

this purpose. Whole school classes were assigned to a flak battery and the kids got their education there. The teaching took place in special school barracks. 16 batteries were staffed by only RAD men (Reicharbeitsdienst). In spring 1944 children born in 1928 were called up. The remaining gaps in personnel were filled in the fall of 1944 by foreign auxiliary personnel, which meant Russian prisoners of war and refugees from the Balkan. Flak batteries in and around Vienna in the fall of 1944 consisted of 61 heavy flak batteries with 432 guns: 28 ea. 12.8 mm, 48 ea. 10.5 mm guns, and 356 ea. 8.8 cm guns. Considering that every gun could fire six shots per minute you can imagine the huge fire power. But all of this was in vain.

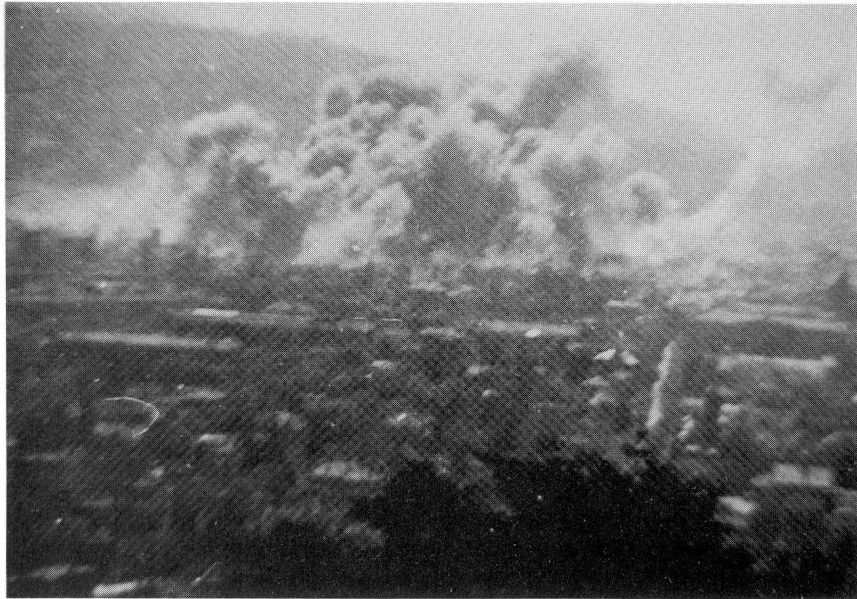
After five attacks in April and May the arms production facilities in Weiner Neustadt were completely destroyed. This could not be prevented by the 27th and 51st fighter groups consisting of four squadrons. They were stationed in air fields around Vienna. Two destroyer squadrons of Me110/210 and one fighter squadron were stationed in Bad Voslau, and one squadron in Hungary.

The Me 109s production was moved to several locations and also several flak batteries were shifted from Weiner Neustadt to Moosbierbaum and to the flak ring around Vienna. Two batteries were moved to Brux, Tchechia and two other batteries went to Linz.

After this rearrangement the oil refinery in Moosbierbaum in summer 1944 was defended by 17 heavy flak batteries with 112 guns; 4 ea. 12.8 mm guns, 28 ea. 10.5 mm guns, and 80 ea. 8.8 cm guns. The Vienna area had 604 guns that were prepared to fight against the long distance bombers.

478 guns 8.8 mm
 94 guns 10.5 mm
 32 guns 12.8 mm in total 1604 guns

Guns that were mounted on flak towers in Vienna consisted of 88 flak guns could start to fire at target at a distance of 12 kilometer, the 105 mm guns at 15 kilometer and the 128 mm guns at a distance of 18 kilometer. This meant that the 128 mm guns on the flak towers in Vienna could hit the bombers when they were still approaching Ebergassing. These flak measurements



Ground Level View of Bombs exploding near Vienna

had good results in clear weather such as on June 26 and July 8, 1944 when the planes were clearly visible.

By the beginning of May there were still 187 fighter planes available which were quite successful from May 24 to May 29, 1944. By the mid-May 1944 only 106 planes of all these squadrons were still in operation. If necessary they were supported by fighter planes from southern Germany and Silesia. Their number decreased after D-day to 60 to 80 planes and 40 destroyers of the type Me 110 and Me 410. After heavy losses in July and August 1944 only the first squadron of fighters from the 302nd group and the Hungarian fighter group were in operation. All the destroyer groups were reduced drastically so that they could not be put into operation. Planes and pilots had to be reorganized.

In May 1944 the boys of the fighter group JG 27/III who were stationed in Gotzendorf would come to Ebergassing to meet the girls there. Once three of those boys

were waiting for a girl that lived in our house. I took that chance and asked them why they were not able to shoot the American bombers down. Two of them did not say a word, finally the third answered: "They are too many." Shortly after that the whole group was moved away from Gotzendorf. Today I know that they were moved to France because of the invasion.

Now I would like to describe the flow of events of an air attack, First there was an Air Raid Warning. When approaching over the Mediterranean Sea the bomber formations were located by radar sets installed on the Istria peninsula, a part of Croatia today. The bomber warning was then transmitted to other aerial region control stations all over the land also equipped with radar sets. The civilian population was informed about the air raid warning by an interruption of the radio program.

A warm, deep and calm woman's voice said: "Attention, attention we are bringing you an aerial situation report. Heavy enemy bomber formations are approaching Carinthia and Styria". Later on there was again an announcement, that would sound like that: "Enemy bomber formation over Lake Balaton". Then suddenly you could hear a cuckoo's call on the radio for one minute. This cuckoo's call was only sent when there was a high probability of an air attack. A few minutes later they gave pre-alarm warnings where the sirens were hooting three times high and three times low. If the bomber formation continued to fly in the direction of Vienna then they gave the main warning. The sirens were hooting twelve times high and twelve times low. The radio program was terminated. Only announcements about the location of the bomber formations were broadcast. These announcements were encoded. To decode them we had to use this map that is divided into grid squares. So if you listened to the