

# Phantom German Air Raids on Canada

## War Hysteria in Quebec and Ontario During the First World War

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In late August of 1914, Canada entered the First World War following the unanimous vote of a special session of Parliament. This event occurred amid great exuberance and unanimity, and was marked by parades, decorations, cheering crowds and patriotic speeches. Canada was situated far from the European front lines, and its distant, vast land mass and cold climate also contributed to a feeling of insulation from attack or invasion. However, despite a general feeling of distance from the war's unfolding events, there was a rapidly growing realization that German sympathizers and enemy agents might pose a more immediate threat.

During the First World War, a series of espionage dramas unfolded among the belligerent countries. Canada and the United States had their share of confirmed spy scandals, acts of subversion and sabotage, and there was considerable concern among Canadians that German-Americans and sympathizers, acting on orders from Berlin or independently, might cross the border intent on crippling Canada's war efforts. In reality, the acts of espionage, sabotage and subversion that took place had relatively little impact on everyday life in the US or Canada, or the war's outcome. The few successful incidents that did occur only heightened fears and suspicions surrounding the intentions of German sympathizers in Canada, and especially the United States. It is difficult to give an exact figure to the number of enemy acts in Canada during the war as "there was hardly a major fire, explosion, or industrial accident which was not attributed to enemy sabotage," and by the time

an incident had been thoroughly investigated, it "invariably led elsewhere."<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1914, an anti-German hysteria steadily rose in North America, and would not subside until well after the Armistice agreement ended the war on 11 November 1918.

During the Great War vivid imaginations and wild rumours were the order of the day, and politicians did little to ease fears. For instance, in the US, President Woodrow Wilson told Congress that Germans "filled our unsuspecting communities with spies and conspirators."<sup>2</sup> In America, the German scare reached such proportions that foods, streets, schools, businesses, and cities with Germanic names were renamed; communities prohibited German music or theatre performances; and suspected traitors were occasionally assaulted, tarred and feathered, or hanged by vigilantes.<sup>3</sup> A similar paranoia swept across Canada as schools and universities stopped teaching German as a language, the city of Berlin was renamed Kitchener, and the Anti-German League was formed to rid Canada of all German influence including products and immigrants.<sup>4</sup> In August of 1915, miners in Fernie, British Columbia, refused to work until alien employees at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company were dismissed, after which they were promptly placed in a makeshift internment camp.<sup>5</sup> As in the US, Dominion politicians further stoked the fires of public hysteria. For instance, the former Saskatchewan lieutenant governor made the sensational claim that 30 percent of Canada's newer provinces were comprised of "alien

enemies, who made little secret of their desire to see the flag of Germany waving over the Canadian West."<sup>6</sup> Between 1914 to 1918, 8,579 German and Austro-Hungarian-Canadian men were placed in internment camps.<sup>7</sup> But clearly, Canadians viewed the greater threat as coming from the US, where in 1910 there were nearly 10 million German-Americans.<sup>8</sup>

Of the many rumours to circulate across Canada during the war, one was particularly persistent and widespread. From the very onset of hostilities, it was widely rumoured that Germans-Americans, sympathetic to the Kaiser, had been secretly drilling to conduct large-scale military raids or an invasion into Canada.<sup>9</sup> During January 1915 alone, the British consul in Los Angeles warned Canadian authorities that German sympathizers were planning attacks on Port Arthur, Fort William and Winnipeg.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile,

The consul general in New York, growing increasingly agitated, claimed that a raid on Canada was imminent and that the Germans had mustered five thousand men in Chicago and up to four thousand in Buffalo. The foreign office in London [claimed]... that a 'reliable source' had reported that a group of eight thousand men had been formed in Boston and that bombing raids on Halifax and St. John's could be expected.<sup>11</sup>

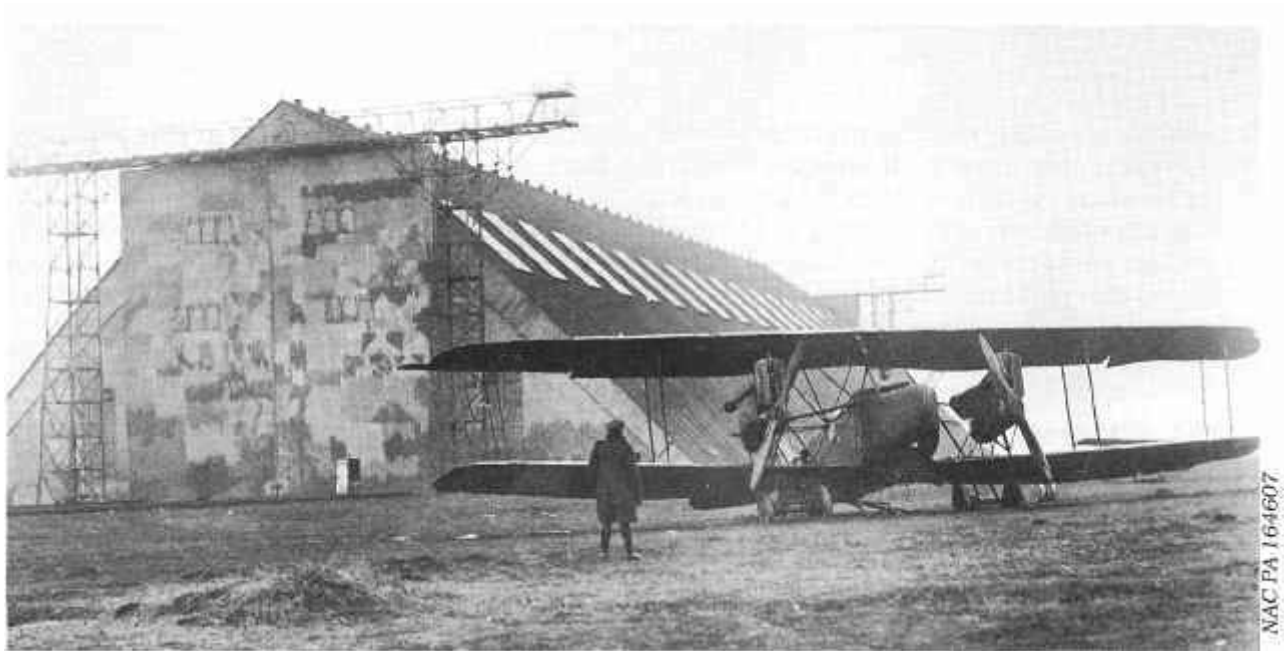
As "imagination ran wild, and on the flimsiest of what passed as evidence," there were scores of false accusations about scheming Germans on both sides of the border.<sup>12</sup> British consul-general Sir Courtney Bennett, stationed in New York, held top honours for being the worst offender.<sup>13</sup> Early in 1915, Bennett made several sensational claims about a plan in which as many as 80,000 well-armed, highly trained Germans who had been drilling in Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York, were planning to invade Canada from northwestern New York State. Despite the improbability of his assertions, it was a testament to the deep anxiety and suspicion of the period that Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden requested a report on the invasion stories, which Canadian Police Commissioner Sherwood assessed to be without foundation.<sup>14</sup>

In conjunction with the German scare, recent rapid advances in aeronautics contributed to a growing insecurity among Canadians that they could be vulnerable to aerial attack. Amid these

concerns, rumours circulated that German sympathizers from within Canada or from the United States were planning to launch surprise bombing raids or espionage missions using aeroplanes flown from secret, remote airstrips.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that within the context of the outbreak of the First World War and Canada's involvement, the aeroplane raid appeared plausible. One press account stated: "the fact that the country is at war and the Germans and pro-Germans abound across the border renders it quite within the bounds of possibility, if not probability, that such a raid might occur."<sup>18</sup>

It was within this context that a series of phantom aeroplane scares swept across Ontario and Quebec provinces between 1914 and 1916. Aeroplanes of the period were crude affairs, very limited in manoeuvrability, and night flying held its own risks, with the first nocturnal flight not occurring until 1910 and lasting just 20 kilometres.<sup>17</sup> Sightings over Canada during the war were almost exclusively confined to observations of nocturnal lights.

The first reports were confined to southeastern Ontario, and began in the village of Sweaburg, six miles south of Woodstock, on Wednesday evening, 13 August 1914, when High County Constable Hobson and numerous residents reported seeing "two large aeroplanes" pass from east to west at about 7:30.<sup>18</sup> Sporadic sightings of mysterious aeroplanes were reported over the next two weeks by many farmers in the region, and in such places as Aylmer, Tillsonburg, and Port Stanley.<sup>19</sup> As a result, a special guard was placed at the wireless station in Port Burwell on Lake Erie.<sup>20</sup> The next major incident occurred at about 9 pm on 3 September when three aeroplanes were observed over the oil town of Petrolea<sup>21</sup> sweeping the countryside with powerful searchlights. Scores of residents watched the spectacle for hours as "every field glass in Petrolea was brought into requisition."<sup>22</sup> The "aeroplanes" were widely thought "to have some connection with Great Britain's war against Germany."<sup>23</sup> One "plane" was observed to fly in the direction of Oil Springs, while a second hovered near Kingscourt, and a third appeared to travel eastward toward London along the Grand Trunk, "evidently scanning the line carefully."<sup>24</sup> Petrolea police chief Fletcher was in communication with nearby communities and immediately began conducting witness interviews.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, military



Although German bombers, such as the one pictured above, never flew in Canadian skies during the First World War, mass hysteria led to the fear of such an occurrence on numerous occasions.

authorities attempted to allay fears and suggested the possibility that they were privately owned aircraft.<sup>26</sup> There were also reports that the planes may have been owned by an American pilot crossing the border at night.<sup>27</sup>

Several observations of "a mysterious aeroplane" were reported near Hamilton during early September and prompted military personnel to investigate.<sup>28</sup> After a spate of sightings between 8-10 September at Springbank, residents were described as "greatly stirred."<sup>29</sup> One witness was Fred Bridge, who urged Canadian authorities to take the reports seriously.

With my neighbour, I have seen the flashlights which swept the countryside and have heard the roar of the motors. Last night three of them came down over Springbank...

The people of London [Ontario] are not taking this matter seriously enough. Some of those fellows will drop something in the reservoir and cause no end of trouble. I am a time-expired man of the British army...[and if] the call is urgent I am prepared to respond... every farmer in the community should be given a rifle and service ammunition by the department of militia, that these spy aviators might be brought down.<sup>30</sup>

By mid-September, the military had issued orders to fire on aeroplanes seen within 14 miles of any wireless stations,<sup>31</sup> and one American plane was even shot at near the border.<sup>32</sup> As the war tension continued, a short-lived panic occurred in Toronto on Saturday 10 October,

when a large fluttering kite flown in the city centre caused a traffic jam as anxious crowds gathered to try to identify the object, and some residents even dove for cover. The incident exemplified the "nervous state into which even Toronto is thrown by the talk of war and of raiding aeroplanes."<sup>33</sup> During mid-October, several residents on the outskirts of Sault Ste. Marie claimed to have observed an illuminated aeroplane rise into the sky from the American side of the border near Soo Locks and sail over the river above the Canadian locks, which were under close guard by militiamen.<sup>34</sup>

Considerable alarm was caused in the city of London on the morning of 21 October, when several soldiers reported that an aeroplane carrying a powerful spotlight flew directly over the Wolseley Barracks and nearby ordnance stores at about 5:50 am. Sergeant Joseph, who was on guard duty, stated:

It was an aeroplane all right...I and three members of the guard were sitting around the camp fire when we heard the purr of engines and looking up saw the aeroplane coming from the northeast of the barracks. It had a bright light and was travelling rapidly. It came practically over us and the ordnance stores and then turned to the east and south. There was no use firing at it for it flew too high and at too rapid a rate. It was an aeroplane, of that we are sure.<sup>35</sup>

This incident followed a series of aeroplane sightings and reports of aerial motor sounds in

the vicinity of London over the previous several weeks, which upon investigation had been traced to toy balloons or boat engines.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, shortly after the barracks sighting at London, Canadian military authorities once again reiterated the unlikelihood of a spy or war plane flying overhead, since, it was argued, spies could travel the city unmolested in broad daylight and achieve similar results. They also wondered why planes on a secret mission would use brilliant searchlights that would surely attract attention.<sup>37</sup>

Scattered sightings continued during November. On the Canadian portion of Niagara Falls, guards watching over the Toronto power plant reported seeing what appeared to be signal lights being flashed from the American side of the border across Lake Ontario. The lights would appear during the early morning hours and consisted of red, yellow and green colours. The militiamen believed the lights were held in order "to form different combinations. A close watch is being kept for spies."<sup>38</sup> During this period there were also rumours of sightings in numerous Canadian villages including Forestville, Quebec.<sup>39</sup>

In the early morning hours of 3 December, a major scare occurred in Toronto as a series of ambiguous rumbling noises were widely thought to have been an aeroplane raid. It was later suggested that the city's cyclone dredge, in conjunction with war jitters, was responsible for the scare. In the light of day, when it was realized what had happened, the Toronto *Daily Star* somewhat sarcastically described the episode as follows:

Aeroplane Raid Robs Citizens of Slumber  
Ominous Rumbling, Apparently  
Coming From Sky, Caused  
Widespread Uneasiness

Half of Toronto sat up in bed last night and held its breath, listening to the Germans in aeroplanes flying about over the roof. Towards five o'clock...the Star office was deluged with reports that included window and picture rattling, purring noises and everything but bombs. From their reports it was learned that the Germans had investigated Bleeker street at 12 p.m., Indian road and Clinton street at 4 a.m., and had stood directly over 45 St. George street at 4:30 a.m.<sup>40</sup>

The sightings were sporadic until mid-February, with reports of aeroplanes near Niagara Falls on

10 December<sup>41</sup> and Montreal during the early morning hours of 11 January.<sup>42</sup>

The biggest scare began on 14 February, 1915, at 9:15 p.m., at Brockville, a community on the US border, nestled along the St. Lawrence River. Constables Storey, Thompson and Glacier, and several residents became convinced that three or four aeroplanes had passed by the city, to the northeast, heading in the direction of Ottawa, situated about 60 miles due north. The actual observations were vague, with the exception of "light balls" falling from the sky.<sup>43</sup>

"The first machine was flying very rapidly and very high. Very little could be seen, but the unmistakable sounds of the whirring motor made the presence of the aircraft known."<sup>44</sup> Five minutes later a second machine was heard, then suddenly three balls of light descended from the sky, plunging several hundred feet and extinguishing as they hit the river. A few minutes thereafter, vague observations of two more aeroplanes were reported to be passing over the city.<sup>45</sup>

As word of the sightings spread throughout Brockville, its inhabitants became "wildly excited."<sup>46</sup> At 10:30 pm, the Brockville Police Chief sent an urgent telegram to Premier Sir Robert Borden, who summoned Colonel Percy Sherwood, Chief of Dominion Police, and after consultation with military authorities, all lights in the Parliament buildings were extinguished and every blind was drawn.<sup>47</sup> Marksmen were posted at several vantage points on Parliament Hill, while the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers kept in close communication in the event of an attack during the night. News of the possible attack spread rapidly, and several Members of Parliament rushed to the roof of the main building to see if they could spot any aircraft.

The scare in Canada was intensified the following morning, when the Toronto *Globe* implied that an air raid had actually occurred. Its banner, front-page headlines stated: "OTTAWA IN DARKNESS AWAITS AEROPLANE RAID. SEVERAL AEROPLANES MAKE A RAID INTO THE DOMINION OF CANADA. Entire City of Ottawa in Darkness, Fearing Bomb-Droppers. Machines Crossed St. Lawrence River.. Seen by many Citizens Heading for the Capital-One was



*On 14 February 1915 the biggest air raid scare of the war occurred when enemy aircraft were "detected" crossing the border near Brockville, Ontario. A warning was sent to Ottawa which led to a blackout being ordered on Parliament Hill and marksmen being deployed to counter the expected attack.*

Equipped with Powerful Searchlights-Fire Balls Dropped." On the American side, the *New York Times* description of the incident the next morning was much more cautious, with its headlines stating in part: "Scare in Ottawa Over Air Raid...but Police Chief's Report is Vague." The same paper also noted that the Police Chief in Ogdensburg, New York, just 12 miles down the St. Lawrence River from Brockville, stated that no one had reported seeing or hearing anything at the time the aeroplanes were said to have passed near Brockville. In addition, flying machines were also sighted at Gananoque, in Ontario,<sup>48</sup> and other observations of unusual aerial objects were redefined. For instance, once the news of the sightings spread, an Ogdensburg farmer told police that he had seen an aeroplane on 12 February flying toward Canada.<sup>49</sup>

On the following night, 15 February, and the early morning hours of the 16th, the Parliament buildings again remained dark, and marksmen were posted at strategic locations.<sup>50</sup> This appears to have been both a precautionary and face-saving measure, as information was rapidly coming to hand which indicated that a series of toy balloons had been sent aloft the previous night on the American side, and mistaken for enemy aeroplanes. In Parliament, Premier Robert Borden was defensive, and when asked for

information on the "invasion," replied that he had left the matter to the judgement of the Chief of Staff and Chief of Dominion Police.<sup>51</sup> The Canadian press, such as the *Toronto Globe*, was also left embarrassed, as it had reported the aerial incursion as a certainty in its previous edition. However, in its next edition, it blamed the affair on "hysterical" residents in Brockville.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, the charred remains of two large toy balloons<sup>53</sup> had been found in the vicinity of Brockville, which local residents, in turn, blamed on boys from nearby Morristown.<sup>54</sup> A number of toy balloons in other locations had also been sent aloft by Americans on 14-15 February, in commemoration of the centenary of peace.<sup>55</sup> An adviser for the Canadian Aviation Corps, Mr. J.A.D. McCurdy, stated that a mission by German sympathizers from northern New York was highly improbable, especially given the difficulty in night flying.<sup>56</sup>

The last major wave of sightings during the First World War occurred during mid-July. In the first week of the month, an aeroplane reportedly landed in a field near Nolan Junction, Quebec. It was claimed that two men carrying plans and papers disembarked, then shortly after flew off toward Montreal.<sup>57</sup> On 16 July, an illuminated aeroplane was seen by blacksmith Silvanus Edworthy in London,<sup>58</sup> while on the morning of



*A sentry stands guard in Toronto in early 1916. The ability of Germany to launch an air attack on Canada during the First World War was non-existent, but supposed sightings, fuelled by "eye witness" accounts published in the newspapers led many to believe that such attacks were possible, and maybe even probable.*

as an aeroplane about to attack.<sup>68</sup> Finally, the last known scare during the war occurred at Windsor, when a biplane was sighted by hundreds of anxious residents for about thirty minutes on 6 July. Several persons using binoculars actually claimed "to distinguish the figure of the aviator."<sup>69</sup>

### **Social Psychological Aspects of the War Scare**

**T**he phantom aeroplane raids and spy missions across Ontario and Quebec during the First World War, are classic examples of a collective delusion. The literature on such episodes indicates the pivotal role of several key factors. These include the presence of ambiguity, anxiety, the spread of rumours and false but plausible beliefs, and a redefinition of the potential threat from general and distant to specific and imminent. Exacerbating factors include the fallibility of human perception, mass media influence in spreading the fears, recent geo-political events, and actions or reassurances from authority figures and institutions of social control such as the police and military.<sup>70</sup>

The outbreak of the First World War generated extraordinary anxiety in Canada, as did concerns about the allegiance of German-Canadians and German-Americans. It was not known whether they possessed the motivation, means and resources to launch aerial missions. Recent advances in aviation technology lent plausibility to the rumours. The ambiguous night-time sky was ideal for fostering misperceptions of stars, planets and other natural phenomena. When an observer scrutinizes an object such as a star, it can appear to change colour, flicker and move.<sup>71</sup> Of particular interest is what social psychologists call "the autokinetic effect." This illusion was first identified by Muzafer Sherif in 1936,<sup>72</sup> who found that in a dark environment, when people stare at a single point of light, the light appears to move - often dramatically - even

the 17th a craft was seen near Massena, Ontario.<sup>59</sup> During mid-month, aeroplanes were widely reported by numerous residents flying in the vicinity of Quebec City<sup>60</sup> and Montreal.<sup>61</sup> When the craft was seen near a factory in Rigaud, the lights were extinguished and precautions taken to protect the place from possible attack.<sup>62</sup> On Sunday night the 18th, a military guard at the Point Edward wireless station fired five shots at what he took to be aeroplanes, and two large paper balloons plummeted to earth.<sup>63</sup>

At 11 p.m. on 20 July, when a mysterious aircraft was sighted by several citizens of Chateauguy near Montreal, speculation became rife that a German resident of that town for the past five years was believed to have flown secretly across the border to the US. The man had been closely watched since the outbreak of hostilities, and disappeared the night the plane was sighted.<sup>64</sup>

Widely scattered nocturnal aeroplane sightings continued until July of 1916, including sightings at Tillsonburg on 22 July,<sup>65</sup> and London on 8 August of 1915.<sup>66</sup> On 5 February 1916, a railway worker spotted two aeroplanes near Montreal. There was thought to be a connection between this sighting and a suspicious man was seen at about the same time under the Victoria Bridge. Fearing an attempt to blow up the bridge, guards on the structure opened fire on the figure, who fled.<sup>67</sup> Several days later on 13 February, a rare configuration of Venus and Jupiter resulted in a brilliant light in the western sky that was mistaken by hundreds of residents of London

though in reality it is stationary. The difficulties in judging distance and movement under such conditions occur because objects such as buildings, cars and people usually provide a familiar frame of reference with which to base judgements. However, in dark settings these cues are either greatly diminished or not available.<sup>73</sup> This situation is similar to Canadians staring at the sky in search of German aeroplanes at night. Human perception is highly unreliable,<sup>74</sup> and people are prone to interpreting objects in their environment that reflect their mental outlook or world-view at the time.<sup>75</sup>

It is difficult to imagine Canadian military authorities handling the sporadic sightings more successfully than they did, short of censoring press accounts. While realizing a responsibility to investigate reports, they simultaneously issued confident, reassuring press statements which helped to contain the spread of each episode, and avoid public panic. Ironically, the very act of conducting an investigation may have lent credence to public perceptions that there was something to the sightings. The Canadian press was more influential in triggering episodes. On several occasions the language of their accounts treated the existence of a hostile aeroplane as a certainty, and the publication of eyewitness reports intermittently rekindled public attention on the issue, and provided a semblance of legitimation to the rumours of their existence.

It is suspected that group delusions, similar to those which struck the populations in Ontario and Quebec during the First World War, are relatively common occurrences during periods of war or war threats.<sup>76</sup> At the time of occurrence such episodes may appear to be of paramount importance, but once their psychological origin becomes evident, they are soon forgotten. This is why so little has been written on this fascinating part of our war heritage.

## Notes

I wish to thank Professor Thomas Bullard, Department of Folklore, Indiana University at Bloomington, who supplied the press accounts used in this article.

1. Desmond Morton, "Sir William Otter and Internment Operations in Canada during the First World War," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 55(1), 1974. pp.32-58.

2. F. MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.23.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.25-26.
4. Morton, p.36.
5. Morton, p.46.
6. Morton, pp.48-49.
7. Morton, p.33; R.H. Keyserlingk, "Agents within the Gates': The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada during World War II," *Canadian Historical Review*, 66(2), 1985, pp.211-239.
8. MacDonnell, p.21.
9. M. Kitchen, "The German Invasion of Canada in the First World War," *The International History Review*, 7(2), 1985, pp.245-260.
10. Kitchen, p.246.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
13. G.S. Mount, *Canada's Enemies: Spies and Spying in the Peaceable Kingdom* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), p.40.
14. *Ibid.*, p.40.
15. Throughout this article I will refer to aircraft of the period as "aeroplanes" instead of the present spelling "airplane," as the former spelling was the standard usage at the time.
16. "Police force augmented," *London Evening Free Press*, 15 February 1915, p.1.
17. C.H. Gibbs-Smith, *Aviation: An Historical Survey from its Origins to the End of World War II*, (London: HMSO, 1985), p. 152.
18. "Reports aeroplanes over Oxford village," *London Free Press* [Ontario], 13 August 1914, p.2.
19. "Airship in Western Ontario," *Toronto Star*, 31 August 1914, p.5.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Presently spelled "Petrolia."
22. "Three aeroplanes scan topography of the province," *London Free Press*, 5 September 1914, p.8.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. "Petrolia planes...Military men say, 'We shouldn't worry,'" *London Free Press*, 5 September 1914, p.2.
26. "Why get excited?" *London Free Press*, 5 September 1914, p.16.
27. "Believe 'aeroplane' is an American one," *London Free Press*, 5 September 1914, p.16.
28. "Mysterious flyer now at Hamilton," *London Free Press*, 12 September 1914, p.5.
29. "Pipe line road saw three aeroplanes. Mr. Fred Bridge...and other people say they saw spies," *London Free Press*, 11 September 1914, p.9.
30. *Ibid.*
31. "Airships restricted in flights in Canada," *Toronto Globe*, 18 September 1914, p.7; "Asks permission to fly over Ontario..." *London Free Press*, 28 September 1914, p.3.
32. *Niagara Falls Gazette*, 17 September 1914, p.1.
33. "Had an aeroplane scare," *Toronto Star*, 10 October 1914, p.10.
34. "Aeroplane reported hovering over Soo Locks. Residents claim to have seen craft rise from south of American canal," *Toronto Globe*, 20 October 1914, p.9.
35. "Soldiers claim they saw airship over barracks...Flew directly over the ordnance stores department. Men are emphatic there was no mistake," *London Evening Free Press* [Ontario], 21 October 1914, p.1.

36. "Many reports," *London Evening Free Press*, 21 October 1914, p.1.
37. "Still see them, but military authorities are not worrying," *London Free Press*, 23 October 1914, p.2.
38. "Signal across river?" *Buffalo Express* [New York], 19 November 1914, p.7.
39. "Seeing things in air. Forestville man says two aeroplanes went over town in dark," *Buffalo Express*, 21 November 1914, p.7.
40. "Aeroplane raid..." *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 December 1914, p.6.
41. "Saw an aeroplane," *Niagara Falls Gazette* [Niagara Falls, New York], 12 December 1914, p.9.
42. "Strange aeroplane appears six miles from Montreal. Ottawa officials..will investigate matter immediately," *London Evening Free Press*, 11 January 1915, p.2.
43. "Brockville's story of the air craft. Dropped fireballs as they crossed river..." *Toronto Globe*, 15 February 1915.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. "Scare in Ottawa over air raid. Parliament buildings darkened on report that three aeroplanes crossed the border," *New York Times*, 15 February 1915, p. 1.
48. "Were also seen at Gananoque," *New York Times*, 15 February 1915, p. 1; "Brockville's story of the aircraft..." *Toronto Globe*, February 15, 1915.
49. "Ogdensburg heard of this Friday," *New York Times*, 15 February 1915, p.1.
50. "Ottawa again dark..." *New York Times*, 16 February 1915, p.4.
51. "Parliament Hill in darkness," *Toronto Globe*, 16 February 1915, p.2.
52. "Were toy balloons and not aeroplanes! Brockville's latest on Sunday night's scare..." *Toronto Globe*, 16 February 1915, p.1.
53. Toy balloons were also popularly referred to as "fire balloons," and commonly available at shops selling fireworks. They were composed of paper with candles attached near the mouth and made buoyant through the generation of heat.
54. *Ibid.*, p.1.
55. "Ottawa again dark..." *New York Times*, 16 February 1915, p.4; "Were toy balloons..." *Toronto Globe*, 16 February 1915, pp.1-2.
56. "Air raid from the states improbable..." *Toronto Globe*, 16 February 1915, p.7.
57. "Saw aeroplane...after landing, took flight towards Montreal," *London Free Press* [Ontario], 6 July 1915, p.1.
58. "Saw an aeroplane...passed over the southern part of city," *London Evening Free Press*, 17 July 1915, p.3.
59. "...People near Massena, Ont., spy strange lights in Heavens," *London Evening Free Press*, 20 July 1915, p.9.
60. "Saw aeroplanes hovering over city of Quebec. Fully creditable persons reported to have noticed mysterious aircraft," *London Evening Free Press*, 21 July 1915, p.1.
61. "Strange airships seen hovering near Montreal," *London Evening Free Press*, 19 July 1915, p.7.
62. *Ibid.*
63. "Point Edward guard brings down balloons. Were at first thought to be aeroplanes..." *London Evening Free Press*, 21 July 1915, p.7.
64. "French believe German officer 'flew the loop,'" *London Evening Free Press*, 22 July 1915, p. 1.
65. "Mysterious light passes Tillsonburg," 23 July 1915, p.2.
66. "Another aeroplane seen over the city," *London Free Press* [Ontario], 9 August 1915, p.2.
67. "Two aeroplanes...close to Montreal," *London Evening Free Press*, 7 February 1916, p. 1.
68. "Display in sky mistaken for an aerial invasion," *London Evening Free Press*, 14 February 1916, p. 12.
69. "Unknown aviator surveys Windsor," *London Evening Free Press*, 7 July 1916, p. 14.
70. The most widely cited study of mass delusions remains sociologist Neil J. Smelser's *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1961). In it, Smelser identifies these common elements in comprising episodes of "mass hysteria."
71. E.U. Condon, (Project director) and D.S. Gillmor, éd., *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects* (New York: Bantam, 1969); W.R. Corliss, éd., *Handbook of Unusual Natural Phenomena* (Glen Arm, MD, The Sourcebook Project 1977); W.R. Corliss, éd., *Mysterious Universe: A Handbook of Astronomical Anomalies* (Glen Arm, MD, The Sourcebook Project, 1979),
72. M. Sherif, *The Psychology of Social Norms* (New York: Harper & Row, 1936).
73. J. Sabini, *Social Psychology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), pp.24-25.
74. E. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); R. Buckhout, "Nearly 2000 Witnesses can be Wrong." *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 16, 1980, pp.307-310; D.F. Ross, et al. *Adult Eyewitness Testimony: Current Trends and Developments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
75. R. Buckhout, "Eyewitness Testimony," *Scientific American*, 231, 1974, pp.23-31.
76. For descriptions of other war scares involving phantom aerial objects, refer to the following social science journals. For an examination of an episode of imaginary German monoplanes sighted over British South Africa in 1914, see R.E. Bartholomew, "The South African monoplane hysteria of 1914: A test of Smelser's theory of hysterical beliefs," *Sociological Inquiry*, 59, 1989, pp.287-300. Another scare involved 'ghost' Zeppelins over New Zealand in 1909. See R.E. Bartholomew, "A brief history of mass hysteria in Australia," *The Skeptic* [Australia] 12, 1992, pp.23-26. Finally, for discussion of a major scare involving phantom V-rockets over Scandinavia shortly after the close of World War II, consult: R.E. Bartholomew, "Redefining epidemic hysteria: an example from Sweden," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* [The Scandinavian Journal of Psychiatry] 88, 1993, pp.178-182.

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