

# DR. PICCARD DOWN ON IOWA TREE-TOP; BALLOON CAR BURNS

**Deflates Some of 95 Bags  
of Craft With Pistol to  
Land—Escapes Injury**

**SOARED TO 11,000 FEET**

**Instruments Lost in Fire After  
6-Hour Trip, but Stratosphere  
Flight Test Pleases Him**

By The Associated Press.

LANSING, Iowa, July 18.—Dr. Jean Piccard's first flight in his novel craft, buoyed by multiple balloons, terminated in a hazardous tree-top landing early today.

The gondola of the Pleiades, the first craft made of sounding balloons ever to carry a man aloft, burst into flames a moment after Dr. Piccard crept from it and climbed down a tree in an isolated valley nine miles from this Northeastern Iowa village. Dr. Piccard was not injured.

The scientist said he believed the fire, which melted the metal of the gondola and destroyed the instruments within, might have been caused by the TNT detonation by which he cut away the upper half of the ninety-five four-foot balloons sustaining the gondola.

Dr. Piccard came down six hours after he took off at 12:08 A. M., Central standard time (2:08 A. M., New York time), from Rochester, Minn., 110 miles to the northeast.

## **Learned Much From Flight**

Notwithstanding the misfortune, the balloonist termed his flight, an experiment looking toward an ascension into the stratosphere, "beautiful," and said he had learned much from it. He sought to determine the feasibility of using a large number of balloons instead of a single large one.

Asked about the possibility of a considered stratosphere flight with 2,000 such balloons, Dr. Piccard said it probably would be attempted if the night's experiment were proved sufficiently successful.

"Wait until I digest the results," he said.

After reaching a maximum of 11,000 feet Dr. Piccard related that he descended into the valley to avoid the Mississippi River, which lay more than a mile and half ahead of him.

The multi-balloon craft came down on land owned by Mort Madden, a farmer. Mr. Madden, busy with his 6 o'clock milking, observed two clusters of what, in his eyes, resembled golf balls floating over the trees in the distance.

Uninformed of the Piccard flight, Mr. Madden said he thought little of the sight until about an hour later. A man with flowing gray hair, clad in white, then appeared at his house and said simply, "Good morning."

Dr. Piccard had walked to the farm home. Two hours later he communicated with Mrs. Piccard.

Dr. Piccard sent a brief telegram to his wife at Rochester, which read:

"Landed safely, Lansing, Iowa. Balloon under perfect control. All equipment burned up."

Then he went to a hotel here and rested.

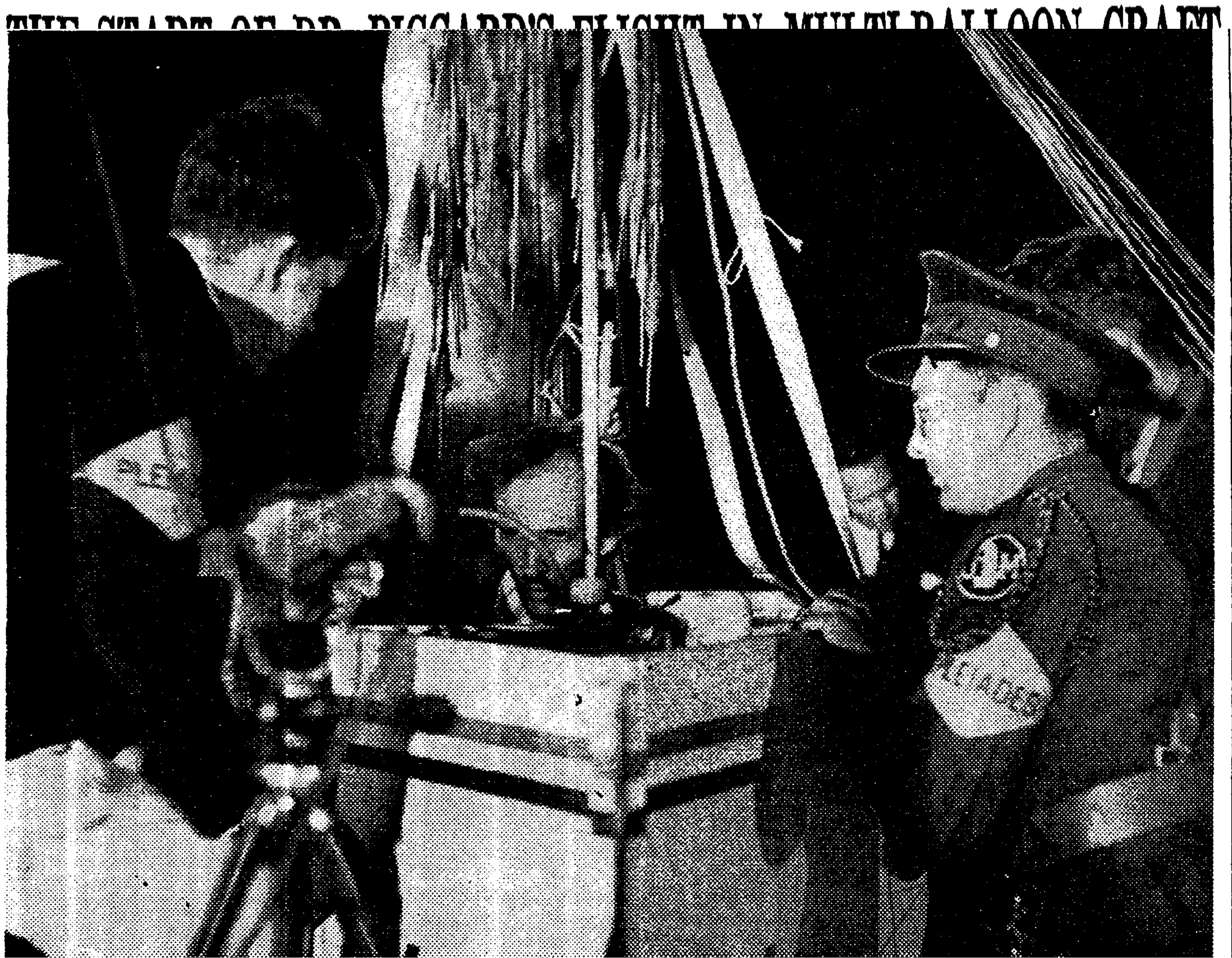
## **Landing Amused Him**

Dr. Piccard choked with amusement as he later described the accident of his landing.

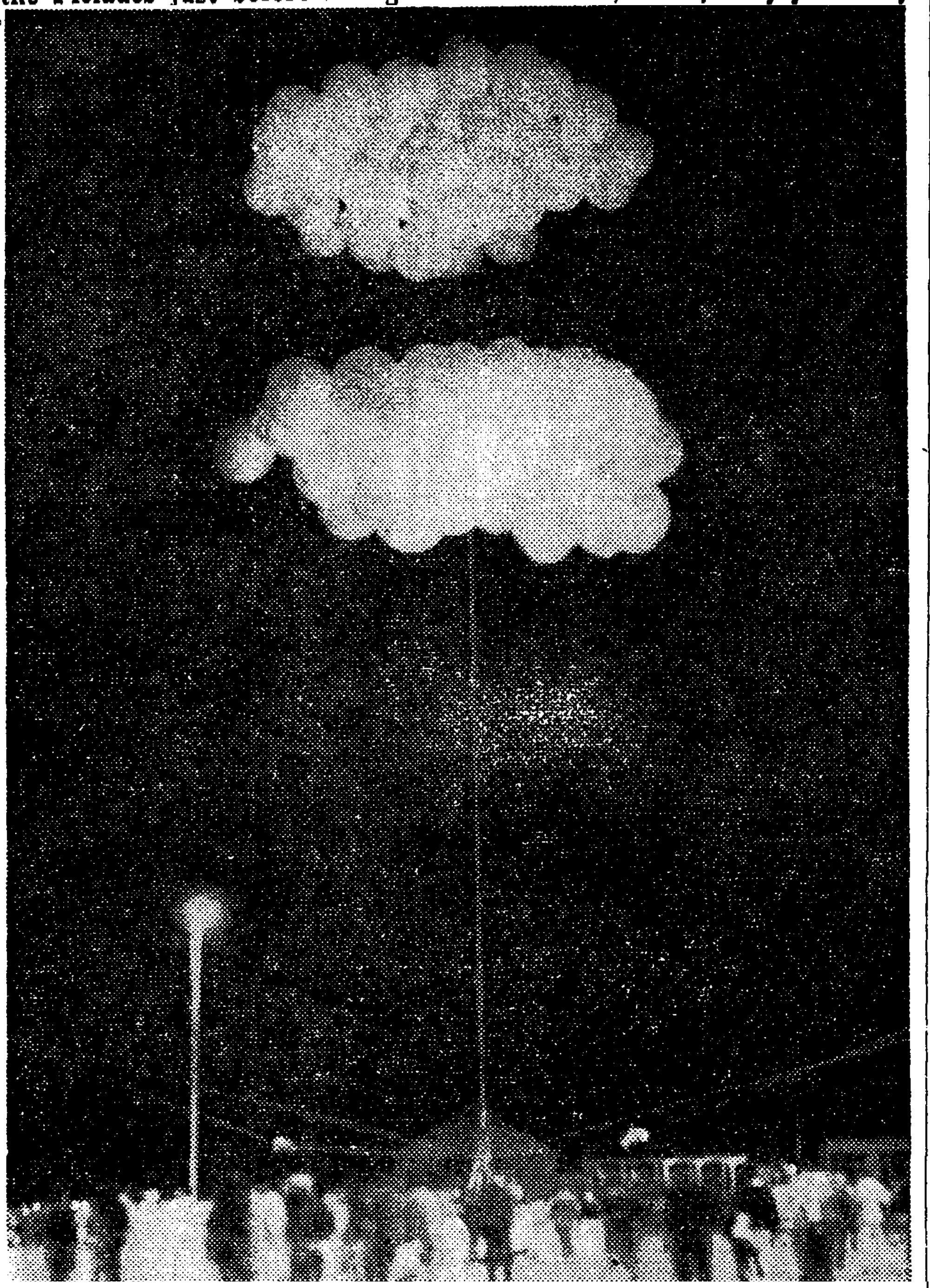
"Had some trouble with my balloons," he laughed, "so I took my pistol and killed about a dozen of them. Then I came down."

He carried the pistol to aid in cutting away the balloons during the descent. He said he did not release the last cluster of balloons

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Dr. Piccard in the gondola of the Pleiades just before taking off at Rochester, Minn., early yesterday. His son John is at the left.



A view of the fully inflated balloon clusters a few seconds before they lifted the gondola from the ground.

## ON IOWA TREE-TOP

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until he had virtually reached the ground.

Neither Dr. Piccard nor members of his radio ground crew were able to explain the failure of his two-way short-wave set, which "went bad" after only two and a half hours of successful operation. The radio failure and the isolation of the place where he came down had contributed to fears that Dr. Piccard's flight had ended in disaster and started a widespread search for him when he was unreported several hours after he was expected to come down.

Mrs. Piccard arrived here in mid-afternoon.

Dr. Piccard had planned to remain in the air for about seven hours, or until after daybreak.

### In Touch for First Two Hours

ROCHESTER, Minn., July 18 (AP).—From the time of his take-off here until 2:30 A. M. Dr. Piccard talked with the ground crew from his multiple balloon by ultra-short wave radio.

His terse messages indicated everything was all right in his "bath-tub" gondola, affectionately named by his family. His three sons, John, 16, who was a member of the preparations crew; Paul, 13, and Donald, 11, hastened to clean up debris of scattered boxes, additional rope and other equipment used at the start.

While the radio functioned Dr. and Mrs. Piccard conversed, after Dr. Piccard had asked to speak with her. She told him he appeared to be going very smoothly and said it looked fine from the earth.

"I think it would be very fine if you could hold the balloon level," she told him.

He blinked his lights several times to indicate he heard her.

When the balloonist announced his instruments showed he was at 3,200 feet, Mrs. Piccard told him:

"Don't you go too high, you will have me worried."

Dr. Piccard kept up a running comment with his ground assistants after he had freed himself from the many tasks which marked the first few minutes of the flight.

He spoke with Dr. W. E. Sheran, in charge of the flight committee, saying he believed, from his early experiences of the ascension, the flight would prove "most successful and most profitable."

At 4,000 feet, Dr. Piccard complained of the cold and said he would have to cut some balloons if he rose too rapidly. He expressed the hope this would not be necessary because the balloons "are so beautiful."

After the ground crew had moved to Caledonia in an attempt to re-establish communications a country doctor at Mazeppa, Minn., reported seeing the balloon.