**History of the 490th BG during its time in Europe during WW2**

The **490th Bombardment Group** a former [United States Army Air Forces](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army_Air_Forces) unit was activated in October 1943 . After training in the United States, it deployed to the [European Theater of Operations](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Theater_of_Operations) and participated in the [strategic bombing campaign](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_bombing_in_World_War_II#US_bombing_in_Europe) against Germany from 31 May 1944 to 20 April 1945, losing 22 aircraft while flying more than 5,000 sorties. Following [V-E Day](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-E_Day), the group returned to the United States, where it was inactivated in November 1945.

The **490th Bombardment Group** was activated at [Salt Lake City Army Air Base](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_Lake_City_Army_Air_Base), Utah on 1 October 1943, comprised four squadrons, the [848th](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/848th_Strategic_Missile_Squadron), [849th](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/849th_Strategic_Missile_Squadron), [850th](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/850th_Strategic_Missile_Squadron) and [851st](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/851st_Bombardment_Squadron). The 848th, 849th and 850th Squadrons were activated with the group at Salt Lake City, while the 851st, a former antisubmarine squadron that provided the group's [cadre](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadre_(military)), was located at [Mountain Home Army Air Field](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Home_Army_Air_Field), Idaho.

In December 1943, group [headquarters](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headquarters) and the three squadrons at Salt Lake City moved to Mountain Home, where they began training with [Consolidated B-24 Liberators](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated_B-24_Liberator). The squadrons left their training base on 9 April 1944 for the [European Theater of Operations](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Theater_of_Operations). The group's ground echelon embarked at [Camp Shanks](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Shanks), New York, sailing on the [SS *Nieuw Amsterdam*](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Nieuw_Amsterdam_(1938)) on 11 April and arriving at Liverpool in the United Kingdom on 25 April. Entraining to Diss, Norfolk before travelling the last few miles by road. The air echelon flew its planes along the southern ferry route beginning on 12 April.

The group arrived at [RAF Eye](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Eye), its combat station, on 28 April.[[2]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/490th_Bombardment_Group#cite_note-Maurer490BG-3) However, before the group could fly its first combat mission, the 850th Squadron was reassigned to [VIII Air Force Composite Command](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/VIII_Air_Force_Composite_Command) to fly [Operation Carpetbagger](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Carpetbagger) missions with the [801st Bombardment Group (Provisional)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/801st_Bombardment_Group_(Provisional)).  The remaining three squadrons of the group began combat operations on 31 May 1944. The group's initial missions were flown to prepare for [Operation Overlord](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Overlord), the invasion of Normandy, as the squadron concentrated on targets in France. It supported the landings on [D-Day](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/D-Day) and attacked [coastal defenses](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_defense_and_fortification), airfields, rail lines and vehicles near the landings. It flew [close air support](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Close_air_support) missions to assist British forces near [Caen](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caen) in July and American forces near [Brest](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brest,_France) in September. It was withdrawn from combat on 6 August 1944, to convert to the [Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_B-17_Flying_Fortress) as the [93d Combat Bombardment Wing](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/93d_Combat_Bombardment_Wing) transitioned to make the [3rd Bombardment Division](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/3d_Bombardment_Division) an all B-17 unit. While the group was transitioning aircraft, the [492nd Bombardment Group](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/492d_Bombardment_Group) replaced the 801st Group in the Carpetbagger mission on 12 August. The 850th Squadron transferred its crews and B-24s to the 492nd Group, and returned to the 490th on paper to be included in the change to the group's new bomber.

on 24 August transition to the B-17 was completed , the squadron concentrated on [strategic bombing](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_bombing_in_World_War_II#US_bombing_in_Europe), attacking [oil refineries](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_refineries), [airfields](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airfield), [marshalling yards](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshalling_yard), and factories manufacturing aircraft and armoured vehicles.It participated in raids against [Berlin](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin), [Cologne](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cologne), [Hamburg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamburg), [Hanover](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanover), [Kassel](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kassel), [Merseburg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merseburg) and [Münster](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BCnster). The 490th flew its first mission with the B-17 on 27 August to Genshagen, Germany to attack the [BMW](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/BMW) engine factory although the mission was aborted due to weather. On occasion, the squadron was diverted from the strategic bombing campaign. It attacked enemy [lines of communication](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lines_of_communication)during the [Battle of the Bulge](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Bulge) from December 1944 through January 1945. In the last month of the war in Europe, it carried out [interdiction](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interdiction) missions to support advancing ground forces.The squadron's last combat mission was flown on 20 April 1945.[[7]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/490th_Bombardment_Group#cite_note-Freeman261-8)

Following [V-E Day](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-E_Day), the squadron carried food to flooded areas of the Netherlands and transported [prisoners of war](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prisoners_of_war) to [Allied](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II) repatriation centres. The air echelon began flying its planes back to the United States on 6 July 1945. The ground echelon sailed from [Southampton](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southampton) on the [RMS *Queen Elizabeth*](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Queen_Elizabeth) on 26 August 1945.The unit regrouped at [Drew Field](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drew_Field), Florida in September and inactivated there on 7 November 1945.