

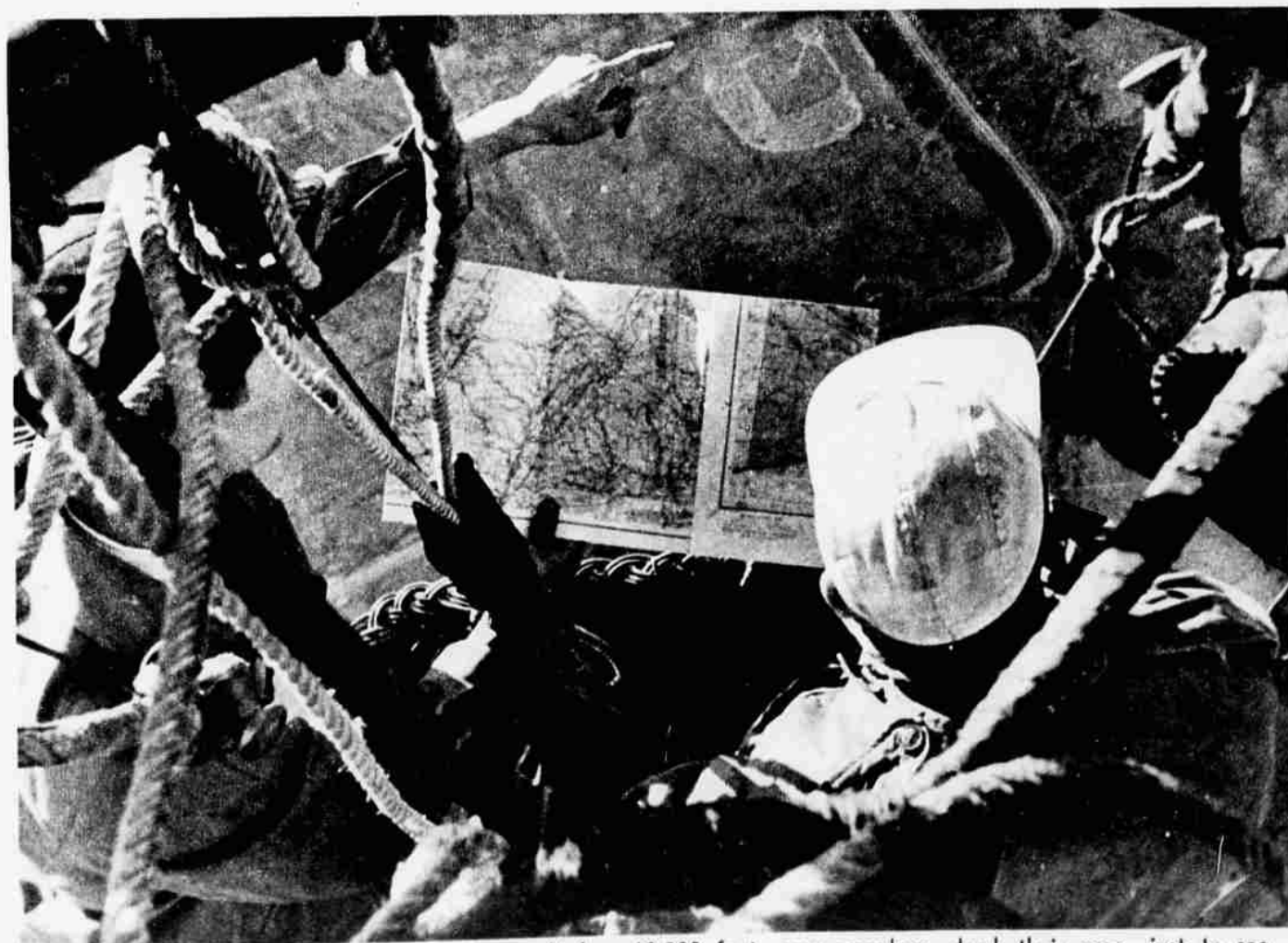
# Balloon Aloft!

Photos: Ehaln from Three Lions.

IT STARTED with balloons; then came the Wright brothers, Lindbergh, jets, and all the rest. Some reactionaries, however, are still playing with balloons. Members of the Balloon Club of America buy these gargantuan toys from Army surplus, fill them with coal gas (it's cheaper than helium), and float off into the trackless skies. Why do they like ballooning? Because of the soul-satisfying advantages of noiseless soaring and an unobstructed balloon's-eye view of America the beautiful.



The bag filled with gas, the basket stocked with sandbags, the balloonists are ready for take-off. Where to, none of them knows.



Breezing along with the breeze, sometimes as high as 10,000 feet, crew members check their map—just to see where they've been. They can adjust altitude—shown on their only instrument, an altimeter—but not their direction.



Ah, but what goes up must come down, and not always in convenient places.