

4,000 TONS IN PRECISION ATTACKS

Precision attacks on four railway yards in France were made last night by most of the heavy bombers in the force of more than 1,000 aircraft despatched by Bomber Command. Two of the targets were attacked mainly by Lancasters. Two mainly by Halifaxes, and a record weight of over 4,000 tons of bombs was dropped.

The technique of attack was the same as in previous raids on these key-points of the railway system of N.W. Europe. The markings were designed to keep all the bombs within the comparatively small area occupied by the yards and workshops. Every possible check was made to ensure concentration of bombing well within the limits of the target.

The character and range of last night's attack account for the greatly increased bomb tonnage, as in a close-range attack the load of a four-engined aircraft can be stepped up.

While these great forces of Lancasters and Halifaxes continued the disruption of the French railway system, Mosquitos were attacking the German capital, and Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings were laying mines.

Reconnaissance of railway targets which have recently been attacked shows how great was the accuracy with which areas of a very few acres were marked and how close the bombs have fallen to the markers.

At Vaires, near Paris, there were well over 200 hundred craters on a railway siding, and on the forwarding sidings, there is an area of devastation too great to have been the work of any bombs. Two long depressions in the ground alone remain to show where two trains loaded with explosives once stood. Armoured fighting vehicles were thrown about the yard and a very great deal of rolling stock was destroyed. Engine sheds were hit and both roads to the locomotive turntable were cut. Many other buildings were damaged or destroyed, including carriage and wagon shops.

Photographs which have already been plotted of last night's attacks show that the bombs must have hit the bull's-eye. Clouds of smoke can be seen on both the yards near Paris which were attacked.

Noisy-le-Sec and Juvisy, two of last night's targets, are both to the east of Paris, and two other important railway centres in the Paris area - Vaires and Villeneuve St. George - have already been heavily bombed. Rouen, another of last night's targets, lies on the direct water and rail route between Paris and Le Havre-Dieppe. These three targets, together with the yards at Tergnier, have very important facilities