SMITH, Ernest Francis 21 May 1944

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Guard	Yalgoo	Shunting operations

Ernest Smith was 46 years of age when he was fatally injured while shunting at Yalgoo. He died the following morning in Geraldton Hospital. Ernest was stationed at Mullewa but kept his residence at Bunbury. He was interred at Bunbury Cemetery. *MM December 2016.*

RAILWAY ACCIDENT
Mullewa Guard Dies of Injuries.
GERALDTON. May 24. Ernest Francis Smith (46), guard, of Mullewa, died in the Government Hospital, Geraldton, on Sunday morning following an accident on the previous night at Yalgoo. During shunting operations he stepped between two trucks, slipped and fell across the rails. The driver of the engine saw Him fall and immediately applied the brakes. The wheels of three trucks apparently passed over the upper portion of the guard's thighs. Mr. Smith was removed to Mullewa and then to Geraldton.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Thursday 25 May 1944 Page 7.*

RUN OVER BY TRUCKS
SHUNTING FATALITY AT MULLEWA
GUARD'S DEATH.
The death occurred at the Victoria District Hospital shortly after 9 o'clock on Sunday morning of Ernest Francis Smith, aged 46 years, married, railway guard, of Mullewa, as the result of injuries he received the previous night when directing shunting operations in the railway yards at Yalgoo. Smith arrived at Yalgoo at 10 p.m. on Friday last as the guard in charge of a passenger train and he was scheduled to return to his home station at Mullewa on a goods train leaving Yalgoo at 10 o'clock on Saturday night. Just prior to the accident, which occurred about 9:45 p.m. on Saturday, Smith and an engine crew were engaged in making up a train and the engine took eight trucks along the main line towards Mullewa. The engine was put into reverse with the aim of shunting five of the trucks on to a spur line. As the trucks approached the points at the junction of the spur and the main lines Smith moved in between them for the purpose of uncoupling those to be shunted onto the spur. What happened immediately afterwards is not known, but when the engine driver, William Leonard Steel, of Mullewa, who saw Smith move in between the trucks, failed to see him emerge he immediately applied the brakes and stopped his train. The assistant stationmaster (James Raymond Bignell), who had been assisting in the shunting operations, was standing on the opposite side of the rake of trucks to Smith moved around the trucks and saw Smith lying close to the rails and it appeared as if three trucks had passed over him, causing severe injuries to the upper portions of both legs. First aid treatment was immediately applied and a special train consisting of a van and engine departed from Yalgoo to convey the injured man to Mullewa. The St. John Ambulance van was despatched to bring the man from Mullewa to Geraldton, but in view of the condition of the road it was decided to continue the journey by special train. Great fortitude was shown by Smith throughout the journey and he conversed freely about the accident with those who attended him. At Northern Gully the injured man, who was still conscious, was transferred to the ambulance and was admit ted to the Victoria District Hospital, where death occurred shortly afterwards. How Smith came to fall when between the trucks has not been revealed, although it is presumed that he tripped over the mechanism used for moving the points.

The funeral of the deceased took place at Bunbury.

The police and railway officials are investigating the matter, and a full report on the occurrence will be presented to the coroner (Mr. K. H. Parker).

Source: *Trove/Geraldton Guardian and Express (WA) Wednesday 24 May 1944 Page 3.*

Author's Note: *A Coroner's inquest later concluded that Ernest Smith had died as the result of an accident.*