

KERNS, ROBERT LEE  
January 19, 1910-April 25, 1948

Robert Lee Kerns, 38, died in Richmond, California, April 25, a week after an accident in the structural steel plant where he was employed.

It is believed the accident was caused by a faulty cable. Around the vat where the structural steel was mixed, was a catwalk about 35 ft. from the ground and 3 men were on it. A 6 ton metal hopper was being hoisted into place by means of a 13 ton cable on each end of the hopper, suspended from a huge crane. The hopper didn't exactly fit in the place where it was intended and the crew began to lower it to the ground again.

Then one cable parted, and the hopper flipped back against the catwalk, crushing Kerns against the wall of the vat. All but 2 of his ribs on one side were crushed. The other two men managed to jump to safety, although one received a broken arm when he hit the ground and rolled or crawled out of the way of the descending hopper.

Kerns lived for about a week after the accident.

He was born Jan. 19, 1910, in St. Joseph, Missouri and moved here with his parents. He lived here until 1942 when he went to California to work in the steel industry.

He is survived by his wife, Ruby, three children, Barbara, Larry and Robert; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Willis Kerns of Wheatland; one brother, Willis Kerns and five sisters, Mrs. Esther Durbin, Denver; Mrs. Leona Wiley, Adak, Alaska; Mrs. Madia Barnes, Kettleman City, Calif.; Mrs. Ruth Bateman, Vallejo, Calif.; Mrs. Elsie Burns, Wheatland.

Services were held at 3 o'clock Sunday at the graveside, Rev. Lasher officiating. Pallbearers were Paul Lawrence, John Nye, Frank Kuehner, Laurel Smith, Jimmy Dunham and Jack Blodgett.