WHITMORE, Frank 12 September 1944

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Fireman	Karrakatta	Struck by passing train

Frank Whitmore was 29 years of age when he died in the cab of an ASG locomotive as the result of being struck by an open coach door on a passing passenger train. Frank was married with three children at the time of his death. Included on original list as George Whitmore (an error originated by a newspaper report on the day of the accident.) now corrected. Information provided by his son Frank Whitmore Junior. March 2016

RAILWAY DEATH

Twenty-six-year-old (sic.) railway fireman Frank Whitmore was killed near Karrakatta early today and shortly afterwards the 119-ton engine of which he had been fireman crashed through a dead-end and came to rest poised over the Davies Road subway at Claremont. Engine driver R. J. Stafford escaped with a shaking. The 85ft. engine and eight trucks of the 750-ton wheat train were damaged. There are conflicting reports as to how *Mr.* Whitmore received his fatal injuries. According to a departmental report, he was struck by an object , possibly the open door of a passenger coach as his Fremantle bound train and a Perth- bound passenger train passed somewhere between Shenton Park and Karrakatta. According to a report received by Chief Police Inspector J. Doyle, *Mr.* Whitmore's train had had occasion to stop near Karrakatta about 12.26 a.m. *Mr.* Whitmore alighted on the right hand side of the engine, was struck by a Perth-bound passenger train. He was placed in the engine cab, taken on to Karrakatta where he was picked up by a St. John ambulance and taken to Perth Hospital, but there found to be dead.

To a Dead-end

After *Mr.* Whitmore had been taken to hospital, the Australian Standard Garratt engine on which he had been fireman, continued on towards Fremantle. It is believed that news of the accident had been sent on to Claremont railway station. At Claremont, it was officially stated today, the signals were set against the Garratt so that that train could be diverted to what is known as the back road. That leads to a dead-end fronting the Claremont subway. Engine-driver *Mr.* Stafford was, it is understood, alone in the cab and continued on apparently in the belief that he was to get his train through to Fremantle without undue delay, because it carried urgently needed wheat. The train instead of going on to Fremantle went along the back road, crashed through the buffers of the dead-end. The engine ploughed through the embankment, came to rest with its front wheels hanging over the subway and its nose resting on the far wall. Only the length of the engine prevented it from falling to the ground about 18 feet below.

The late, (George (sic.)), *Frank* Whitmore was married and lived at 87 Forrest Street, East Fremantle.

There will be an inquest into the cause of his death. The Railway Department is holding a departmental inquiry into the tragedy and the subway smash.

As a safety measure, single line working on the section between Swanbourne and Claremont was resorted to early today. Early passenger trains today were slightly delayed as a result. Because of the weight and the length of the damaged Garratt, its removal may not be possible before tomorrow.

Source: *Trove/The Daily News 12 September 1944 Page 1.*

How Fireman Was Killed

Engine driver R. J. Stafford is stated to have told police that his fireman 26 year-old Frank Whitmore was killed in the engine cab early on Tuesday when struck by some object on a passing train. Mr. Stafford is understood to have made a statement to police today on the matter.

Conflicting reports had been received on Tuesday as to how *Mr.* Whitmore received his fatal injuries. *Mr.* Whitmore's death was a tragic prelude to the crashing of an 119-ton Australian Standard Garratt engine on to the Davies Road subway structure.

An earlier report from a man who was present at Karrakatta when the injured firemen was removed from his train had suggested that *Mr.* Whitmore's train had had occasion to stop between Shenton Park and Karrakatta and that he had alighted from the engine and had been struck by a passing train. Railway report, however, had stated that Whitmore had been struck by some object on a passing train —possibly the door of a carriage — while the two trains were moving.

Because of the risk involved the subway had been closed to road traffic since Tuesday. Today it was open again.

(Italics added by MM April 2016)

Source: *Trove/The Daily News16 September 1944 Page 11.*

A later coroner's inquest determined that Frank Whitmore's death was accidental. MM April 2016

FAMILY NOTICE
WHITMORE. On September 12, 1944, suddenly, at Karrakatta, as the result of an accident, Frank, dearly beloved husband of Gladys Whitmore, of 87 Forrest Street, East Fremantle, and loving father of Lawrence, Frank and Wesley; aged 29 years.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian. Death Notices. 13 September 1944*