



## Source 2

**Another extract from the official account of Bomber Command by Arthur Harris, 1945**  
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### Questions

1. Harris took over Bomber Command in February 1942. Before this, RAF bombers had not been successful, they were inaccurate and suffered high casualties. According to Harris, what were his orders when he took control?
2. Who gave the orders?



# HEROES & VILLAINS

Churchill & Dresden > Was Churchill responsible?

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3. The main task, therefore, laid upon the Command by the Air Ministry directif letter numbered S.46368/D.C.A.S., of 14th February, 1942, was "to focus attacks on the morale of the enemy civil population, and, in particular, of the industrial workers."\* This was to be achieved by destroying, mainly by incendiary attacks, first, four large cities in the Ruhr area and, then, as opportunity offered, fourteen other industrial cities in Northern, Central and Southern Germany. The aim of attacks on town areas had already been defined in an Air Staff paper (dated 23rd September, 1941) as follows :—

"The ultimate aim of the attack on a town area is to break the morale of the population which occupies it. To ensure this we must achieve two things ; first, we must make the town physically uninhabitable and, secondly, we must make the people conscious of constant personal danger. The immediate aim, is therefore, twofold, namely, to produce (i) destruction, and (ii) the fear of death."

4. My primary authorised task was therefore clear beyond doubt : to inflict the most severe material damage on German industrial cities. This, when considered in relation to the force then available, was indeed a formidable task. Nevertheless, it was possible, but only if the force could be expanded and re-equipped as planned, and if its whole weight could be devoted to the main task with the very minimum of diversions.