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On the Threshold of Space

An article in the August number of the *National Geographic Magazine*, "Aviation Medicine on the Threshold of Space," may well be the most significant popular presentation yet written on the formidable problems which face workers in this specialty. In addition to its timely importance and exciting color photography, it is revealing reading for everyone.

The author, Allan C. Fisher, Jr., of the magazine's staff, toured the aero-medical research centers of the country to obtain the story he has told so well. The men with whom he talked and flew at Pensacola, Dayton, Randolph, Johnsville and Holloman, with hardly an exception, are prominent members of the Aero Medical Association.

Mr. Fisher has brought into sharp focus the acknowledged importance of aviation medicine. He gives his readers intimate glimpses of the research of Graybiel, Barr, Stapp, and Henry. His searching interviews with Strughold and Haber foretell the future. General Ogle puts it this way:

"The Nation's air supremacy and safety may depend on aviation medicine. What good would new, high-performance aircraft be if man could not tolerate the stresses? Frankly, I feel a sense of urgency about our work. We are already in an area that

requires adaptation of man and machines to space."

Possibly no other science writer has collected Mr. Fisher's experiences in aviation medicine. From a few seconds of weightlessness 20,000 feet over Edwards Air Force Base, a ride on the Navy's huge centrifuge and a flight in Gunter's low pressure chamber, plus close association with flight surgeons and test pilots, he has created a new perspective of this specialty for the serious reader:

"Through the centuries earth's unexplored frontiers—jungle, desert, polar ice—have fallen before the determined assaults of man. But the last, the greatest, and the most dangerous frontier of all is just 17 miles from your home.

"If you would seek it, look up at the stars or scan the blank and seemingly guileless blue of the sky. There, high overhead in the outer reaches of the ocean of air, is the untamed borderland that men of aviation medicine call their vertical frontier. . . .

At times their problems seem insurmountable. But they yearn for the stars, and each year their work carries some lonely pilot to new heights on the vertical frontier."

On behalf of all of the members of the Association, the JOURNAL extends its appreciation and thanks to Mr. Fisher and to the *National Geographic's* photography staff, headed by Luis Marsden, for their notable contribution to aviation medicine.