



L-4 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

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FOURTH FRIDAY BULLETIN

June 24, 2022

With no news to report from the company or the alumni association since the previous bulletin, I thought I would provide a short story for your amusement.

Something New

Many years ago I was returning home from a week of training at the intelligence center on Fort Huachuca, Arizona. I flew out of Tucson for Houston where I connected for the final leg of my trip to Washington National Airport—now Ronald Reagan National Airport. I landed on schedule in Houston and was patiently waiting at the final gate for my plane to arrive. I heard a familiar voice. Looking in the direction of it, I saw no one I recognized. My neighbor, a British army colonel, was a stout but short man. I moved in the direction of his voice and quickly located him among the taller crowd. We shared stories about why we were headed home. Colonel George was a British exchange officer at the US Army engineer school on Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Since we each occupied quarters near one another on the post it was decided to share the cab fee home from the airport.

We landed on time just at midnight. Standing on the curb, the Brit waved down a cabbie. Once belted in the back seat I detected an unknown foreign language transmitting over the cabbie's dispatch radio. I leaned over in Colonel George's direction and quietly said, "I thought we landed in North America?" He grinned at me and to my astonishment began speaking in a foreign language to the cabbie. They conversed in Swahili. As it turns out, Colonel George was born in Nairobi, Kenya. He was fluent in the language having grown up there. When ready his parents sent him away to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, England. He was an engineer in the Queen's army.

Colonel George told me that he had made many late night arrivals into Ronald Reagan and had learned that the immigrant Swahili's had a monopoly for late night cabdrivers around the beltway. I learned something new that night. No wonder all the cabbies were tall slender African Americans. Colonel George chuckled at my ignorance, but I learned something new. It helps to speak Swahili at midnight when afoot at Washington's national airport.

Fraternally,

Joe Harris

Director of Administration