

You might say that Ellsworth was a wee bit modest. In his letter to me he did not give any of the details of the 6 August 1944 mission, nor did he mention anything about them in our telephone conversations. However, the following article appeared in the Manchester, NH newspaper and was reprinted in "The Torretta Flyer" #24 in 1993. This is the semi-annual publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association.

"A retired Manchester letter carrier was awarded the Distinguished Flying cross last night, nearly half a century after risking his life in the fuel laden bomb bay of a B-24 over occupied France. Ellsworth E. Goodell, who is 72 and a 1937 alumnus of Central High School, received the medal he earned in World War II during a reunion of the 484th Bomb Group in Dearborn, Mich.

"The award was requested 48 years ago by Goodell's commanding officer Vincent W. O'Shea, who subsequently returned to the United States without knowing the outcome of his request. Until recently O'Shea didn't know his request for the prestigious medal had been lost in the shuffle, nor did Goodell know that one had been sought for him. On Aug. 6, 1944, O'Shea was command pilot on the B-24 and Technical Sergeant Goodell was the radio operator/gunner on a mission over Southern France. "We received heavy anti-aircraft fire which severed our main fuel line almost causing fatal damage to our plane," O'Shea recalled. "In a very heroic effort, Sgt. Goodell and our engineer/gunner, Technical Sergeant John F. Barber, squeezed into a small space over the bomb bay and held the fuel lines together by hand until we were able to get to a lower altitude where we could make temporary repairs.

"Goodell's memory of the mission is as good as his commanding officer's. 'We were on a bombing mission over German occupied France. Over the target, heavy anti-aircraft fire was encountered and we were hit with exploding flak shells.' Goodell dismisses the incident like it is an every day occurrence. 'We noticed gasoline leaking out, like a mist, flying around inside the compartment' he said. 'Sgt. Barber found some old rags and we wrapped them around the pipes where they were leaking, and held them until the pilot landed on Corsica'

"Although it was mid-summer, the temperature at the altitude at which we were flying was 15 degrees below zero, and the two men were exposed to freezing cold causing severe burns over their bodies', O'Shea said. 'With winter garb, heavy flying suits, metal flakjackets and leather helmets with oxygen masks, the compartment was cramped and low. They had to lie face down on the floor, holding the fuel lines. By their outstanding devotion to duty they not only assisted materially in the destruction of an important objective, they also made possible the safe return of our aircraft to its base in Italy.' O'Shea immediately recommended both men for Distinguished Flying Crosses. 'We returned to the United States and lost track of each other,' O'Shea said. 'I heard no more regarding the disposition of my recommendation. 'Eight years ago Goodell and O'Shea began to meet at reunions of the combat group. They located Barber and he attended a recent reunion. It was only at that point that the medal came up in conversation. 'Sgt. Barber informed us that the recommendation had been approved and that he had been presented with the medal when he separated from the service in 1945' O'Shea said last week. 'However, Sgt. Goodell had never been informed or received the medal.' O'Shea went home and started writing letters to the Air Force. After what O'Shea terms 'extensive correspondence' the 100 octane gasoline story received approval for the medal and the medal was sent to O'Shea. Asked if he suffered burns, Goodell admitted he and Barber 'had to put some salve on our arms, later on. That was my last mission' he said. 'I shipped out ten days later and the information that I

received the DFC never caught up to me. I never knew about it until three years ago when I went to a reunion and I was talking about how I had accumulated the various points needed for a discharge and Sgt. Barber commented that it didn't hurt, point wise, to get a DFC. 'I told him I didn't have a DFC!' Goodell said." The two preceding documents are about all the information I have about Toggle Annie's first thirty or so missions. In a trip to the National Archives in Washington DC, I found that the records for the first 31 combat missions of the 484th Bomb Group, covering the period 29 Apr.- 14 Jun. 1944, are not there. Nor does anyone know where. The composition of the first crew to fly Toggle Annie in combat, as reported in the obituary of Vincent O'Shea in the "Torretta Flyer" # 26, is as follows: Pilot- Vincent W. O'Shea- Deceased 2 May 1944. Co-pilot- Norman J. Dion- Reported deceased by Ellsworth Goodell. Navigator- Guido Mattei- Living in FL. Bombardier- Gerald S. Fluxgold, Deceased 1978 (Dept. of Veteran Affairs). Engineer- John F. Barber, Living in TX. Radio Operator- Ellsworth E. Goodell- Deceased, 30 Sep 1996. Upper Gunner-James H. Malone- Deceased, 11 Apr 1978 (Dept. Veteran Affairs). Ball Gunner- John W. Malony-Reported deceased by "Chickie" O'Shea. Tail Gunner- Raymond E. Adler. Nose Gunner - Newman McMurtre. Ellsworth Goodell wrote in his letter that McMurtre was not on their crew but he didn't say who was the nose gunner; and it's too late to ask him now. It would appear that there are only two surviving members of O'Shea's crew- Barber and Mattei. O'Shea and his crew flew fifty missions (usually, but not always, as a unit) . Actually 34 missions, but he received double mission credit for 16 of them. When the Group first arrived in Italy, the tour of duty was 50 missions; but some sorties received double credit. I have never been able to find out what the criteria was for a double mission or whether it was determined before or after the fact. They flew almost exclusively in Toggle Annie, except the mission 3 Jul 1944, and the missions after 6 Aug while she was under repairs in Corsica. By the time we arrived in Italy, the double missions had been eliminated and the tour of duty was 35 missions.

Toggle Annie flew 107 credited missions between 29 April 1944 and 23 April 1945 with the 484th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force. (She also participated in at least ten other mission for which she did not receive mission credit, for various reasons). In an attempt to verify these missions, I went to the National Archives in College Park, MD, 19- 20 June 1995, to inspect their records. Here is a synopsis of what I found: As I said before, there are no records there for the first 31 missions flown by the Group from 29 April- 14 June 1944. The mission numbers assigned at the Archives go hand-in-hand with the list of missions in the "Torretta Flyer" #23 up to and including mission #84, 6 Sept 1944. The eight "Supply Missions" 11 Sept- 22 Sept inclusive, and the mission, 7 Oct 1944, Failed to Rendezvous, are not assigned numbers at the Archives. The "Bad Weather" missions are a mixed bag. Missions on 10-23, 10-29, 10-31, 11-5, 12-8, 12-9, 12-10-1944 and 1-8, 2-18, 2-24, and 2-26-1945, are not included nor assigned numbers. However the "Bad Weather" Missions 5-19, 6-30, 9-1, 9-5 10-10 and 10-17-1944, and 1-5, 2-22-1945 are included and assigned numbers, but not all were given mission credit. For some reason, missions 11-21-1944 and 4-6-1945, are not included nor assigned numbers. The missions 6-26, 6-28, 7-8 and 7-16-1944, are numbered, but the folders for those missions are empty. (See addendum). To sum up the missions flown by Toggle Annie, that I can account for, are the ones appearing in the Mission Numbers National Archives column; (92) , plus the 6 Supply Missions minus missions noted 4, 6, or 9 (10)=88. To sift it out another way, I