

The Squadron Badge

by Ron Ward

At the latter end of the research for our book 'From Auster to Apache' we received a request from the squadron 'Story line' team on the origins of the Squadron Badge.

I initially approached Les Rogers who delved into his recall system and he remembered seeing copies of the squadron badges in the archive of the Museum of Army Flying. Mark Meaton and the museum staff made a search but did not find the said badges but did find a document produced by Major John Cross in 1992, 'AAC Squadrons' badges - heraldic descriptions' which gave us the answer.

656	Air OP	Feb 47	In front of two gun barrels in saltire, proper, mouths upwards, a Chinthe's head or
			Volans et Videns (Flying and seeing)
			The Chinthe is the mythical lion which guards temples, and this reflects the squadron's first theatre of operations, Burma

As we all know, having bought and read the Book, the Squadron formed in December 1942 and quickly moved to India then on to Burma, the rest you all know!!



**656 Air OP Squadron RAF
1942 - 1952**



**656 Air OP Squadron RAF
1952 - 1957**



656 Lt. Ac. Sqn. Army Air Corps 1957 – 1964
656 Sqn. Army Air Corps 1964 --

The decision on the design was made during the period when the Squadron was finally certain of their destination in the Far East and approved in February 1947. The choice of a Chinthe as a centre piece to crossed Gun Barrels was an inspiration. The rest, at that time, was a standard design for the RAF. Ted Maslen-Jones has an original painting by the College of Arms, signed by the Chester Herald. At the time J.D.Heaton Armstrong was the Inspector of Air Force Badges.

The 'Crown' is that of the reigning monarch worn at their Coronation.

1. RAF: has both the Imperial Crown of George VI (Albert Frederick Arthur George; 14 December 1895 – 6 February 1952) and the St Edward's Crown of Elizabeth II (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary; born 21 April 1926).
2. AAC: has the St Edward's Crown with a red tie at the bottom which joins the scroll to the wreath.

St Edward's Crown takes its name from St Edward the Confessor, although the present crown is a reconstruction made for the coronation of King Charles II in 1661. Two-dimensional representations of the crown are used in coats of arms, badges, and various other insignia throughout the Commonwealth to indicate the authority of the reigning sovereign. Two of the Queen's predecessors - Victoria and King Edward VII - turned down the solid gold St Edward Crown for their coronation because it is so heavy. They opted instead for the Imperial State Crown, in which is set the famous 14th-century black ruby of the Black Prince. Modifications have been made, over the years, to make the crown more comfortable however.