



## Source 1

**Extract from the official account of Bomber Command by Arthur Harris, 1945**  
(Catalogue ref: AIR 16/487)

### Questions

1. According to this account, how successful was the raid?
2. What is the attitude towards the Dresden raid? What does this suggest about the views of Harris on area bombing?
3. Explain what Harris means by the attack having a 'moral effect'?
4. Does this source provide any evidence that Harris rather than Churchill was chiefly responsible for the Dresden raid? Explain your answer.



# HEROES & VILLAINS

Churchill & Dresden > Was Churchill responsible?

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166. The attack on Dresden, the largest city (630,000 population) that had not previously been bombed, may be mentioned as one among many other highly effective operations. Apart from its industrial significance, Dresden had become of great importance as a communications centre and control point in the defence of Germany's eastern front. On the night of 13/14th February, 1945, a double attack was made on the city by a total of 805 aircraft. There was cloud over the area for the first attack, but it had cleared for a distance of 10 miles from the target before the second attack developed. Next day reconnaissance showed a vast pall of smoke from innumerable fires still burning in the city. As a result of these attacks (and two smaller Eighth U.S.A.A.F. daylight attacks on the two succeeding days) more than 1,600 acres of the closely built-up sections of Dresden were destroyed. The effect, not only on the local population, but on the whole nation is now known to have been very great. Speer mentions this attack as having a moral effect comparable to that produced by the destruction of Hamburg in 1943. Other important industrial centres in Eastern Germany previously beyond effective operational range, such as Dessau, the heart of the Junkers concern, and Chemnitz, "the Manchester of Saxony", were all attacked with outstanding results.