

Near Miss

By [Peter Luban](#)

In Germany, we had a battalion at IdarOberstein most well known for the church in the cliff. The Germans had a visible beacon there in WWII as it was high on the mountain top. Took a heading and set down on a strip in a valley a number of miles away. The flight from Coleman (Mannheim) was around an hour in the CH-34C. Before I left I would call on a land line and a guy would go outside and then report a visual on what he was seeing. There were two ways to get there, the direct route or the valley route. If the mountain was in the clouds, forget it both ways. If you could go the valley route, then it was between Ramstein and Sembach (two AF bases about 8 miles apart). Once past them, weather usually improved. One day flying the valley route around a turn, I am face to face with a C-130 - what he is doing there I have no clue. We can see each other in the cockpits. I pull the stick back, hear him go under, drop the bottom out and proceed. There was no option to go left or right. The whole thing lasted about 3 seconds. To top things off when I get into AF's airspace and request to pass through at 200 feet, something I had done many times, I got endless questions from some idiot that I was an Army CH-34 as I proceed. Finally I say I'm a deuce and a half at 200 feet and my wheels are now out of your airspace. That ended it. I spent the rest of the day thinking about what to do about this ultra near miss. I decided to see if anything came down the road from the AF guys and would then respond. Nothing ever happened down the road.