FLITCROFT, James 30 August 1939

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Ganger	Wannamal, MRWA	PW Trolley/Train Collision

See also Thomas HODGES and Clarence MURRAY.

James Flitcroft was 59 years of age when he was fatally injured in a collision between his per way trolley and a train at Wannamal on the Midland Railway line. James lived at Highgate with his wife and he is interred at Karrakatta Cemetery (ANGLICAN/ZB/0446).

SMASH ON MIDLAND
RAILWAY:
3 Permanent Way Employees Killed in Collision.
When enveloped in a dense pocket of fog north of Wannamal on the Midland Railway Company's line on Wednesday morning, a ***permanent*** way repairing gang ***on a trolley*** collided head-on with the Perth bound Geraldton express, three of the four men being killed in the impact. The fourth man, J. E. Prately, who was driving the trolley, escaped with severe shock and abrasions by throwing himself clear just before the collision occurred.

The victims were:—**James Flitcroft (59); Thomas Henry Hodges (63)and Clarence William Murray (43).**

Source: Trove/Great Southern Herald, Saturday 2 September 1939 Page 2

James Flitcroft was born in England in 1880 and was 59 when the accident happened he had a living spouse, Eliza (64), 9 adult children and 5 grandchildren.

Source: James Flitcroft's Granddaughter Dorothy Farrell. March 2016

Thomas Hodge and Clarence Murray were both married at the time of their deaths but little else was reported about them.

Trolley Struck by Train
SMASH IN HEAVY FOG
Perth, Aug. 30.
In a fog, which reduced visibility to about 15 yards, a rail motor trolley collided head-on with the Perth bound mail train from Geraldton on the Midland Railway Company 's line, 22 miles north of Gingin, this morning and three of the four men on the trolley were killed. The victims were: — Mr. James Flitcroft (59), married, whose relatives reside in Wright Street, Highgate Hill,
Thomas Henry Hodges (63), married, whose relatives reside in St. Kilda road, Belmont and Clarence William Murray (43), married, of Wannamal.
The scene of the fatality is about two miles north of Wannamal and the men concerned were employed in the company's permanent way repairing gang. Early this morning the men who lost their lives in the collision and John Edward Pratley (53) left their depot at Wannamal siding on a rail motor trolley, travelling north towards Mogumber, Pratley was driving. They had travelled only about two miles when, in a dense patch of fog, the trolley smashed into the front of the mail train from Geraldton. The driver of the trolley saved his life by jumping to the right, but his three companions were thrown, with the

wrecked trolley, on to the front of the engine and received severe injjuries. The train was quickly brought to a standstill. The engines cowcatcher was so damaged that it had to be removed before the train could resume its journey
and the vacuum brake coupling was smashed. When the accident was reported to the Midland Railway Coy., Ltd. by the company's travelling inspector, Mr. G. Chapman, the general superintendent, Mr. R. G. Drake sent Mr. W. Leslie (engineer), Mr. J. A. Pidgeon (assistant engineer) and a relief driver by motor car to the scene of the accident. They were joined by Constable Ramshaw at Gingin. A doctor from Moora was also summoned.
The collision occurred about 7.30 a.m., and, after the bodies of the three men had been placed aboard the train, and the wreckage cleared away, the train's journey was resumed at 11.15 a.m. On account of the delay a mixed train for Geraldton was held up for about two hours at Gingin, and a special goods train from Geraldton was held up at Mogumber until the section was cleared. On the outskirts of Midland the mail train was stopped at a little used crossing and the bodies of the three men were removed and taken to the morgue. Interviewed by company officials the fireman of the engine said that there was no sign of fog when the train left Mogumber, but at various points near a group of lakes the train ran into pockets of fog. The fog enveloping the train just before the accident was very dense and in spite of a careful watch on the line ahead the outline of the trolley looomed out of the fog only 10 or 15 yards in front of the train. The driver of the trolley was a passenger on the train when it reached Midland Junction. He was suffering from shock and was
taken by car to his home in East Perth.
Discussing the company's immunity from accidents, Mr. Drake said that during the last 40 years there had been only three accidents with loss of life. The crew of the train involved in the accident comprised David Pritchard (driver),
Lloyd Reynolds (fireman) and Walter Hess (guard).

Source: *Trove/The Kalgoorlie Miner (Kalgoorlie) 31 August 1939 Page 4.*

Clarence William MURRAY. Photograph provided by his daughter Betty Purser
May 2016.