BLUMENTHAL, Percy 28 May 1912

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Night Porter	Geraldton	Struck by wagon

Percy Blumenthal was 30 years of age when he died as the result of an accident in the Geraldton shunting yard. Percy's left leg was severely injured when he caught his foot in a spring crossing and was struck by a slow moving wagon. An operation to amputate the leg was successful but Percy did not regain consciousness and died that day. Percy Lived at Geraldton and was interred at Geraldton Cemetery.

DEATH OF A NIGHT PORTER.
Geraldton, May 28.
This morning an accident occurred at the railways yards, which resulted in the death of a night porter named Percy Blumenthal, who is said to have been a native of England, and about 30 years of age.

At a quarter past 6 o'clock this morning some trucks were being shunted, and Blumenthal went to deliver a message to the shunter. His foot caught in a patent spring crossing, and the truck jammed his leg. The train was moving slowly at the time, and was almost instantaneously stopped. It was found impossible to release the injured man without cutting the bolts holding the crossing, and this was done, the operation taking nearly an hour and a half. The injured man was then conveyed to the hospital, where his left leg was amputated at the hip; but he never recovered consciousness, and died at about midday. The deceased was a well educated man, and is said to have been in Australia for several years.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Wednesday 29 May 1912 Page 7.*

The Railway Fatality.
INQUEST AND VERDICT.
The Inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of a night porter named Percy Blumenthal, who met with a fatal accident on May 28th, at the Goods yards, was resumed on Thursday, before Mr. J. E. Geary, Acting R.M., Mr. Wakeling appeared for the Railway Department.

Dr. L. Hungerford, who was called to the accident shortly after six o'clock in the morning, said he found deceased lying on the line. There was a rake of trucks behind him, and an 'engine and two trucks in front. His left foot and leg as far as the knee were firmly caught in the points, and it was quite impossible to move him from his position without cutting though the bolts, which was done as speedily as possible. On being removed to the hospital deceased elected to have an operation performed, and his leg was amputated between the upper and middle third of the thigh. After the operation deceased sank and died shortly after 11 o-clock. In reply to Sergeant Thomas, witness said Dr. MacMorran, who was present at the operation, considered the case, hopeless from the first.

Evidence of identification was given by George F. McAdam, who had known the deceased for seven or eight years.

Archibald Elyard, night stationmaster at Geraldton, said at 6.10 a.m. on the morning of May 28th, he sent deceased with a written message to the head shunter, who was at the Bluff Point end of the yard. He carried a hurricane lamp: Seven minutes later the shunter came hurriedly to him, and informed him of the accident. After telephoning for Dr. Hungerford, he. went to the scene of the accident. He looked at the leg to see if he could render first aid, but found it impossible, as the leg,

up to the crutch of the thigh, was embedded be tween the points. Dr. Hungerford and Guard Underwood tried to draw deceased's leg out, but could not. Blumenthal was conscious, and asked how he got there. He also enquired if his railway career was ended. He asked for a smoke, and with the doctor's permission a cigarette was given him. 'Deceased did not seem to know what had happened.

Replying to Mr. Wakeling, witness said he did not think this type of spring crossing was any more dangerous than the old kind. It was not necessary for Blumenthal to go be tween the moving wagons to deliver his message. He should have gone round the end.

By Sergt. Thomas , Observation would show him that was the best course to adopt. There were about 34 trucks on the train, and each would be about 9 feet long.

Mr. Wakeling said the trucks would be about -15ft. 6in. long on the average.

Sergt. Thomas said that did not say much for witness's powers of observation.

Witness further replying to Sergt. Thomas, said Blumenthal should have gone behind the tracks to deliver his message. Practical men sometimes jumped on a truck to give a message to the shunter, and Blumenthal could have done hat. He had, however, known practical men to meet with accidents in that way.

By Mr. Wakeling : Blumenthal could have got round the front of the trucks if he had waited a little while or he could have gone round the back end Employees were forbidden to expose themselves to risk. It would not have taken an hour and a half to have released a man from an ordinary crossing.

John Fenn, the head shunter, said whilst he was walking alongside the wagons to see if any of the brakes were on, because the driver had complained of the trucks pulling heavy, he heard his name called. Witness walked towards the voice until he got to the second truck, and then Blumenthal slipped in between the second and third wagons and walked with the train. He said he had a message for him. Witness stepped in to get it. There was no danger in that with ordinary precautions. After getting the message he stepped back, and turned his lamp so that it shone across the rails. As he did so he saw Blumenthal 's foot catch in the crossing, and he signaled for the driver to stop, realising that Blumenthal' was in danger. The trucks moved about two or three feet for ward after he gave the signal to stop.

By Mr. Wakeling He did not think there was any necessity for Blumenthal to step In between t the trucks. He could have handed the message across.

By the Foreman, He did not think spring crossings were more dangerous than, ordinary ones. All crossings were dangerous, but shunters familiar with, the yard kept clear of them. Personally, he would have waited until the wagons had passed, knowing the danger of the points catching his foot. He did not suppose deceased knew so much of the danger.

By the Coroner : He did not think deceased did right in crossing be tween the trucks, but he supposed he had thought he was perfectly safe. There was always danger near crossings. It was against the rules to cross between moving trucks.

James O'Byrne, Inspector of Permanent Ways, described the method adopted to release the deceased.

By Mr. Wakeling : He did not consider spring crossings were as dangerous as rigid crossings .

By the Coroner : Blumenthal took a great risk in crossing between moving trucks, and the danger was greater at a crossing.

John Joseph Smith, the driver, also gave evidence.

Hugh Serjeant, District Engineer, expressed the opinion that spring crossings were safer than the rigid type. They were in general use in many countries.

By the Foreman: It would be much easier to get a man out of a spring crossing than a rigid one, but a man was more likely to get his foot caught in a rigid crossing than the the spring crossing.

After a few minutes deliberation the jury returned the following verdict :— '"We find that Percy Blumenthal came to his death at the Geraldton Hospital from shock caused by being caught in a spring frog crossing at the Geraldton railway station no blame being attachable to any one. "

Source: *Trove/Geraldton Guardian (WA) Saturday 8 June 1912 Page 4.*