

SECRET

AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

TRANSLATION NO. VII/95

THE EFFECTS OF
ALLIED BOMBING RAIDS
ON FRENCH TARGETS

Translated from French documents supplied by
the Service Historique de l'Armee de l'Air, VERSAILLES

TRANSLATED BY
AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6
FEBRUARY, 1950

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ATTACKS

		<u>Page</u>
ALBERT	2 March, 1944	3
ANTHEOR (viaduct)	17 September, 1943) 13 February, 1944 } 1 November, 1943 } 18 December, 1943 } 4 February, 1944 }	1
ARGENTEUIL	11 June, 1944	15
AULNAT (airfield)	10 March, 30 April, 1944	6
AVIGNON	27 May, 25 June, 1944	14
BELFORT	25 May, 1944	11
CARRIERES-sur-SEINE	27 May, 1944	13
CLERMONT (A.I.A.)	10 March, 1944	6
CLERMONT-FERRAND	10 March, 30 April, 1944 }	
CREIL (lock)	23, 26 March, 1944	7
CREIL (station)	23 March, 1944	8
DEOLS	10 March, 1944	5
HIRSON	6 March, 1944	4
LA CHAPELLE	21 April, 1944	10
LAON	24 March, 1944	9
LA RICAMARIE	10 March, 1944	5
LE PECQ	28 May, 4 June, 1944	14
LIMOGES (A.I.A.)	8/9 February, 1944	2
MARSEILLES	27 May, 1944	14
MONTATAIRE	March, 1944	5
FORT BERNALIN	8 November, 1943	1
PORTE DE MONTREUIL (PARIS)	3 March, 1944	4
SAINT-DENIS	21 April, 1944	10
SAINT-ETIENNE	26 May, 1944	12
SAINT-QUENTIN	2 March, 1944	3
TERGNIER	9 February, 1944	3
TOULON (arsenal)	24 November, 1944	2
TOULOUSE	25 June, 1944	16
VAIRES	29 March, 1944	9
VENISSIEUX (Berliet)	2 May, 1944	11
VENISSIEUX (S.I.G.M.A.)	23, 25, 26 March, 1944	7
Conclusions	16

S E C R E T

Attacks on the viaduct at ANTHEOR (near AGAY)

Target

Many attacks have been made on this target; the following are the most important:

on the nights of 17 September, 1943
11 November, 1943
13 February, 1944

by day on 1 November, 1943
18 December, 1943
4 February, 1944

Casualties

On the whole casualties were light. During the raid on 11 November, 1943, there were 15 killed and a few injured.

Effects

The viaduct was hit only once - on 1 November. Damage was slight and repair-work was completed by 9 November.

The railway was hit almost on every raid but repair work was simple and rarely lasted more than 24 hours.

Conclusions

(a) Attacks on the viaduct were ineffective, resulting only in a few minor disruptions of traffic.

(b) Heavier bombs might have achieved the result intended.

- - - - -

Attack on the dam at PORT BERNALIN, 8 November 1943

Raid

The attack was made at 19.00 hours on 8 November 1943 by a single aircraft.

Effects

The explosions caused a hole in the dam of about 10 metres in diameter. Repair work would take about 3 months.

Conclusions

River traffic and communications are extremely vulnerable to successful attacks. To realise this, it is sufficient to compare the attack on the PORT BERNALIN dam and that on the ANTHEOR viaduct. In the first case there was 1 plane, which dropped 4 bombs; result: disruption of traffic for 3 months; in the second, several waves of 20 - 30 aircraft dropping hundreds of bombs; result: disruption of traffic for a few days. One must not generalise however too much. The attack on the viaduct could have been carried out more successfully, if the method used had been more suitable for this kind of objective (i.e. ground attack).

/For

S E C R E T

For example there is one case which deserves mention. The RAF made an attack during the year 1943 on the dams at MOHNE, EDER, and SORPE. The raid was carried out by a squadron of Lancasters, specially trained, and using for this purpose mines of 1500 lbs, which gave the blast necessary for pulverising the heavy masonry with which these dams were constructed. The attacks were eminently successful; the dams were burst and the hydro-electric plant situated further down was carried away by the torrent, which also caused serious flooding.

Attack on Arsenal at TOULON, 24 November 1943

Raid

The raid took place in the early afternoon of 24 November 1943. The aircraft, probably American, numbered 80 and flew in formations of 30, 30 and 20. About 800 bombs were dropped on the objective, including about 100 which fell in the sea. Total tonnage was about 250 tons.

Casualties

Military personnel: 75 killed. Civilian personnel: at least
400 killed.

Effects

All parts of the Arsenal were hit. Bombs also fell on the town and in the suburbs, causing widespread damage to housing and public utilities. The effect was immediate. Communications were broken. The various obstructions of the roads, in the Arsenal as well as in the town, caused a serious setback especially in the communications with le Mourillon (for reinforcements). A number of incendiaries were also dropped, causing three major conflagrations and other smaller ones which were soon extinguished.

Attack on aircraft factory at LIMOGES, 8/9 February 1944

Target

The aircraft factory is situated 4 kilometres to the N.E. of Limoges, between the River Vienne and the railway Limoges - Saint Sulpice Laurière. It was manufacturing motors for the Germans to equip Me 323's. The total number of workers was a little over 2000. In January 1944 they produced at least 115 motors.

Raid

The raid was carried out on the night of 8/9 February by not more than 6 four-engined aircraft, which dropped about 15 tons of bombs.

Casualties

There were only 5 wounded, 2 seriously.

Effects

A number of industrial buildings were hit. Of the 16 most important, 4 were completely destroyed, 2 badly damaged and beyond repair, and 10 more or less damaged but repairable. A number of administrative offices were also

S E C R E T

damaged, but only lightly. About 25% of the machinery was destroyed.

The 6 buildings which are to be demolished comprise a half of the actual industrial section, and a third of the whole factory (including administrative buildings).

Incendiaries caused little damage.

- - - - -

Attack on the station yards at TERGNIER, 9 February 1944

The station at TERGNIER, which includes an engine depot and a repair works, was bombed on 9 February 1944 between 09.40 and 09.45 hours. The raid was carried out by two waves of 18 aircraft.

Effects

The station and the repair works suffered considerable damage; the machinery depot was hit by only 2 or 3 bombs. There was also serious damage to housing, some of which was completely destroyed by a direct hit. After 6 days repair work the essential lines were in running order.

- - - - -

Attack on the factory at ALBERT, 2 March 1944

Target

The factory at ALBERT was manufacturing motors for Focke Wulf. This objective, situated 200 metres S.W. of the town, was extremely well camouflaged.

Raid

The bombing took place on 2 March from 21.15 hours to 21.45 hours by approximately 15-20 aircraft.

Effects

All the bombs fell on the target or in the immediate vicinity. The factory was completely hit. Every part was affected either by a direct hit or by blast, and much of the factory is now useless. There was also widespread damage in the neighbourhood due to the impact of the explosions.

- - - - -

Attack on SAINT-QUENTIN, 2 March 1944

Target

It appears that the objective was the Paris-Brussels line, the 6 or 8 sidings which are connected to it and the locks on the canal from the R. Sambre to the R. Oise, where there is an important traffic in materials.

Raid

The attack was made on 2 March about 17.00 hours by 2 successive waves of 20 Fortresses.

/Casualties

G.254611/EJW/2.50/35.

S E C R E T

Casualties

90 dead
150 injured

Effects

The railway line from Paris to Brussels was re-established 48 hours after the bombing. The other routes were in running order 8 days after.

The canal was hit but the lock was untouched. 2 districts in particular suffered great damage and many houses were destroyed.

- - - - -

Attack on LA PORTE de MONTREUIL, 3 March 1944

On 3 March 1944 about 03.30 hours, when American aircraft were attacking the factories S.N.C.A.M. (Société Nationale de Constructions Aéronautiques du Midi) at LES MUREAUX, MEULAN, and SARTROUVILLE, a plane which was probably in difficulty dropped a few bombs near the PORTE de MONTREUIL in Paris.

Effects

Some damage was done to housing, causing

2 dead and
12 injured

- - - - -

Attack on the station at HIRSON, 6 March 1944

Target

The station at HIRSON is an important marshalling-yard and junction for the northern and eastern railways. It also has an engine depot and repair shops.

Raid

The attack took place by day on 6 March 1944. 100 aircraft took part in the operations.

Effects

About 1000-1200 bombs were dropped, of which 300 fell on the machine depot and its lines, and 600 on the marshalling-yard and the passenger and goods stations.

All the sheds were hit. Some of them received several bombs on the roof which consequently destroyed the underlying rails. Walls were shattered by the blast and one shed was completely demolished. For 2 days after the bombing, traffic from Hirson was impossible but after 4 days it was re-established.

The marshalling-yard was out of order for more than a month and it required the same time to repair the lines connected to the engine depot. The engines underwent considerable damage.

The repair shop which has special equipment is closed for the duration and will perhaps be impossible to repair.

/Locomotives

S E C R E T

Locomotives and carriages were demolished in the coal-yards and passenger station.

The main signal box was demolished and the points were completely destroyed.

- - - - -

Attacks on the marshalling-yards at MONTATAIRE, March 1944

Target

This is an important marshalling-yard on the northern network, 4 kilometres south of the station at CREIL. It also includes a very important engine depot.

Raids

These took place by day on 17, 20, 23 and 26 March. The total number of aircraft which took part was over 600, and in particular on 23 March there were more than 300.

Effects

The marshalling-yard was severely damaged, and lengthy repairs are necessary. The signal installations were also destroyed. The machine depot was badly hit; all the locomotives were badly damaged, and the cranes were overturned.

- - - - -

Attack on the NADELLA works at LA RICAMARIE, 10 March 1944

Target

The A.I.A. (Atelier Industriel de l'Air) was doing repairs for the Germans on BMW motors with a normal output of about 200 motors per month.

Raid

The attack was made on 10 March 1944 at 2330 hours by 15 or 20 aircraft. Some incendiaries were also dropped.

Casualties

There were no casualties among French personnel, but there was a certain number of victims among the Germans who were occupying the huts across from the works.

Effects

The incendiary bombs had little effect. A few huts were burnt down, but of the ten bombs (500 kg) which hit the principal industrial building, it could be safely said that only one caused any great damage, and this can be repaired. The machinery suffered little. In spite of the damage done to the principal building, work was resumed shortly afterwards, due partly to the decentralisation of the different branches. Indeed, 15 days after the bombing, work was resumed at the A.I.A., production having dropped only 50%.

- - - - -

/Attack

S E C R E T

Attack on the aircraft factory at DEOLS, 10 March 1944.

Target

The S.N.C.A.S.O. factory (S.W. branch of the Societe Nationale de Constructions Aéronautiques) at the time of the attack held about 1000 workers and manufactured the following:

- wing units and fuselage parts for Siebel
- motor bonnets and bodies for B175
- various parts for Junkers
- various parts for FW 190

Repair work was also done on Bloch 155's and Messerschmitts.

Raid

The attack was carried out on the night of 10/11 March by a number of aircraft, which must have been in the region of 30 bombers. A number of incendiaries was also dropped.

Effects

Only about 15 bombs hit the buildings of the factory, 4 of which at least did not explode. The total damage seems to have been caused by the explosions of 8 - 10 bombs at the most. The administrative offices were entirely destroyed by fire. Only one building will have to be demolished. About 80% of the machinery was smashed up, but much of it can still be repaired and the actual loss is about 30% - 40%. On the whole however the damage done to the manufactured products and the machinery is less than that which the buildings underwent. Consequently, activity at DEOLS has ceased, the machinery being transferred to SAINT-ASTIER; the factory itself will have to be completely reconstructed.

Attack on aircraft factory at CLERMONT-FERRAND and the airfield at AULNAT, 10 March and 30 April 1944.

Raids

The A.I.A. (Atelier Industriel de l'Air) was attacked twice during the night: on 10 March and 30 April 1944, the second attack being motivated by the partial failure of the first. Doubtless both these raids were the work of the RAF (probable type of aircraft: "Liberator", at least for the first raid).

American aircraft attacked the AULNAT aircraft on the morning of 30 April. The raid was carried out by 5 successive waves of 21 bombers, accompanied by a number of fighters which engaged the German fighters and brought down 3.

Casualties

There were no casualties in the A.I.A. but on the 10 March there were a certain number of victims among the Germans who occupied the huts situated to the south of the THIERS road.

On 30 April bombs fell on the town of AULNAT. About 30 houses were destroyed and there were

6 dead and about
12 injured

/Effects

S E C R E T

Effects (30 April)

2 buildings which were hit on 10 March were again hit on 30 April (A.I.A.) and this time were almost completely destroyed. The majority of the other buildings were more or less damaged by blast or by fire.

Out of the 251 motors in existence in the factory there were only 24 destroyed and 62 damaged.

Effects on airfield

The central part of the field was not hit and at no moment were the take-off and landing of aircraft interrupted.

Effects on industry

After the attack on 30 April, which caused much damage, the Germans did not think it suitable to resume work at the A.I.A. (only one building was more or less intact) and the machinery which was salvaged was removed.

Attack on the lock at CREIL, 23 and 26 March 1944

Target

3 kms. downstream from CREIL on the Oise there is a lock system which allows the simultaneous passage of two barges, and consequently the running of a two-way traffic.

Raids

23 March - this attack was made at 11.45 hours by 14 waves of 15-20 aircraft. It was a follow-up of the raids made on 18 and 20 March on the marshalling-yards at MONTATAIRE.

26 March - a raid was made about 14.00 hours by a number of aircraft. At the same time an attack was made on the railway bridge over the Oise at LAVERSINES, by an unknown number of aircraft.

Effects

23 March - 3 bombs made a direct hit on some masonry above the lock system on the canal, which became obstructed by the debris.

26 March - damage done on this occasion was negligible. One bomb hit the house of the lockkeeper. THE LAVERSINES bridge was also attacked but only one bomb hit the parapet near the railing. Traffic was resumed as soon as minor damage to the railways had been repaired.

Attack on the S.I.G.M.A. factory at VENISSIEUX,
23, 25 and 28 March 1944

Target

The factory belonging to the Société Industrielle Générale de Mécanique Appliquée (S.I.G.M.A.) is situated in the S.W. suburb of LYON in the district of VENISSIEUX. It is part of a very important industrial centre which includes:

/the factories

S E C R E T

the factories BERLIET, MARECHAL, the CHIMIO-TECHNIE, the Societé Française des Electrodes and the LONGWY steel works.

Raids

23 March - the attack was made about 22.40 hours by about 60 aircraft.

25 March - the attack was about 23.00 hours by approximately 20 aircraft which dropped only incendiary bombs.

29 March - the attack was made about 22.40 hours by approximately 100 aircraft.

Effects

23 March - the bombing was a complete failure. The bombs fell about 500 to 600 metres N.E. of the objective. Damage on the whole was slight. About 60 houses were destroyed. The industrial consequences would have been nil, if it had not been for a breakdown in electricity supplies. Telephone and water communications were cut at St.-Tons-Venissieux.

25 March - there was a large number of incendiaries dropped on this night. Many of them hit the following industrial establishments:

SIGMA - BERLIET - CHIMIOTECHNIE - SOMUA - MARECHAL -
Sté. FRANÇAISE des ELECTRODES - LONGUY steelworks.

Some damage was done to all, but everything was under control by 08.00 hours in the morning. On the whole the industrial consequences of this attack were negligible in relation with the number of bombs dropped.

29 March - the whole factory (S.I.G.M.A.) requires reconstruction. The plant however is largely intact (86% machinery, 50% of important material) which means that it can be transferred to other localities, and that manufacture can be resumed. The main results from the raid affecting industry were the delay and inconvenience of decentralising plant.

Attack on the station at CREIL, 23 March 1944

Target

The target cannot be exactly defined, but it seems from the objectives hit, that the Anglo-Americans had as their objective the junction of the lines CREIL-PARIS and CREIL-BEAUVAIS rather than the factories on the banks of the Oise between Creil and the marshalling-yards at MONTATAIRE.

Raid

The raid was made on 23 March about 12.45 hours by a formation of 12 aircraft.

Effects

The railways CREIL-PARIS and CREIL-BEAUVAIS were hit at several points. The CREIL-BEAUVAIS route was repaired within 48 hours. The traffic towards PARIS would have been re-established in the same time if the track had not been so badly hit in the marshalling-yards at MONTATAIRE. There the damage was so great that the main line CREIL-PARIS was not re-established until 10

/days

G.254611/EJW/2.50/35.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

days after and the marshalling-yards not for several months.

Attack on the station at LAON, 24 March 1944

Target

This station has important marshalling-yards, and is the junction for the northern and eastern network of railways. There is also an engine depot.

Raid

The attack was made about 22.00 hours by approximately 100 aircraft, probably Flying Fortresses.

Effects

About a thousand bombs were dropped, of which 180 hit the railway installations, 80 the engine depot and 100 the railway lines. Quite a lot of damage was done to the lines. All those in a direction west of the station were destroyed and are now useless, as well as the TERGNIER and SOISSONS lines connecting the engine depot with the station and the marshalling-yards.

4 locomotives were hit and damaged badly. The depot itself will take only 15 days at most to repair.

Attack on the railway station at VAIRES, 29 March 1944

Target

This is an important and very modern marshalling-yard in the eastern network, on the PARIS-STRASBOURG line, one of the most important lines of this network from economic and strategic standpoints. The VAIRES station had had its traffic considerably augmented since other marshalling-yards had been destroyed by bombing. Day and night there were successive movements on a considerable scale of troops and material. At the time of the attack there were in the station three trains transporting troops, material and munitions.

The station also had a very important engine depot.

Raid

The attack was made about 21.35 hours and 21.50 hours by approximately 100 aircraft of unidentified type.

Effects

More than a thousand bombs were dropped.

The troop trains, which were carrying troops, material and munitions were pulverised by the explosions of the bombs and their own munitions. In one area there were about 250 carriages, of which there remain now only the twisted iron carcasses blackened by the fire which followed the explosion.

The principal line PARIS-STRASBOURG was cut for 48 hours. At the end of this delay, traffic was resumed on one line, after 4 days on 2 lines. The passenger station was not hit. The coaling-plant of the depot which receives

/and

S E C R E T

and distributes the coal for all the stations of the eastern network in the Paris area was completely destroyed.

Many of the locomotives however are not beyond repair.

Attack on the railway stations at LA CHAPELLE and
LA PLAINE SAINT-DENIS, 21 April 1944

Target

At LA CHAPELLE there is a goods station and a marshalling-yard, also workshops and an important engine depot.

At SAINT-DENIS there is a marshalling-yard which also includes an engine depot.

These two stations together constitute a very important junction: PARIS-CREIL in direction of CALAIS and BRUSSELS, PARIS-SOISSONS, with junctions with the eastern and central networks.

Raid

About 400 bombers took part in the attack, operating in successive waves of about 15 aircraft. Also a number of pathfinders kept the target illuminated during the bombing.

Effects

More than 2000 bombs were dropped. Some houses were hit.

The principal lines PARIS-CALAIS, PARIS-BRUXELLES and PARIS-SOISSONS were broken at many points. The traffic on these lines was interrupted for 10 days.

After this delay two lines were re-established, but with great difficulty.

The lines in the marshalling-yard and the station yard were broken at innumerable points and sometimes rendered completely useless in the central area north of LA CHAPELLE station, and the area S.W. and N. of the SAINT-DENIS station.

The goods station and marshalling-yards at LA CHAPELLE were destroyed. The coal station however was untouched. The western side of the yards at SAINT-DENIS was totally destroyed. The goods station there was less damaged.

2 signals boxes were destroyed, 7 others underwent serious damage.

The engine depot at LA CHAPELLE was damaged a little; the one at SAINT-DENIS completely destroyed. The workshops at LA CHAPELLE were partly destroyed.

Casualties

Casualties were great; a large number of people (roughly about 600) were killed. There was also a small number of injured.

/Attack

S E C R E T

Attack on Berliet factory at VENISSIEUX, 2 May 1944

Target

The Berliet factory is situated about $1\frac{1}{3}$ kilometres N.E. of VENISSIEUX. Monthly production on the 1st May was 100 bombs of which 80 were for the German market. This activity does not seem to justify the extent of destruction. It seems that the marshalling-yards at VENISSIEUX were a target also.

Raid

The raid was made at night by 150 aircraft of unidentified type. The bombing began at 01.00 hours and lasted about 40 minutes.

Casualties

21 dead
70 injured

Effects

About 480 impacts were recorded as follows:

- 270 on the factory and the town of BERLIET
- 170 at the N.E. extremity of VENISSIEUX
- 40 on the station

The number of bombs dropped seems small in comparison with the number of aircraft. The number of aircraft (150) is probably grossly exaggerated.

60 houses were completely destroyed, walls crumbled with the blast and tiles were blown off roofs. Electric and telephone cables were destroyed.

50% of the factory will have to be reconstructed. The losses in machinery however are slight (10% at most) and 90% of the manufactured products are salvageable. This is in part due to the fact that there was no fire. Nevertheless certain workshops have been closed for the duration, and the normal activity of the factory cannot be resumed until after the war.

The railway from Lyon to Grenoble was disconnected at 13 points. On the yard there were 21 lines damaged and 67 carriages destroyed. Work however was resumed as usual 8 days after the attack.

These results then are absolutely negligible and if the marshalling-yards were really aimed at as a secondary target, then one must conclude that it was part of a systematic and thorough attempt to destroy rolling-stock, rather than an attempt to paralyse momentarily a part of the French railway network, which has no strategic interest.

Attack on the railway junctions and depot (S.N.C.F.) at BELFORT, 25 May 1944

Target

The presumed objective consisted of the S.N.C.F. (Société Nationale des Chemins Ferroviaires) depot and the junction of the railways BELFORT - MULHOUSE, BELFORT - DIJON, and PARIS - BELFORT.

/Raids

G.254611/EJW/2.50/35.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

Raids

The target was again attacked (had already been attacked without great success on 11 May), on the morning of 25 May. The number of planes taking part was about 120.

Casualties

4 dead
10 injured

Effects

Telephone cables and signal boxes were damaged. Hangars and locomotives were destroyed.

There was also some damage done to houses within the district.

The traffic was completely suspended for

24 hours on the BELFORT-MULHOUSE route
48 hours on the BELFORT-DIJON route
8 days on the line of connection MULHOUSE-DIJON.

The repair shops were entirely destroyed, as well as important rolling-stock and the water installation in the depot. Practically speaking there is no longer a depot at BELFORT as reconstruction cannot be envisaged at the moment. This is incontestably the most serious result of the bombing.

Attack on SAINT-ETIENNE, 26 May 1944

Target

There were several objectives at SAINT-ETIENNE which justified the Anglo-American attack: railway installation, collieries, steelworks, Manufacture Nationale d'Armes. All these objectives, situated in the same district were more or less hit so that it is now difficult to tell from the results which of them was the special target.

Nevertheless the bombing on 26 May takes place in a series of attacks directed against the French railway network, and more particularly against that part of the network which affects communications with the Mediterranean coast. It is sufficient to recall the principal attacks on railway installations on the 25, 26, and 27 May to conclude with certainty that the attack on Saint-Etienne was part of the same plan:

25 May - CARNOULES, LYON, GIVORS, AMBERIEU
26 May - LYON, CHAMBERY, GRENOBLE, NICE, ST.-LAURENT du VAR
27 May - MARSEILLE, AVIGNON, NIMES

Raid

The attack was made by day by 150 4-engined American bombers in 5 waves of 30.

Casualties

About 1000 dead.

/Effects

G.254611/EJW/2.50/35.

S E C R E T

Effects

60 bombs fell on the steelworks, 430 in the S.N.C.F. area and some on the munitions factory (Manufacture Nationale d'Armes). The extent of damage done to the latter was slight.

The steelworks at Saint-Etienne, suffered serious damage, as about 60 bombs fell into the very heart of the factory. Among the buildings destroyed were

- the offices
- the electric station
- the machine workshops
- the workshop for the finishing and despatch of the sheet-iron.

The damage which had the most serious consequences was that done to the electric station, which completely deprived the factory of power for 4 weeks.

The principal railway installations hit were those at CHATEAUCREUX and PONT de l'ANE.

Bombs also hit the tunnel at MONTFERRE blocking the line for three weeks. Signals and locomotives were also damaged, but traffic was disrupted for only a few days.

Attack on bridge at CARRIERES-on-the-SEINE, 27 May 1944

Target

The railway bridge at CARRIERES-sur-SEINE is situated on the PARIS-ROUEN line, between ASNIERES and SARTROUVILLE.

A second route links PARIS to ROUEN via ARGENTEUIL and PONTOISE: this route crosses the viaduct of Limay near MANTES which was hit many times in May 1944.

The SARTROUVILLE bridge on the direct route was also attacked on 27 May for the first time.

All these attacks had the same purpose: the disruption of communications between Paris and Rouen.

Raid

The attack was made in the evening by 12 aircraft in 2 groups of 6 (type unidentified).

Effects

There were few bombs dropped (25 a maximum). The bridge was probably hit by 3 bombs. This was excellent really, when one considers the smallness of the target, the small number of bombs dropped, and the method used. Traffic was resumed only 28 days after the attack.

/Attack

S E C R E T

Attack on MARSEILLES, 27 May 1944.

Target

The 2 principal objectives were the stations of SAINT-CHARLES and LA BLANCARDE. The former is a terminus and has no strategic interest. The latter situated in the direction of NICE has an engine depot.

Raid

The attack was made towards noon by 130 Flying Fortresses or B.24's in 7 formations of 18 aircraft.

Casualties

There were more than 1500 killed. More than 500 houses were destroyed, as well as 2 hotels, shops, cafés, etc.

One must attribute this large number of victims to the carefree character of the populace who did not believe an air attack was possible and applied themselves without enthusiasm to the task of A.R.P.

Effects

Great damage was done to the stations SAINT-CHARLES and LA BLANCARDE. At the former 60 bombs fell on the railways of which 4 fell in the hall. The station was closed for several days.

At LA BLANCARDE the engine depot was destroyed and the lines cut. The station was closed for 2 days.

Attack on bridge at LE PECQ, 28 May and 4 June 1944.

Target

This railway bridge is situated on the Seine, between PARIS (Saint-Lazare) and ST.-GERMAIN-en-LAYE. It is relatively unimportant, ST.-GERMAIN-en-LAYE being a terminus, but its destruction was undoubtedly part of the plan which was being carried out systematically at this time to destroy the Seine bridges. Also ST.-GERMAIN-en-LAYE is an important German garrison and the H.Q. of innumerable general staffs and units, and has been already attacked several times by Anglo-American aircraft.

Raid

The attack was made by day on 28 May by 28 single-engined aircraft.

Effects

Some damage was done but traffic was not disrupted.

Attack on the railway station at AVIGNON,
27 May and 25 June 1944.

Target

This station is a very important junction which controls all the traffic down the Rhone valley for the south of France. 3 main lines meet there.

S E C R E T

In AVIGNON there is also a goods station, the marshalling-yards at FONTCOUVERTE, a large engine depot and innumerable workshops.

Raids

It is astonishing that there was a lapse of time of about a month between the two attacks, the second of which was motivated by the partial failure of the first.

The raid on 27 May was carried out during the day by approximately 100 bombers (Fortresses) in four waves of 25.

The raid on 25 June was made during the day by 150 bombers (B.24) in successive waves of 20 to 30 aircraft.

Casualties

27 May - there were several hundred casualties.
25 June - about 50 victims.

Effects

About 450 houses were destroyed, totally or partially by the 2 raids.

The ORGA factory of pharmaceutical products and the VOULANT factory of food products, situated on the edge of the AVIGNON-MARSEILLES railway were partially destroyed on 27 May and completely demolished on 25 June.

The ALFA factory and the factory at ST.-GOBAIN were also seriously damaged on 25 June.

One bomb fell in the centre of the Rhone viaduct. It exploded however in the Rhone.

On the other hand, the suspension bridge connecting AVIGNON to VILLENEUVE was cut in two by a direct hit.

On 27 May the engine depot was partially destroyed. 2 of the 3 turning bridges were damaged but are probably repairable. About 15 locomotives were badly hit. The LYON-MARSEILLES route was cut at 4 points, thereby disrupting traffic for 4 days.

On 25 June the depot received another 6 bombs, while 18 bombs hit the yards at FONTCOUVERTE. It was however the installations in the S.E. especially which suffered the most: about 150 bombs fell on the goods stations and the connecting rails. All the routes were cut, sometimes at several points and 400 carriages were badly damaged. The water supply for the engines was also affected.

Attack on the bridge at ARGENTEUIL, 11 June 1944

Target

This railway bridge is situated on the Seine between PARIS and PONTTOISE.

It affords direct connection from PARIS to DIEPPE and at this time the only remaining means of connection with Rouen.

/Raid

S E C R E T

Raid

The attack was made during the day by 6 twin-engined aircraft.

Effects

2 bombs hit the bridge causing damage which interrupted traffic for 36 hours.

Attack on airfields at TOULOUSE, 25 June 1944.

Target

The objectives were the airfields BLAGNAC and FRANCAZALS. It is impossible to say whether the purpose of the raid was simply to destroy the military installations or to damage the runway.

Raid

The total number of aircraft taking part (4-engined) was about 200.

Casualties

Only 8 injured.

Effects

At BLAGNAC the Atelier Industriel de l'Air which had already been bombed on 6 April was again hit, a number of buildings suffering some damage (offices, hangars, garage, canteen). At FRANCAZALS, 2 hangars, petrolroom, water supplies, and a munitions depot were hit.

Another munitions depot on the road from FRANCAZALS to PORTIER-SAINT SIMON was also hit.

+ + + + +

Conclusions

As to the real effects of the attacks on the French railways it is too early to draw conclusions: the railways constitute a whole, on which the destruction of any part whatsoever has its effects. The consequences of the diverse bombing-raids cannot be studied independently and only the technicians of the S.N.C.F. will be capable of finally defining, by a retrospective study of the difficulties encountered, the actual effectiveness of each blow aimed at our railway network by Anglo-American aircraft.

A.H.B.6 Distribution:-

Same as for Translation VII/75

Editor's Note

Some of these reports, prepared at the time of the attack by the local authorities, are very meagre, owing to the fact that the defence of the target concerned was entirely a German responsibility and French officials were not granted access. Other reports were somewhat coloured, presumably to please the Vichy Government.
