

## Bigelow Frisby Fallen Hero Profile

American Battle Monuments Commission

**Name:** Bigelow G. Frisby

**Born:** April 23, 1911

**Died:** July 9, 1944

**Hometown:** Picayune, Mississippi

**Entered the Military:** April 28, 1943

**Branch of Service:** U.S. Navy

**Org Unit:** USS Swerve

**Rank:** Fireman First Class

**Award(s):** Purple Heart

**Cemetery:** Tablets of the Missing, Sicily-Rome American Cemetery

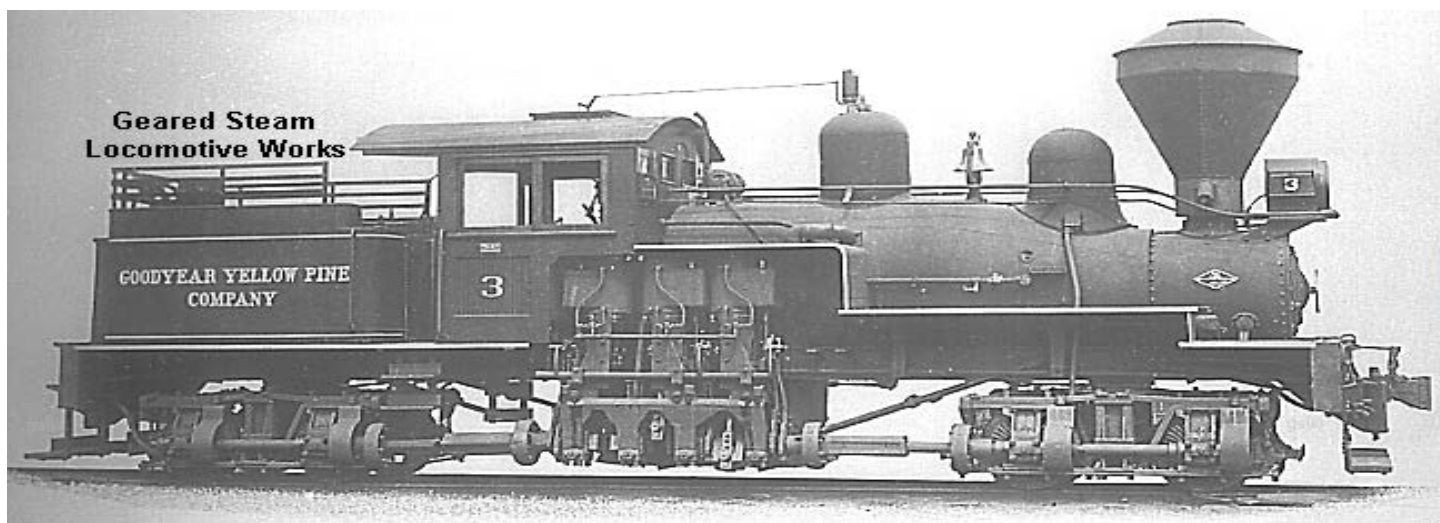


Courtesy of Dennis Jackson

### Before the War

Bigelow G. Frisby was born on April 7, 1911, in Appleton, Wisconsin. His mother, Grace, died shortly after his birth and his aunt, Elvira Frisby raised him. Upon graduating high school, Frisby followed his father and stepfamily to Picayune, Mississippi, where he worked as an electrician for the Goodyear Yellow Pine Company.

Before enlisting, Frisby worked as a turpentine still operator for Crosby Naval Stores, a division of the Goodyear Yellow Pine Company. In 1940 he married Veda Jean Spikes of Poplarville, Mississippi, with whom he would have one daughter, Barbara. On April 28, 1943, Bigelow Frisby joined the Navy and enlisted in Jackson, Mississippi.



Goodyear Yellow Pine Company Train, Pearl River Historical Society

# Bigelow Frisby Fallen Hero Profile cont.

## Military Experience



USS Swerve, National Archives and Records Administration

Frisby served aboard the USS Swerve, a minesweeper during World War II. Fireman First Class Frisby was a pipefitter, installing and maintaining pipe systems. He also served as the ship's mess man for a month. The USS Swerve left from Charleston, South Carolina on April 7, 1944, with a convoy to Bermuda on its way to Naples, Italy.

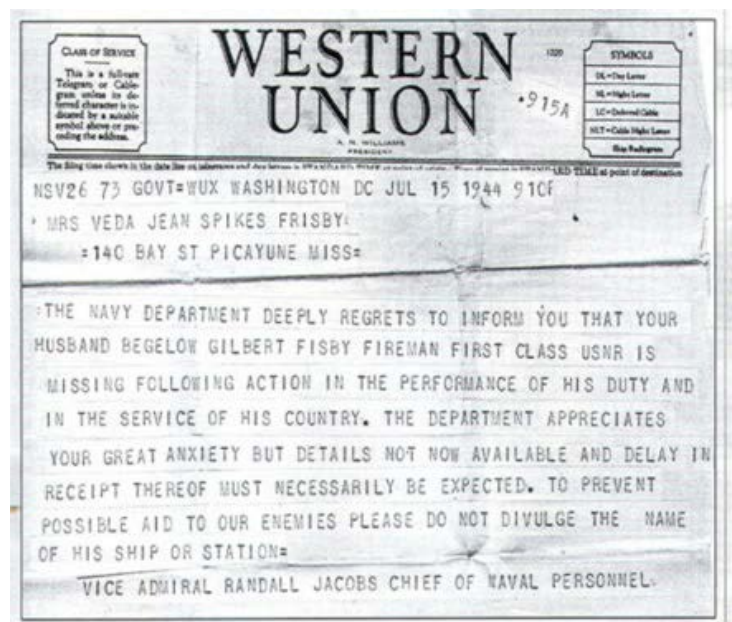
The ship arrived off the coast of Anzio, Italy on June 5, 1944. Over the next five days, the USS Swerve faced enemy air attacks but received no damage.

On July 9, the USS Swerve was a flagship for a sweeping run with its sister ship, the USS Seer. At roughly 1:00 p.m., the USS Swerve struck a mine and sank within 12 minutes. Of the 66 men on board, three men died from the explosion and ensuing chaos. When the mine exploded, Frisby was at his station as a lookout on the fantail. The explosion obliterated the fantail of the ship, killing him and a fellow sailor.

## Commemoration

Fireman First Class Bigelow Frisby's body was lost at sea, along with two shipmates. He received a Purple Heart for his ultimate sacrifice. Frisby gave his life to aide in securing Italy, a vital step for the Italian Campaign. Frisby is commemorated on the Tablets of the Missing at Sicily-Rome American Cemetery. Two months after Frisby's death, his daughter, Barbara, was born.

Frisby is remembered fondly by his family. His wife Veda Jean put it in simply, "I can't find anyone like him."



Western Union telegram alerting Frisby's family that he was Missing in Action