

NINETEEN MILES UP.

Below a huge plastic balloon of helium gas, a man prepares to explore the fringes of outer space. He is Major David Simons, a U.S. Army doctor. To his chest which is shaven a stethoscope is fastened; for one object of the adventure is to test human endurance many miles above the earth's surface. It will help to answer the question - when we achieve space travel, will the human body be able to stand it?

The pressurized canister (with its mass of lightweight instruments and its bright aluminium casing to protect him against radiation) is sealed around Major Simons. He plans to stay aloft for 30 hours or more, gathering information on cosmic rays and other problems - and incidentally admiring a view of the world such as no man has seen before. As the miles slip past him and the atmosphere thins out, the plastic balloon will swell into a sphere.

Major Simons' achievement - a flight of 32 hours, reaching an altitude of about nineteen miles. He was tired and cramped, but he came to no harm. Thus a brave soldier-scientist takes mankind a step further in his journey into space.