

The following comments are aggregated (with his permission) from three recent letters from Paul Rodgers, a former U.S. Air pilot. Tho't you would find them interesting. [Sam Woolsey]

I am currently in Panama flying for Copa Airlines and this is great fun with beautiful equipment 737NGs 700/800s! There are approximately 65 "ex-pats" down here and a new class just started on June 2nd.

The flying here is the easiest I have ever done. Most days you fly one leg and at the most three. On Thursday I will go to Montevideo leaving Panama at 1858 and arriving in Uruguay at 0158 Panama time. You fly back to Panama two days later, leaving Uruguay at 0258 and arriving Panama at 0958 on day three.

I go to Rio twice and I have flown to Santo Domingo three times this month. One leg over and lay over for 16 hours and one leg back. All of the U.S. pilots are on a 15 day per month schedule and you can break the days up however you like.

Next month my entire family will come down for a vacation. I have the first three days of July off and then take the other twelve when the family is down here. Copa is terrific and will work with you on any scheduling problems.

We have had three pilots terminated. Two pilots took too long to check out. They had passed their simulators but had flown more than 100 hours of IOE without being put up for their AAC check-rides. The AAC is the Panamanian equivalent of the FAA. The other pilot was fired for a "drug" arrest back we he was 17 years old. He thought that the incident had been expunged. I guess Copa takes the background check seriously.

Copa Airlines flies to LAX, MIA, MCO, IAD and JFK. Almost every flight from Panama to the United States to LAX, MIA and MCO is flown by an "over 60" U.S. pilot!

Paul Rodgers