BOWEN, Richard Neil 25 June 1943

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Goods Porter	Geraldton	Shunting operations

Richard Bowen was 53 years of age when he was fatally injured while shunting in the Geraldton Station yard. Richard was seen to trip and fall and was run over by wagons being shunted. Richard was married with two grown daughters who were also married. Richard and his wife lived in Geraldton and he is interred in the Anglican section of the Utakarra Cemetery at Geraldton.

LATE MR. R. N. BOWEN
FUNERAL AT UTAKARRA
The funeral of the late Mr. Richard Neil Bowen, who died in the Victoria District Hospital on Friday last from injuries he sustained earlier in the day in the railway yards at the Geraldton station, took place in the Anglican portion of the Utakarra Cemetery on Sunday afternoon. Deceased was born fifty-three years ago in Victoria and had resided in Western Australia forty years. He is survived by his wife and two daughters (Mrs. Smyth, who as Miss Verna Bowen was well known in entertainment circles in Geraldton some years ago, and Mrs. T. Hardwicke).

There was a large and representative gathering at the graveside, and the service was conducted by the Rev. K. B. Ha Hey. The chief mourners were Mrs. Bowen (wife), Mesdames K. Smyth and T. Hardwicke (daughters) and Mr. K. Smyth (son-in-law). The pall-bearers were Messrs. T. Moore, M.L.C., E. Hancock (Geraldton Sub Branch R.S.L.), A. Buttfield (station staff), G. Dickson (locomotive staff), G. Beckman (permanent way staff), C. Gummery (electrical staff). C. Donald son (goods shed) and W. Terrell (running staff), and the casket was borne to the grave by Messrs. J. Wellington, jun., R. Healy, O. Grapes and J. Youard.

Amongst those present at the graveside were: — Messrs. J. Davey, F.
Cunnold, L. MacTntyre, D. J. Thompson, J. Wellington, sen., A. O'Farrell, C. Mellor, C. H. Penniment, P. Doolan, D. Davis, T. Askew, A. J. Clark, P. J. Stone, A. Carr, J. Murray, G. S. Johns pon, W. Waters, F. Whitmore, N. Gee. J. McKay, sen., C. Jones, G. Curry, W. Currell, W. Thompson. J. Frost. F. Caito, B. Pass, H, J. Wetherall, S. Tayler, J. F. Millward, G. F. Smith, L. Pomeroy, J. Kirwan, F. Carr, L. W. O'Malley, J. Larcombe. W. Mahon, D. Baker. J. J. Jenner, L. J. Chapman, I. Bennett. G. E. Whitby, A. Taylor, T. P. Shanahan, T. Cant, P. Gibson, Detective-Sergeant T. P- Triat, Corporal Payne. Private Wood and L.A.C. Olsen. Mesdames Askew, Lowe. Turner and Dawson (Women's Auxiliary of the R.S.L.) and Layton. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr. Aidan Pinder, of Forrest Street. Geraldton.

Source: *Trove/Geraldton Guardian and Express (WA) Wednesday 30 June 1943 Page 3.*

RAIL FATALITY
Fifty-three-year-old Richard Neil Bowen, married, of Eleanor Street, Geraldton, was killed on Friday in a shunting accident in Geraldton rail way yards. News of the fatality was received today by Acting Police Commissioner, Chief inspector J. Doyle from Inspector Cooney of Geraldton. Bowen fell between moving trucks and some of the wheels passed over the lower portion of his body. He was taken to the Victoria District Hospital and operated on but he died shortly after.

Source: *Trove/The Daily News (Perth) Thursday 1 July 1943 Page 6.*

INQUEST
RAILWAY FATALITY. SHUNTER RUN OVER.

MISHAP IN GERALDTON YARDS.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Richard Neil Bowen a shunter, who died in the Victoria District Hospital on June 25th from injuries he received when run over during shunting operations in the Geraldton railway yards earlier in the day were inquired into by the coroner (Mr. K. H. Parker) in the Geraldton Courthouse yesterday. Sergeant H. Larsen elicited the evidence on behalf of the Police Department ; the District Traffic Superintendent (Mr. D. Williams) represented the Commissioner of Railways ; Mr. C. A. Gough, assistant secretary of West Australian Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees, appeared on behalf of the relatives of the deceased ; whilst Mr. C. H. Webb, secretary of the Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union, appeared for the engine crew of the locomotive concerned in the fatality.

Dr. A. T. Watson said that on the afternoon of June 25th he was summoned to attend the scene of an accident in the railway yards at the Geraldton station. There he saw the deceased (Bowen) lying by the side of the track. He was removed to the Victoria District Hospital where blood transfusion and other treatment were administered. He was operated upon at 5 p.m. and died at its conclusion. The deceased had sustained extensive mutilation and crushing of the lower limbs. Death was due to shock and haemorrhage.

David James Lampard, engineer's assistant, produced a plan of the scene of the accident.

John Henry Pass, engine cleaner, said that on the afternoon of June 25th he was engaged cleaning out an engine by the engine shed. He saw a rake of trucks being shunted and noticed the deceased walk in between them and the van for the purpose of coupling the latter to the trucks. The trucks were moving very slowly. A few seconds later he saw the deceased fall forward. He appeared to strike the van and fall out from the line. He rolled after striking the ground in the direction in which the trucks were moving. Two wheels of the first truck passed him. Bowen then appeared to roll back to the line under the rear set of wheels. Witness then commenced to run to the scene of the accident, and as he approached another shunter jumped through the rake of tracks and pulled Bowen away from the line. Witness then ran towards the engine for the purpose of telling the driver to stop. As he approached the engine three short blasts were blown on the whistle of another engine. After telling the driver what had happened he ran back to the scene of the accident, and subsequently summoned the doctor.

Mr. Williams : How many sets of wheels passed over the man?

Witness: About six. I think that three trucks passed over him.

Witness told Mr. Webb that he was about forty yards from the scene of the accident when he first saw Bowen fall.

David James Thompson, shunter, said that he was working in the yards of the Geraldton station on June 25th. Bowen was also working in the capacity of head shunter. About 2.10 p.m. they were shunting a rake of repaired empties and loaded tracks. They were coming on to the bend which obstructed the view on that particular road. Bowen went in to lift the "chopper" to catch on to the van. Just as he was in the act of lifting the "chopper" to close into the buffer of the van, witness heard someone call out. He looked over his shoulder and saw Bowen in the act of falling. After applying a brake on the end of the truck, witness ran out, gave the stop signal and sounded his whistle. He could not see the engine, which was around the bend. He jumped on to the rake of tracks and ran out about eighteen yards south-east of the line and again gave the stop signal and sounded his whistle. Seeing other men running to the scene, witness returned to the deceased, who lifted up his arm and said "Pull me out of this." Witness helped Bowen to the side of the track.

To Mr. Gough witness explained that there was a set of points at the scene of the accident, and it would be easy for the deceased to trip over them.

The coroner : Are there any safety precautions when shunting around a bend in railway yards?

Witness : When a shunter is out of sight of the engine, the driver should apply the brakes.

How would it be possible to shunt in this locality? Could this safety regulation have been complied with? in this position it would be impossible to comply with the regulations.

Mr. Webb : Is that rule carried out in practice?—No.

Would it be possible to carry out shunting operations efficiently if that rule were complied with?

Not unless another man were engaged.

The coroner : That is in this particular yard?

Yes.

Walter Thomas Currell, engine driver, said on the afternoon of June 25th he was driving an engine in the Geraldton yards and was engaged shunting a rake of trucks out of the locomotive yards at a speed of about two miles an hour. The deceased was acting in the capacity of head shunter. They had put one van up a road and were backing empties to put on to this van. The deceased had given him the signal to come on to the van. As he felt the van connect with the rake of trucks he applied his brakes. This was about the same time as he observed Pass run towards the engine. Pass informed him that a man had been injured.

The coroner : Do you know the existence of a rule as to what is to be done when the shunter is out of sight?

Witness: Yes.

What are you supposed to do?—To stop.

Why did you not stop in this case?

In this case I knew what I had to do. I had to take the trucks back to the van and slow when I got around the bend, and till I received another signal to proceed.

Further evidence was given by Jack Frost, fireman, and Police constable E. R. Lee

The coroner said that only one witness (Pass) had seen what had actually happened and he was some considerable distance away. There was nothing to show if the deceased had tripped, or bumped into the van. Bowen was an experienced shunter and he was inclined to think that he had tripped. He returned a verdict that the deceased had died from shock and hemorrhage from injuries he received when run over by trucks in the Geraldton railway yards. He was satisfied that death was caused accidentally and that no blame was attachable to anyone.

Source: *Trove/Geraldton Guardian Express (WA) Saturday 10 July 1943 Page 3.*