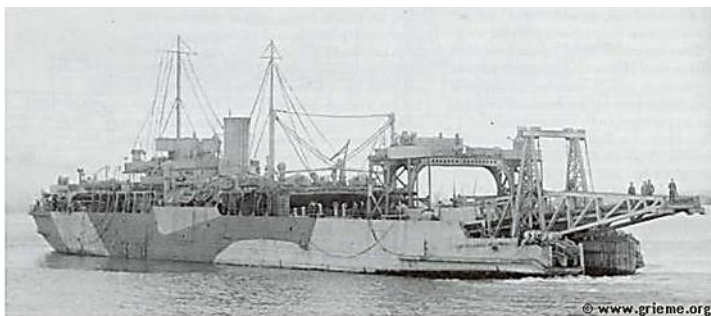
In 1922, Great Eastern Train Ferries Ltd. purchased the three ships and the link spans for their new Train Ferry service between Harwich and Zeebrugge. The dismantled Southampton terminal was in transit on two barges to Harwich when 3 days after departing Southampton, the loads moved and sank on 4 September 1923 near the Cork Light Vessel. The machinery could not be salvaged and was blown up to avoid hazard to shipping but the linkspan was recovered, and with the Richborough towers, erected at Harwich. *TF3* began its freight only service from Harwich on 25 April 1924. The three ships were converted at Antwerp in 1925 to coal burning boilers from oil burning. The service lost money, Great Eastern Train Ferry was declared bankrupt in 1933 and the ships were bought by the London & North Eastern Railway Co., London in whose ownership they continued until requisitioned in September 1939 (Harwich).

The Second World War

TF3 was first used to transport military cargo to and from Harwich and Calais. In January 1940, six trips were undertaken extending into February [TNA: BT 389/12/177]. In late May 1940, the situation changed, and Sealed Orders are indicated against the sailings from Harwich on 25, 28 and 30 May which can be set against the evacuation from Dunkirk of the British Expeditionary Force between 26 May and 4 June. *TF3* had left Harwich on 2 June 1940 and arrived at Southampton the next day – the next recorded sailing was from Southampton on 12 June returning on 17 June without an intermediate port recorded but *TF3* sailed the same day arriving at Jersey the next day and returned to Southampton on 20 June, assisting with the evacuation from Jersey and Guernsey [TNA: BT389/9/43]. *TF2* was lost on 13 June 1940 off Saint-Valéry en Caux.

TF3 was purchased [Railway Museum] by the Admiralty in September 1940 and converted to a Landing Ship, being commissioned in June 1941 as HMAV *Daffodil* and crewed by the Royal Navy. *TF1* and *TF3* conversions were termed “Landing Ship Stern Chute”, destined to be used as locomotive transports – this term arose from having had a stern door fitted so that the vehicle deck could be flooded facilitating LCI sized landing craft to enter and leave, secured on cradles en route with water pumped out [Wiki]. This stern door conversion was an early attempt and prelude to the LCU [Wikipedia: Landing Craft]. During the conversion, the twin funnels were trunked into one funnel.

Initially despatched to Loch Ewe on barrage balloon duty at a convoy assembly anchorage, *Daffodil* was there for nearly four months then deployed until May 1944 moving landing craft around the UK. In May 1944, a ramp was fitted to the ship to facilitate landing of railway equipment where there were no shore facilities – as at 29 May 1944, *Daffodil* was classified as a L.S.S. (Landing Craft Support) and was at Chatham for “*reconversion to train ferry 1 July, ex trials*”. It was at that time equipped with *L.C.P(L) No. 764 – Landing Craft Personnel (Large) between 8- and 11-tons* TNA: ADM 210/7,45D]. It is unclear when *Daffodil* resumed service but in due course it was crossing regularly with railway material from Southampton to Cherbourg and then regularly to Dieppe as these ports became available [LNER].



HMS Daffodil (As it was when sunk)

Note the single funnel compared to the previous images. © www.grieme.org

Source: <https://grieme.org/epaves/manche2/14-base/manche-est/d/67-daffodil.html>

On 17 March 1945, *Daffodil*, denoted as a Train Ferry, returning to Southampton, struck a mine off Dieppe and sank the next day. The LCP(L) No 764 was also lost on 18 March in “home waters” [naval-history].

33 persons who lost their lives are listed in Appendix 1. The original crew list for the fateful voyage and the number of

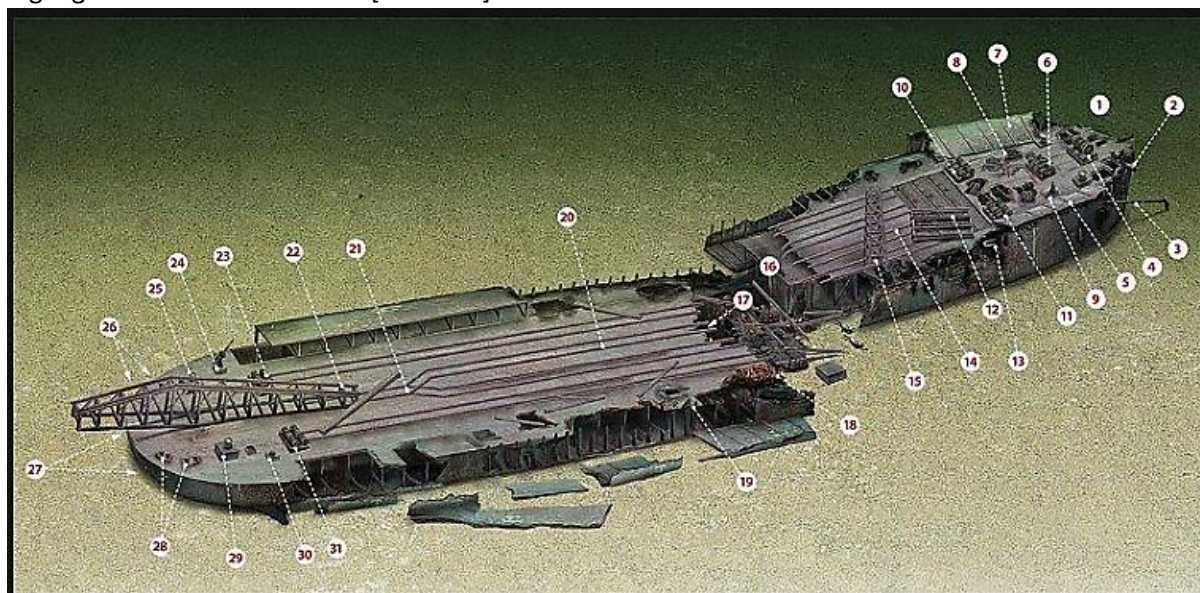
survivors has not been found. Anecdotes by affected families can be read at <https://impossiblesongs.blogspot.com/2007/01/hms-daffodil.html>

According to the *British Medical Journal*, 21 July 1945, page 101: “Temp. Surg. Lieut. George Smith, R.N.V.R., has been appointed M.B.E. (Military Division) for bravery and great devotion to duty, while serving in H.M.S. Daffodil, in refusing to leave his ship though seriously wounded himself in order that he might attend casualties” [BMJ].

The Wreck

The coordinates of the wreck are 50 02.514N, 001 04.240E, about 15km north of Dieppe. It is, according to an undated Wrecksite note, between 9m and 16m depth, orientated at 70° on a sandy bed. A series of excellent images may be viewed at <https://grieme.org/epaves/manche2/14-base/manche-est/d/67-daffodil.html#photos> A YouTube video is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2d_P1i-6WE

MAT is grateful to Diversnet for permission to include their website post, dated September 2011, which highlights details of the wreck [Diversnet]:



“Although on a pretty level seabed, the highest point of the wreck is a surviving section of shelter deck just back from the bow. It’s the spot where the freediving section of Rouen GCOB Plongée like to tie their buoy line, but for convenience we will begin our tour at a depth of about 15m, right at the tip of the bow (1). Here the shelter deck once extended over the main deck and bow fittings, but has now decayed to leave exposed anchor hawse-pipes (2) cut between the main deck and the hull. Below the starboard side, an arm (3) extending down the side of the hull to the seabed forward of the bow would have once connected to a similar, but now missing, arm from the other side of the hull. Its purpose was to tow minesweeping cables and paravanes from the bow. Back on the main deck, a big anchor-winch (4) sits in the middle of the bow. Our route aft now zigzags across the deck a few times. On the starboard side, the hull rises to the remains of the shelter deck (5), which then tips inwards.



Anchor Chain & Winch

From here, across the main deck are a pair of big capstans with a winch between them (6). These would have been used to haul mooring cables tight, to keep the ship stable against the loading pier so that railway wagons could be rolled on board at the stern without derailing. On the port side, the shelter deck (7) is similarly tipped inward. Now heading aft along the inward edge of the shelter deck, an anti-aircraft gun-mount (8) has fallen on its side amid scattered ammunition. This was one of four gun positions, essentially mounted one in each corner. Cross the deck again, and an intact and upright mount (9) is located in the equivalent position on the starboard side. Between the guns, a winch is located with its axis along the deck, so as to operate across the deck. Behind the guns, larger winches (10, 11) are arranged to operate along the deck.



Wagon-Handling Winch

These winches and some others we will see later were used to shunt railway wagons about the tracks on the deck, so that the ferry could handle wagons of supplies without needing to have locomotives on board. Behind the winches are two short sections of track mounted above other track so that they could be slid from side to side (12). These were originally in line with the rails further aft, but are now rotated out of alignment. This traversing cradle was used to shift wagons between sets of rails along the deck, pulled from side to side by the winch that operated across the deck that we passed earlier, located between the anti-aircraft gun-mounts. As TF3, HMS Daffodil was originally built with points to shift wagons between the tracks. Additional track and the traversing cradle were subsequently fitted, both to speed loading and unloading and to add capacity. Straying from the diver’s train-set for a while, tucked in beneath the shelter deck on the starboard side is a bath-tub (13). The main deck continues with four sets of railway track leading aft (14). These are soon crossed by a latticed framework (15) that has fallen to the deck. The location is roughly below where the wheelhouse would have spanned high above the main deck, so perhaps it was part of the supporting structure.

The hull then breaks (16), providing a view inside what are essentially big flat buoyancy tanks with a deck on top. Crossing some debris on the seabed, the intact part of the wreck soon resumes. Contained within the hull are four boilers, two to each side (17). These are the usual cylindrical Scotch-type boilers, but pushed out against either side, so the flues could be routed to the side of the main deck, somewhat as they would be on an aircraft-carrier. Or perhaps that should be the other way round; perhaps aircraft-carriers have the flues routed as they were on train ferries, because train ferries were invented first. Back on deck, above the starboard boiler is a pile of chain (18), used to secure wagons while the ship was at sea.

The sides of the hull and small areas of deck have decayed, particularly along this side, with the starboard engine just visible well back inside (19). The side of the deck and the seabed off to the starboard side is strewn with boulders – not shown in the illustration, to keep the wreck clear. These were dumped here when the port of Dieppe was being extended, and have nothing to do with HMS Daffodil. On the main deck, the four sets of track (20) continue aft until the centre sets merge at a set of points (21) to direct a single track onto the loading ramp (22). This ramp was another modification

to the cargo-handling. Originally, TF3 was fitted with two tracks all the way to the stern, to mate with a loading ramp from the shore. This would have restricted loading to ports fitted with such a ramp system, so HMS Daffodil was refitted with the single long ramp that could work with any port, as long as there was a railway line. The ramp was completely removed for D-Day, so that landing craft could be rolled off the stern. To the port side of the loading ramp, another winch (23) is lined up with the outer track, so it could have been used for wagon-handling, but also for raising and lowering the ramp. Behind this is another anti-aircraft gun (24), this time intact and pointing skyward.

I mentioned the need for the stern of the ship to be held absolutely steady against the loading pier when rolling wagons on and off, so next we have another big capstan (25), followed by pairs of bollards along the edge of the deck (26). HMS Daffodil has two propellers and two rudders, tucked well under the stern and either side of the loading ramp. The port propeller (27) is more accessible in a slight scour beneath the stern, to give a maximum depth of 24m on a high-water slack.

Back above deck, the starboard quarter is a mirror image of the port, with pairs of bollards (28), a big capstan (29), an anti-aircraft gun-mount (30) and a winch for shunting wagons (31). Here the anti-aircraft gun has broken from the mount, and there is more ammunition scattered about the base".

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Appendix 1.

List of Those from HMS *Daffodil* who lost their Lives [Wrecksite EU]:

1. ADAMS, FREDERICK PRIDGEN (29), Lieutenant, HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Reserve, †18/03/1945, Son of Frederick and Ida Austin Adams, of Dover, England; husband of Erica D. Adams, of New Malden, Surrey, England, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
2. ALLEN, ARTHUR WILLIAM JOHN (20), Ordinary Seaman (no. C/JX 408351), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Arthur William and Alice May Allen, of Chadwell Heath, Essex, England, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
3. ANSELL, DONALD GEOFFREY (19), Stoker 2nd Class (no. C/KX 678656), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Charles Geoffrey and Ethel Lilian Ansell, of Southall, Middlesex, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
4. BIRD, CHARLES EDWARD (36), Petty Officer Stoker (no. C/KX 75048), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of John and Louise Bird; husband of Betty Bird, of Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.

5. BURNS, CHARLES (45), Petty Officer Stoker (no. C/K 56464), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Patrick and Margaret Burns; husband of Elizabeth Burns, of Belfast, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
6. BYROM, JAMES (21), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 359104), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of James Hutton Byrom and Alice Ann Byrom, of Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, England, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
7. CARVER, JOHN DANIEL, Able Seaman (no. C/JX 317073), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
8. EDMONDS, WILLIAM (24), Stoker 1st Class (no. C/KX 146682), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of William James Edmonds and Florence Louisa Edmonds, of Millwall, London, England; husband of Louisa Frances Edmonds, of Cubitt Town, Poplar, London, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
9. EDSER, CHARLES ARTHUR ROBERT (21), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 319610), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of William and Maud Mary Edser, of Battersea, London, England; husband of Mary Adelaide Edser, of Brixton, London, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
10. ENTWISTLE, EDWARD (28), Able Seaman (no. C/SSX17897), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Edward Bailey Entwistle and Alice Anne Entwistle, of Bolton, Lancashire, Memorial: Dunkirk Town Cemetery.
11. FARROW, EDWARD HAROLD LESTER (56), Petty Officer Stoker (no. C/K 258), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Edward Farrow; husband of Lilian Rosemund Farrow, of Chatham, Kent, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
12. FRASER, JAMES (23), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 156527), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of James and Mary Fraser, of Naim, Scotland, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
13. FULCHER, NORMAN FRANCIS (20), Ordinary Seaman (no. C/JX 543741), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Charles David and Rosina May Fulcher, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
14. GILBERT, ALFRED (24), Petty Officer Stoker (no. C/KX 105297), Mentioned in Despatches, HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †22/03/1945, Son of Alfred and Harriet Victoria Louise Gilbert, of Bordesley Green East, Birmingham, England; husband of Irene Gilbert, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
15. HAMILTON, FREDERICK ALEXANDER (22), Leading Stoker (no. C/KX 136062), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Henry Alexander Crawford Hamilton and Rosetta Charlotte Hamilton, of Colliers Wood, Surrey, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
16. HEATH, REGINALD JABEZ (21), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 352406), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Joseph Raymond and Mary Eleanor Heath, of Aspley, Nottingham, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
17. JACKSON, GEORGE ERNEST (45), Sub-Lieutenant, HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, †17/03/1945, Memorial: Liverpool Naval Memorial.
18. KILNER, JOHNSON ROBERT (19), Stoker 1st Class (no. C/KX 601980), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †17/03/1945, Son of Albert and Sarah Ann Kilner, of Pendlebury, Lancashire, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
19. LEES, ERIC (33), Petty Officer Writer (no. C/MX 76810), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Frederick and Mary Lees; husband of Winifred Emily Lees, of Manchester, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
20. LOCHHEAD, EDWARD (32), Sub-Lieutenant (E), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, †17/03/1945, Memorial: Liverpool Naval Memorial.
21. MCCAULEY, MICHAEL ANTHONY (21), Stoker 1st Class (no. C/KX 139711), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Husband of Grace Alice McCauley, of Plumstead, London, England, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
22. MCNALLY, WILLIAM THOMAS (43), Stoker 1st Class (no. C/KX 142541), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Francis and Louisa McNally; husband of Lillian Frances McNally, of Battersea, London, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.

23. MORRISON, DOUGLAS LISTER (43), Lieutenant, Mentioned in Despatches, HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, †18/03/1945, Son of James Scott Morrison and Ada Joan Morrison; husband of Alison Young Morrison, of Bearsden, Dunbartonshire, Memorial: Oostende New Communal Cemetery.
24. NEWTON, STANLEY ARTHUR, Leading Cook (O) (no. C/SMX 613), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Newton; husband of Mrs. Newton, of Nottingham, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
25. PARDOE, HARRY (20), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 353740), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Grandson of William Pardoe, of Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, England, Memorial: Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-Sur-Mer.
26. PAYTON, WILLIAM, Able Seaman (no. C/JX 346755), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
27. SCOTLAND, MATTHEW (37), Supply Assistant (no. C/MX 82209), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Matthew and Isabella Scotland; husband of Ann L. Scotland, of Edinburgh, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
28. SIMPSON, JAMES DUFF (40), Lieutenant, HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Reserve, †18/03/1945, Son of Peter William and Agnes Duff Simpson; husband of Isabella Marr Philip Simpson, of Glasgow, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
29. SMITH, HENRY MAYBORN (56), Lieutenant Commander (E), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Reserve, †17/03/1945, Son of William H. and Susannah Wilhelmina Smith; husband of Elsie Marion Smith, of Ilford, Essex, Memorial: Liverpool Naval Memorial.
30. TAYLOR, FREDERICK, Sub-Lieutenant (E), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, †17/03/1945, Son of George and Jane Taylor; husband of Priscilla Mable Taylor, of Sudbury, Suffolk, Memorial: Liverpool Naval Memorial.
31. WALKER, BERNARD (21), Able Seaman (no. C/JX 354035), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Walker; husband of Eileen Olive Walker, of Castle Bromwich, Warwickshire, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
32. WARD, NORMAN ANNISON (40), Shipwright 3rd Class (no. C/MX 69269), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Myles Baines Ward and Mary Isabella Ward; husband of Winifred Emily Ward, of Fulham, London, Memorial: Chatham Naval Memorial.
33. WOOTTON, RICHARD THOMAS (22), Leading Signaller (no. C/SSX32657), HMAV Daffodil, Royal Navy, †18/03/1945, Son of Raymond Frederick and May Edith Wootton, of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, Memorial: Le Crotoy Communal Cemetery.