



PHOTO BY WARREN GERIG



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Noria Gerig points to a brass plaque on a bench in Bletchley Park, England, which honors a Stidham couple from the WWII era (left). Closeup of the brass plaque and its inscription (above).

Mystery of the Stidham Bench in Bletchley Park, England Solved

Editor's note: The following message was sent by email from Noria Stidham Gerig (DCM-101).

My husband, Warren, and I were visiting our vacation home in London, England in April, which we have had for more than 25 years. Each visit we try to take a day trip outside of the city.

This year we took a train to Bletchley Park, about 50 miles north of London. Bletchley Park was England's best kept secret during World War II, as it housed the enigma machine captured from a German U-Boat. A huge decoding machine called "Collosus" was built to decode messages sent to the German high command. This technology was credited with shortening the war and perhaps saving many lives.

We sat down on a bench there for a brief rest when I noticed a brass plaque attached. It read, "To the memory of Jimmy and Peggy Stidham, reunited in love 2011. USAAC." Apparently, Jimmy was stationed there during World War II, and members of their family perhaps dedicated the bench after the last one passed away. I began to wonder if they might be part of our extended family.

A quick email to TSS Historian, David Stidham and the mystery of Jimmy and Peggy Stidham was solved.

Found in the Stidham* Family Tree, ID: I5966. James Edward [2793] Stidham; b. 4 Aug 1923, Bon-

nyman, Perry Co., KY; Son of Floyd Davis [1358] Stidham and Mary Elizabeth Deaton; Married Margaret Mary "Peggy" Warner (b. 11 Mar 1922), 19 Jun 1945 in Bletchley Parish Church, Buckinghamshire, England.

Military service for James: US Army, World War II, Private; Enlisted 16 Mar 1943 at Fort Thomas, Newport, KY. At time of enlistment: Residing in Perry Co., Kentucky. Single. Education: 1 year high school. Source: National Archives and Records Administration.

Military service for Peggy: Served in World War II in Great Britain's Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) serving at Bletchley Park (Station X) decoding Enigma messages.



PHOTO COUTESY OF SANDRA [5460] STIDHAM WARNER

Margaret Mary "Peggy" and James Edward [2793] Stidham