



Cheryl Ritchie's classmates were glad they didn't have to hold press conferences. The latest additions to the pilot seniority list are, all from left to right, front row, Daryll T. Sipe, P. A. Dorsey; second row, H. M. Trotter, Jerry Polverino, S. L. Hunt and Carl Gamble; back row, D. J. Ferris, T. C. Restel and Cheryl Ritchie.



Like everything else in her training program Cheryl handled her press conference like a pro.

Long lines

(Continued from Page Five)

pared to 567,412,772 for the same period of 1973.

The passenger load factor for the first seven months of 1974 was 55.5 per cent, up from 49.6 per cent in the comparable period of 1973.

The number of passengers carried January through July this year increased 11 per cent to 2,241,919, as compared to 2,019,416 during the first seven months of 1973.

The available seat miles for this July were up 6.61 per cent, to 181,185,474 as compared to 169,952,164 for the seventh month of 1973. The year-to-date increase in ASMs was .58 per cent, up from 1,143,920,186 in the first seven months of last year to 1,150,586,698 for the same period this year.

First Officer C. P. Ritchie

First Officer C. P. Ritchie, Number 429 on the pilot system seniority list of 430 names. By now everyone knows First Officer Ritchie, if not by name or face then because of the "firstness" of her First Officer title.

She's Piedmont's first woman pilot. And her arrival was not a quiet one. She created quite a stir with the news media across Piedmont's system. Newspapers and television stations have kept Mrs. Ritchie and Vice-President—Flight Operations W. O. Tadlock busy with requests for interviews.

In spite of her more than normally hectic introduction to life as a Piedmont pilot Cheryl seems to be very happy about where she is and what she's doing.

She's currently based in Norfolk and is a YS-11 co-pilot.

Cheryl started her flying career while a stewardess with Eastern in Miami some nine years ago. While on furlough from that job she started taking flying lessons. That same year, 1965, she got her private license. She followed her course and earned FAA certificates for Commercial Single and multi-engine ratings, Instrument, Certified Flight Instructor—Instruments, Air Transport Pilot and Advanced Ground School.

"I haven't had time to teach, but I've kept my ratings current," she says.

Six and a half years ago Cheryl married James B. Ritchie. He is an attorney with Shood, McClain and Jessee of Atlanta. "Though my husband doesn't fly he is the backbone of my being at Piedmont," she says. "It's been a long tough haul. If it hadn't been for him kicking me during the most discouraging moments, I wouldn't be here."

The "long tough haul" led Cheryl to her somewhat unique position. There are four or five other women commercial pilots flying for scheduled U. S. airlines.

Cheryl attributes her success to "a persistent effort to get hired. Captain Tadlock encouraged several other female applicants as much as me. He advised us to keep updating and I qualified."

Cheryl says she has received little if any flack from her male counterparts. She says, in general, the male crew members don't treat her differently, "Some men haven't even accepted women driving cars. But even those have not tried in any way to make it more difficult for me."

She finds humor in her entrance into a here-

tofore man's world. Recounting her first flight Cheryl said, "The captain was real quiet at first. Then, toward the end of the flight, he turned to me and said, 'I really don't mind flying with you, I just don't know what to talk about.'"

She wears the same uniform as the other pilots, plus a few darts. She started just as all the pilots were getting new uniforms, so "it was good timing."

Cheryl says she has no desire to design a more feminine uniform for herself or other women pilots-to-come. "I don't think it's my place to buck the system. They're trying to prevent a double standard. Besides, I'm too grateful for my job."

Even while wearing the tailored navy-blue uniform with her three pilot's stripes and wings, Cheryl finds that passengers mistake her for a stewardess. "They say 'Can I have a Coke?' So I run back and get them a Coke and hop into the cockpit."

The stewardesses' attitude toward Cheryl is supportive. "Most have said, 'I think it's great we finally got a woman flying.'"

"The captain is tickled because he gets both girls (herself and the stewardess who stays in the front part of the plane) to himself and no competition from the first officer," Cheryl says grinning.

Passenger's comments about Cheryl have ranged from "That guy's hair is a little long" to "I don't want to ride on this plane. The co-pilot's a little funny." Cheryl says these comments don't insult her; she gets a kick out of them.

At her first press conference, the day after she finished ground school, she was asked about women's lib. Giving no credit to that movement, she said "I've been liberated all my life." That first day, with cameras, lights and a lot of not-easily-satisfied reporters went off without a hitch for Cheryl. And it was her birthday too!



A whole flock of seats was in each of the Mey-Air 737s when they arrived in May. All 130, in each plane, were removed and replaced with Piedmont's standard, comfortable 90 seats.



It was a perfect picture taking day when the Mey-Air planes came in. We weren't quite so lucky, weather-wise, when we photographed the bold new Piedmont paint design, see picture on page one.