

## An A to Z of Dragonlore (*eleventh instalment*)

TOVE, a slithy creature noted in passing in *Jabberwocky*.

TRAGOPAN, a bird like an eagle but with ram's horns, as noted by a Tudor herald; the name is now given to an oriental pheasant with a horn-shaped feathered crest, probably known to the ancients.

TRIFFID, the brilliant invention of the novelist John Wyndham, perhaps not a beast but certainly a monster, it appears first in the guise of a plant but becomes carnivorous and capable of locomotion.

TRITON, the heraldic merman, usually shown holding a trident and a conch.

TROGODICE, a Tudor heraldic monster like a stag with antlers pointing downwards and forwards, similar to those of a reindeer.

TROLL, a gnome-like creature from Norse mythology, properly from the realm of Fairyland.

TYGER, a fanciful heraldic monster with a spiky nose and tusks, evidently derived in Tudor times from the natural tiger, which, when it appears in modern heraldry, is termed a Bengal tiger.

TYPHON, a creation-monster from Greek mythology possibly derived from volcanic fires and fierce winds, and father of many other monsters, he was eventually overcome by Zeus.

UNDINE, the elemental water-spirit of Paracelsus, a kind of mermaid.

UNICORN, known to classical antiquity, this attractive ungulate with the singular horn became a favourite with mediaeval moralists, was adopted as a mascot by the Scottish royal family, and thence arrived in the United Kingdom as a Royal Supporter, along with the Lion; this archetypal pair is probably the best-known of all the heraldic supporters in the world. Although no longer reckoned as a genuine zoological species, the Unicorn still casts its spell on the imagination and remains one of the most popular of fabulous beasts.

URISK, an elemental man-goat from the Scottish Highlands that lives near waterfalls.

UROBOROS, a "tail-eating" serpent or dragon of Northern Europe, more symbolic than mythological, it is a favourite in church decorations.

USOMGAL, a Sumerian serpentine monster, praiseworthy rather than evil.

VAMPIRE, a blood-sucking monster who could transform himself into the shape of a bat.

WAKONDA, a North American Thunderbird from the Great Lakes tribes.

WENDIGO, a vicious man-eating monster known to the Algonquin in North America, it had a heart of ice and was so hungry for flesh that it had eaten its own lips away.

*To be continued:*

**Predicted in 1994 by Ralph Brocklebank**

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# Dragonlore

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Some RAF Squadron Badges drawn by Roland Symons

## The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Following on from the introduction to RAF Squadron Badges in issue No 9, we can now reproduce some of the drawings prepared by Roland Symons for **Knights of the Sky: Part Five—Numbered Flying Squadrons** by B. Holliss and R. Symons (Newport Pagnell 1992), and have selected some of the less common beasts.

*On the cover:*

No 45 Squadron chose a Winged Camel, to indicate service in Egypt and also because it had flown the Sopwith Camel fighter plane during the First World War. This aircraft was given its nickname from the humped fuselage in front of the cockpit, but it was a great success and the name became official. Other squadron badges derived from named aircraft include the Bulldog, Demon, Dolphin, Elephant, Flycatcher, Fox, Gamecock, Gauntlet, Hart, Hind and possibly Salamander. Eagle, Lion and Tiger were names of aero engines that inspired squadron badges. There seem to have been very few aircraft named after fabulous beasts.

No 79 Squadron had a Salamander, symbolic of resistance to fire.

No 109 had a Panther Incensed, for attack during night-time hunting.

No 129 had a Gunda Bherunda of Mysore, a mythical bird said to confer might, majesty and victory (and what about dominion and power?).

*On the next page:*

No 142 had a Winged Sphinx to mark service in Egypt; note that it is an Egyptian Sphinx with wings added, not a Greek Sphinx which was winged to start with.

No 165 had a Dragon with two heads to symbolise readiness to fight in all directions.

No 208 had a Giza Sphinx in frontal view, again marking service in Egypt.

No 210 had a Griffin, surprisingly said to represent the Squadron's long period of duty stationed in Wales.

Note that the form of crown on all these badges was that used during the reigns of Kings George V and VI. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth II the crowns on the badges of all units in service as well as on new badges granted were in the form preferred by Her Majesty with the depressed centre to the arches.

Coloured versions of the badges of Squadrons that were in service at the time are reproduced in **Per Ardua Ad Astra—A Handbook of the Royal Air Force** by Philip Congdon (Airlife, Shrewsbury 1987); these include the Dolphin (19 Squadron), Demi-Pegasus (28), Winged Lion (207), Giza Sphinx (208), Cockatrice (3), Pegasus (18), Phoenix (56 & 57) and a Winged Demi-Lion (70), while an Enfield is in the badge of No 38 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force..



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### REVIEW

**The Encyclopedia of Monsters** by Daniel Cohen (UK ed:- Guild, London 1989) This useful work of reference was originally published in America in 1982, and takes an original approach to its subject, treating press reports of rumours, myths, unconfirmed sightings and even outright hoaxes with great objectivity. There is scarcely a deep lake or wide bog anywhere in the world without its legendary monster, nor a wooded mountainous area without its hairy primate. It is instructive to see how tales of unseen creatures build up in the popular imagination until people are quite convinced that they have experienced for themselves something that previously existed only in the world of mythology. Such happenings still frequently occur and nowadays include giant predators, aliens from outer space, crop circles and other unexplained phenomena.