
EAA Chapter 170 San Luis Obispo, CA

Next our most senior and respected Chapter member, Oscar Bayer agreed to tell us about his career; for which he is justifiably proud. Oscar got his first airplane ride at age four while sitting on his mother's lap while his dad, a pilot and also a policeman flew them around the San Francisco Bay area that introduced Oscar to flying; a love that he has never abandoned.

After high school Oscar entered the Air Cadet training program and was sent to Washington State University where he got his ten hours in a J-3. Next he volunteered into the Army Air Force, where he trained to be an navigator. He was stationed to the Pacific at the time the war as coming to the end with Japan's surrender.

With the conclusion of active service, Oscar stayed in the Air Force reserves and during that time he flew At-6's, T-18's, and the B-25, and then went on to jets such as the T-38, F-86 and F-102. Oscar also went on to get his private and commercial license, followed with some flight instructing. Otherwise he flew any available airplane as often as possible.

With the outbreak of the Korean War, he was recalled to active duty and reassigned as a B-29 navigator. He flew 13 missions and have done more if his B-29 was not hit by flak when somewhere near the Yalu river, and was forced to crash land into a rice paddy. The crash went badly and the front of the airplane was torn off. Oscar although injured was the only survivor. After hospitalization he was returned to flying status. He finished up giving flight instruction for B-25's.

Oscar severed in the Vietnam war where he had 142 missions in the Phantom and also flew the F-106. Following that he then did more flight instructing. One exceptional F-196 flight was when Oscar took the airplane to 80,000 feet and to a speed of Mach 2. Asked about how it felt to break the sound barrier, Oscar said he felt some vibrations, but there were not a problem, and the F-106 was an excellently designed airplane. His recollection is that he may have flown more than 60 different airplanes in his plus 6,000 hours of military flight time.

Retiring after 31 years of service in the U.S. Air force, Oscar remained aviation occupied. Working as a CFI he gave instructions and also flew business charters. On one occasion he flew to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.



In addition to building a house in Arroyo Grande he had thoughts of also building an airplane. Somehow he found time to build a Starduster. When asked why the *Starduster*? Oscar replied that he was interested since his early youth in having an open cockpit bi-plane. He found the *Stolp Starduster* the most appealing.

His building project, just short of 6 ½ years was finished in 1984. Following engine and taxi testing the first flight was made in January 1986. In its first 28 years the airplane has been to Oshkosh thirteen times, twice to Alaska, and in one adventure he completely circumvented the United States. The airplane has 2213 hrs. So far, Oscar has accumulated a total of 15,000+ flying hours.