

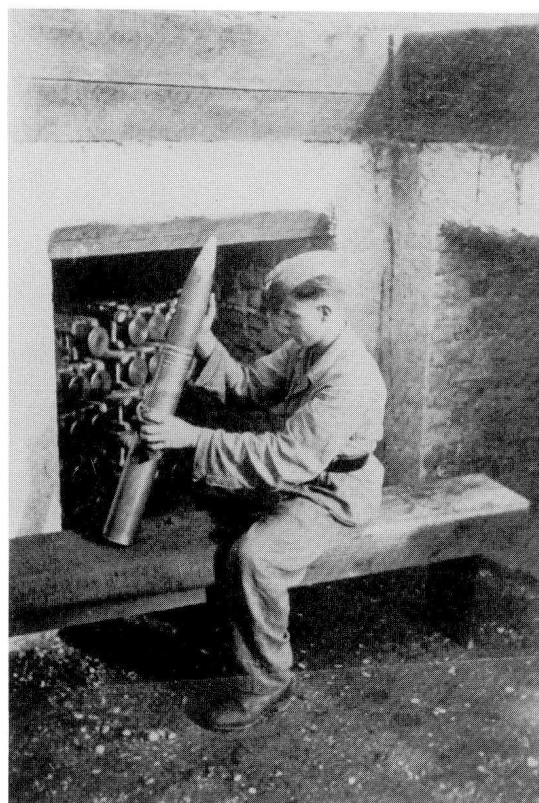
these planes were enemy planes. Suddenly around these glittering points you could see shells exploding. The number of shells grew constantly and left a lot of small dark clouds in the sky. The planes flew through these clouds and were partly hidden by the flak clouds. Then for the first time I saw a plane crash down. A big burning dot with a long tail of smoke was tumbling down to earth in a wide bow. Shortly after that a second plane came down burning less than the first one and again the rumbling of the far away bomb hits. The flak clouds grew lighter and broader covering the sky over Weiner Neustadt from where two huge clouds of smoke rose high in the sky. But then it was quiet again. Even the people at the bus stop said no word except for the school boys who discussed about all the strange new things they had seen. Today I know that the second wave was the 44th BG. On the 24th of October 1943 and on the second of November I was not able to observe anything as we children were led by the teachers to an air attack shelter. An old sugar beet storage cellar served as shelter. We had to stay there till the air raid was over.

None of the simple people knew where the bombers came from as everything was confidential. It was strictly forbidden to listen to "enemy radio". Suddenly the war had reached our own homes. Everybody feared what would come next.

After November 2nd, 1943 for a long time there was no air attack, no aircraft were seen. No exact reports about raids to other areas were available. Many people thought that the Vienna area would not be bombed again. But then the year 1944 came.

Only a little information was given to the civilians by the German broadcasts. Listening to foreign radio stations was punished severely. Let me give you some examples of the news in radio and newspapers. On the 13th of August 1943 it would sound like this: Official information for the population: enemy air craft attacked the south eastern territory of Germany. Several buildings have been destroyed and people were killed by highly explosive and incendiary bombs. Weiner Neustadt would not be mentioned. Or on the second of November 1943 when the 15th Airforce flew their first raid to Weiner Neustadt:

An air attack of enemy air forces to the south eastern territory of Germany caused damages on buildings and the death of several people. Seven planes were shot down. Again Weiner Neustadt was not mentioned. Only in December 1943 when Innsbruck was bombed twice was the name of the city broadcast. Still only damages on residential buildings were reported. Also, the civilians were not told where the approaching bombers came from. The only information they got was that the bombers flew to



*Cleaning 88 mm shells*

Southern Germany.

From January until March 1944 it was still relatively quiet in the Vienna area. We heard several air alarm announcements and cuckoo calls in the radio when Klagenfurt and Steyr were attacked but that was all before March 17 1944.

It was a cloudy and foggy day. At 12:30 in the afternoon air alarm was announced that enemy bombers were approaching our area, five or six were reported. Shortly after this message you could hear the roaring of aircraft engines over Ebergassing. As no planes could be seen we

went down to the basements of our homes for shelter. Suddenly we felt the ground tremble and heard the booms of exploding bombs. We had to live through this two more times. On the next day we heard that the whole area around Schwechat got hit. Ebergassing is only six miles away from Schwechat as you see on the map.

Then April 12 1944 came. On this day I saw from very close up the first air attack. The target was Fischamend-Market, plant number three of the Weiner Neustadt ME 109 production unit. These were the announcements given by the Air Raid Alarm Service based on what I have been told by the workers of this plant and on what I have seen myself: Announcement at:

11 :00 A M Enemy planes are approaching from Southeast 40 kilometers east of Karlstadt, Yugoslavia.

At 11 :07 Enemy planes are in the Zagreb area.

At 11: 10 A new formation of 100 enemy bombers is approaching from South near Banja Luka, Yugoslavia.

11: 13 The first formation is over Koprornitza, Hungary heading northwest.

At 11: 15 Highest aerial danger was announced.

A worker of the Me109 factory in Fischamend told his co-workers about the announcement. Everybody became nervous and scared. Many of the workers had gone through the raids on Weiner Neustadt when the Plants one and two were destroyed. After these raids they had been moved to Fischamend.

At 11 :20 the 27 planes of the first wave headed for Szombathey, Hungary.

At 11 :25 Air Attack Alarm was announced. All workers left the production buildings. Many ran to seek shelter in the two bunkers that had been build into a nearby hill. It was said that this bunker was bomb proof. But many more workers ran to some woods south of the plant.

At 11 :32 (eleven thirty two) the announcement sounded like this: The first formation has reached the Sopron area. The second formation is in a distance of 15 (fifteen) minutes flight time to Weiner Neustadt. An attack to Weiner Neustadt must be taken into consideration.

At 11 :42 Enemy planes are over