

Thumb in the Eye

By [Peter Luban](#)

Some Saturday in Germany in February 66. Our group 10 minutes down the road from the air field by car was part of COMZ which was in Orleans, France. So, the major general wants to pay a visit (we were previously under 7th Army). He and his retinue come into Coleman in their King Air. I'm parked on a small ramp having taxied over from the ball park with clutch still engaged and rotor turning, I'm waiting for people to show up. My people arrive - two full bulls and the S3 major. I'm a 100 feet from the tower. Everyone communicated on the same UHF frequency. Tower guy puts his hands up and points to his ear to make sure I heard the transmission. "got it" I told the crew chief to get out (he had long line) and show 5 fingers. They got it. King Air comes in parks next to me, everyone climbs in and we are off to Germisheim (one of our 6 battalions) about 20 minutes away. Grass strip with an operations shack that was never manned, except for today. Everyone piles into cars and away they go.

After a half hour, I call Coleman asking about weather which was already bad. It is getting worse, ceiling is heading down to ground. I say to the ops EM find them and tell them now or spend the rest of the day here and maybe the next one or take the 4 hour car ride. They showed up in four minutes. The bird was running and we left. East to the Rhine, about a minute and then North down with the barges, over the bridges. Spotted my rail spur which put me on center line to Coleman. Told them to get the King Air running and call for transportation for my people. Crew chief calls up and says there are bunch of people about to crap their pants and crossing themselves, including me. "Coleman I'm here" They never saw me until I passed by the tower in a taxi. They piled off and headed for the King Air and mine to the staff car.

The Major General walked a few paces, turned around and threw me a salute. The return was sticking my thumb in my eye. They were gone in a minute and I taxied back to the ballpark. Monday my group commander called me - general called him. Everyone got home to dinner and I got laid by another Col daughter and in the end we got married.