

The flak continued to fire at the bomber formation. After bombing the formation turned to the south and flew directly over us. Then the same thing that happened to the bomber crews, happened to us, too. The fragments of the exploded flak shells fell down to the ground buzzing like thousands of bees. We had to hide in the slit-trench to not be hit by one of the fragments. On this day again Weiner Neustadt and Bad Voslau were bombed.

Now we were in the middle of the bomb war. In the nights you would often hear the announcements of the approach of single enemy bombers dropping mine barriers in the Danube. These mine barriers were meant to destroy the oil transports from Ploesti.

The next raid on May 10, 1944 I did not see as close as the ones I have described before. As this was the first raid of the 484th bomb group to the Vienna area I will tell you about it based on the findings of my research work.

At 10:04 AM the approach of heavy enemy bomber formations to Styria and the south eastern territory heading to the north is announced. Already at 10:27 the formation turns over Lake Balaton and heads to the Vienna area.

At 10:40 the air alarm is announced for the Vienna area. At 10:45 the formation is over Lake Neusiedl approaching Weiner Neustadt. The second bomber formation has just crossed Lake Balaton and the third formation has reached the lake.

When the first and the second formations reach Lake Neusiedl they are attacked by 30 Me109 of the fighter group 27 and by 50 FW 190s of fighter group three. When the bombers get into the flak area the fighters break away because now the flak takes over and the work of the flak soldiers starts. The radar devices show interferences so that the bombers have to be covered by optical means only.

At 11:09 the fire bell calling for group fire rang in eleven flak batteries in Weiner Neustadt. These batteries had eleven guns 12.8 mm, 58 (fifty eight) guns 8.8 mm and 24 guns 10.5 cm. Now each gun fired up to sixteen shots per minute at the bombers. The result could be seen clearly. Three B-17's of the first group were hit and crashed down even before reaching the targets. Another B-17 makes it to Weiner Neustadt with burning engines and crashes down ten kilometers south of the target.

Then the second bomber formation with B-24's reaches the flak fire. Two B-24's catch fire immediately and break away from the formation. Four crew men manage to jump out of the plane before she ex-

plodes. Another plane crashed on fire and explodes on the ground.

At 11:15 and six bombers are burning on the ground around Weiner Neustadt and over the target plant one and two there are thick black smoke clouds. In the flak positions 1,460 empty shell cases are standing around, the shells used up for the bombers in the sky. After leaving the target area the bombers were attacked by German fighters again. Again two B-17's and two B-24's tumble on fire to the ground. The German fighters have losses too. The 27th fighter group loses five pilots and the third fighter group has one death and two wounded.

At 11:45 the third bomber formation reaches Weiner Neustadt and the target is the airfield of the Me109 factory. During the approach the formation gets into the range of two flak batteries near Lake Neusiedl. Two B-24's are hit and crash down before reaching the target.

Two more bomber formations approach Weiner Neustadt at 12:05 and 12:15 and bomb the Me109 production plant. Again the flak fires with all they have.

At 12:52 the air attacks are over and from Weiner Neustadt to Karlovac in Yugoslavia there are twenty-eight crashed bombers and three escort fighters on the ground. In Weiner Neustadt both Me109 production plants are severely damaged and nine buildings are destroyed completely. One 105 mm flak battery got two hits and had several dead and wounded.

No sooner than the damages were repaired to a certain extent when the next attack followed on May 24 1944.

On this day I had a unique experience. Shortly after 9 in the morning I sat in the classroom of our school 3 kilometers away from Ebergassing as an Me 109 fighter which was stationed at Gotzendorf airfield rushed over the school. We got nervous. Half an hour later the principal entered the

classroom and said: "You are still here! Air Attack Alarm will soon be announced!". We hurried out of the school, took our bicycles and rode home to Ebergassing as fast as we could. Suddenly the sirens were hooting but we kept on treading. As we reached open field we already heard the roaring of the engines and saw a Liberator formation coming through the clouds from the North. At this moment the flak began to fire. We threw ourselves in the road ditch and looked at the bombers. Then we heard the whistling of the bombs. I was really frightened. The roaring of the engines, the cracking of the flak and the whistling of the bombs. Then the earth was shaking and soon I heard the bombs explode. I looked towards the south



*A dreaded 88 mm cannon with three victory rings around the barrel*