

# Chemawa Native Students Learn To Be Fliers

Ten young native people from Alaska, students at Chemawa Indian School, are learning to fly. They are taking advantage of the flight training program made available this year at Chemawa.

Flying is fast becoming a tradition among the native people with fine pilots representing all major native tribes in Alaska, Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts.

Native people are taking to flying as ducks take to water and have already been recognized as some of the finest pilots in this north country.

Such pioneers as Capt. Thomas Richards, a full-blooded Eskimo from the Kotzebue area, has paved the way and inspired many a younger native to take up the profession.

Tom Richards has flown for 21 years, first with Wien Airlines and now with Wien Consolidated Airlines continuing his flying career after the former merged with Northern Consolidated Airlines.

Capt. Richards has the signal honor of being the first Eskimo in Alaska, perhaps in the world to pilot a pure jet, the modern Boeing 737, which he regularly flies throughout Alaska.

Tom worked his way up to bigger aircraft starting with Piper Cubs. When asked how he liked flying the 737, he answered:

"Fine. The only trouble with flying that thing is that I get there too fast."

Capt. Richards, by getting there fast, may be the prime influence or inspiration to the growing number of native Alaskan pilots.

(Continued on page 7)



**CAPT. THOMAS RICHARDS**—One of the original Eskimo fliers in Alaska, Capt. Thomas Richards, right, has been flying for 21 years in the Arctic and throughout the rest of Alaska. Starting with Piper Cubs in 1948, Tom Richards is now standing in front of the modern Boeing 737 which he pilots to widely separated points in Alaska. He recently set down the 737 on the North Slope when the picture was taken. Tom is standing with Bill Arant, flight engineer, left, and a fellow pilot, Capt. Ed Steger.





**BUDDING NATIVE FLIERS**—Ten Alaska native young people, students at Chemawa Indian School, are taking their final written test in flying at the McNary Field at Salem, Oregon recently under watchful eye of Thomas M. Taylor, left, Federal Aviation Administration inspector. The native flying students are from widely scattered communities in Alaska. Back row, left to right, Frederick

Huntington, Robert Vanderpool, Leonard Chase, and Edward Dull. Second row: Herman Anderson, Larry Hunter, Donald Tyson, June Doria Balluta, Standing, Lloyd Thompson, Chief flight instructor, Salem Aviation, and Steve Nowatak. In the foreground, right, is Abraham Alexie.

—Courtesy Photo by OREGON STATESMAN

## Ten Chemawa Students Learning to Fly . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Ten young people at Chemawa Indian School, including a young lady who recently soloed, are following the footsteps of the

older native pilots. They are training with Salem Aviation, Salem, Oregon, and have taken their final written tests there at

McNary Field recently under the watchful eyes of the Federal Aviation Administration Inspector Thomas M. Taylor.

As some people would say, the ten young people at Chemawa are not too far off—something of a stone's throw from their background of the Stone Age. Capt. Richards, however, can better them because he could throw the stone directly at his backyard when he started flying.

The ten Alaskan youngsters are: Frederick Huntington, son of Jennie Huntington of Koyukuk, Alaska; Robert W. Vanderpool, son of Robert I. Vanderpool, Red Devil; Leonard Chase, son of William Chase, Anvik; Edward Dull, son of Mrs. Albertina Dull, Nightmute;

Herman Anderson, son of Mrs. Peggy Anderson, Clark's Point; Larry Hunter, son of Donald Hunter, Fortuna Ledge; Donald Tyson, Mrs. Molly T. Francis, guardian, Pilot Station; June Doria Balluta, daughter of Nickoli and Sophie Balluta, Nondalton;

Steve Nowatak, son of Nick and Mary Nowatak, Kokhanok Bay; and Martin Alexie, son of Abraham Alexie, Kwethluk.