

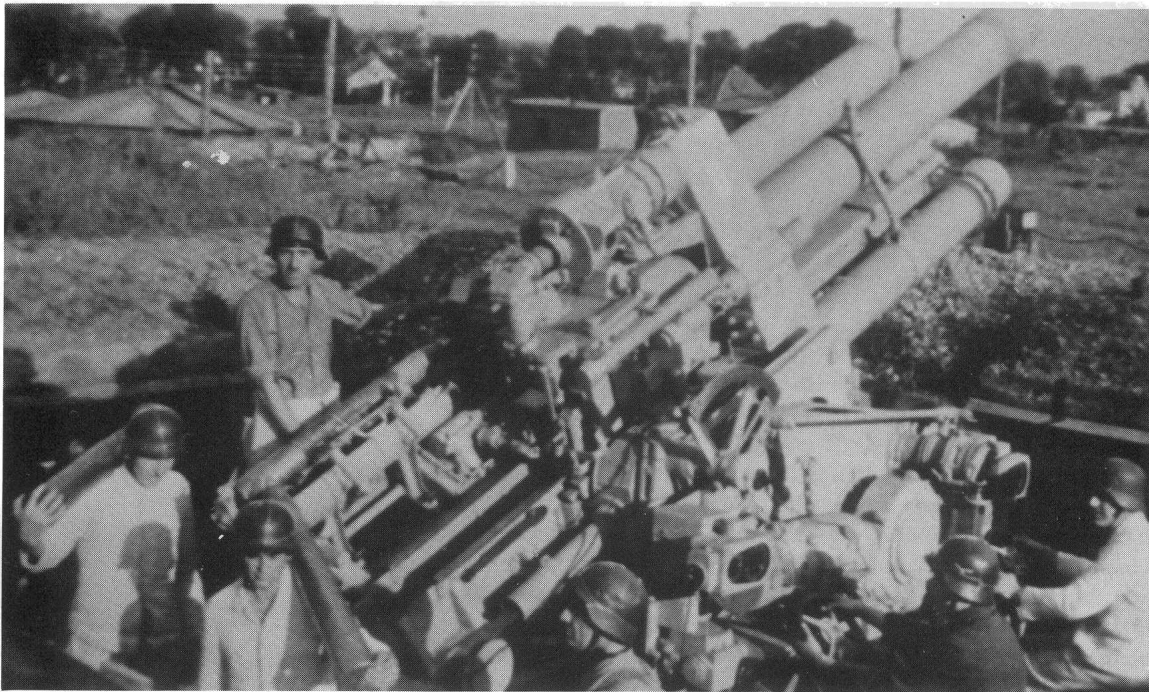
MY MISSION LIST

By Felix Rameder

We have in this story the experiences of a 13 year old Austrian boy who experienced the bombing of his country during World War II. As airmen we witnessed the bombs walking across the landscape in dusty puffs of smoke. The effects on the inhabitants below were unknown to us then. Many bomber crew airmen wondered silently, or in conversation on the effects of the destruction they were witnessing below.

Felix Rameder gives us some insights in answer to this question in this story.

The air war as seen by a 13 year old Austrian boy.



Flak gunners waiting for the next wave of bombers

The Vienna area at the beginning of the air war stretched from Wiener-Neustadt to the industrial plants at Schwechat, Fischamend Market, Vosen-dorf, Lobau and to the refinery at Moosbierbaum, thus covering the whole Viennese basin and the extended Vienna area. For aerial defense purposes this was called the Vienna Area.

This area was divided into three flak defense districts: 1) Wiener-Neustadt, 2) Vienna, and 3) Moosbierbaum. Fighters assigned for protection against the bomber formation were brought into action from the airdromes in the Vienna area depending on the direction of the approaching bomber stream. Seyring, Gotzen-dorf, Fles-am-Wagram, Eisenstadt, Parndorf, Markersdorf, and Vos-lau. Fighters also could be called up from airdromes in Bavaria (Southeastern Germany), Hungary, and even from airdromes in Si-lesia (Old Prussia/ Southwest Poland /Jever)

When approaching over the Mediterranean Sea *the bomber formations were located by radar sets installed on the Istrien pen-insula, that is part of modern Yugoslavia. The bomber warning was then transmitted to other aerial region control stations all over the land. They too were equipped with radar sets.

The civilian population was informed about the air raid alarm by an interception of the radio program. A warm, deep, and calm female voice would say, "Attention, Attention, enemy bomber formations approaching Carinthia Styria." Later on another announcement was broadcast, "Enemy bomber formation over Lake Balaton. Then suddenly you could hear a cuckoo's call on the air. This cuckoo's call was only sent when there was high danger of air attack. A few minutes later a pre alarm siren would hoot three time high pitch and three time low pitch. If the bomber formation continued flying in the direction of Vienna the sirens would sound

twelve times high and twelve times low. The regular radio pro-gramming would be terminated. In its stead announcements would be broadcast in code. To decode these messages we had to use a map which was divided into grid squares. If you were fortunate to be near a radio during an attack you could determine the location of the bomber formation by finding the exact grid square and what di-rection they were coming from.

When the bomber formation was located within 15 minutes from the probable target, an air attack warning was given for this area. But often the air attack warning and bomber formation reached the target at the same time. In Vienna when the radio would broadcast, "Bomber formation approaching Carinthia Sty-ria." the people of Vienna, mostly women and children would head toward the flak towers (Huge cement monoliths 50 to 60 feet high where flak guns were mounted). The flak towers gave the safest shelter. Today these flak towers still stand but are used only for storage.

At the beginning of an air raid warning, things always hap-pened in the same way. After the hooting sirens ceased, it became very quiet. Most people went to the cellars and began to wait. Some courageous people stayed in the buildings and watched the sky from wide open windows to see if the bombers were coming or not. From the official announcements and from the grid map one could determine the direction of the bomber stream. On a clear day you would suddenly see many tiny glittering dots, and often condensation trails as far as 30 miles away. In this situation the bombers would reach us in about 10 minutes. The town of Eber-gassing, where I still live is situated 10 miles southeast of