



# **UFOs of the First World War: Phantom Airships, Balloons, Aircraft and Other Mysterious Aerial Phenomena**

*By Nigel Watson*

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## **A comprehensive look at the UFO rumors and scares of World War I**

Lieutenant R.S. Maxwell took off in his BE2C fighter but saw nothing unusual until 8:25 when according to his report: "My engine was missing irregularly and it was only by keeping the speed of the machine down to 50 mph that I was able to stay at 10,000 feet. I distinctly saw an artificial light to the north of me, and at about the same height. I followed this light northeast for nearly 20 minutes, but it seemed to go slightly higher and just as quickly as myself, and eventually I lost it completely in the clouds." Such sightings occurred frequently during the war. The reasons are fascinating in themselves: the first is that aviation is in its infancy, so light phenomena at altitude are a new experience. The second is fear: for the first time a real threat came from the skies. It wasn't just the Western Front: on August 21, 1915, 20 New Zealand soldiers saw eight bread-loaf shaped clouds over Hill 60, Suvla Bay. "A British regiment, the First-Fourth Norfolk, of several hundred men, was then noticed marching . . . towards Hill 60." They marched into the cloud, which lifted off the ground, and were never seen again.

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#### About the Author

**Nigel Watson** has written for numerous publications, including *All About History*, *All About Space*, *Beyond*, *Fortean Times*, *History Today*, *Paranormal Magazine*, *UFO Matrix*, and *Wired.com*. He is the author of several books, including the *Haynes UFO Investigations Manual*.

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