

EAA meeting PIH 11-21-9

The guest speaker was Daniel Wyckoff, the youngest Air Force pilot in WWII. He was 16 when he enlisted in the service, and showed an aptitude for flight that made him quite successful in training. He really wanted to fly a B-17, but was assigned to fly a C-47. a primary mission was to be glider towing, so he got glider experience at the same time. He was assigned to Europe, and the lack of an effective defroster on the trip across the ocean meant he had to use the heat from his hand to de-ice a small patch of windscreen. He flew supplies in for the battle of the bulge, and POWs out. At the conclusion of the war his fellow pilots got civilian licenses, but he had to get his parents permission since he was not yet 21. Daniel continued in the service, getting 50 hours in a P-51, and the early jets, F-80 and F-84, bombing bridges on the Yalu River in Korea. Here he had to evade cannon fire. He went on to teach fighter gunnery at Del Rio TX and Chandler AZ, and then to Saudi Arabia to teach their pilots to fly the F-86. He finally got back to bombers in a B-47. In-flight refueling required him to slow to nearly a stall at 90% power. He went on to Vietnam to fly a C-123, flying cargo and bringing back some of our troops killed by friendly fire. After 37 years in the Air Force he retired and went on to fly a DC-3 in the Bahamas as a civilian. He did this for a power panel company for 8 years, and after that did the same thing for Busch for 12 years in a variety of planes. The only close call he had was in a King Air with landing gear that wouldn't extend. This was complicated by the fact that he was carrying his boss and the president of the company and their girlfriends. Their wives were home. Even if they survived a gear up landing, they might not have survived the following investigation. Fortunately he was able to bank and kick the rudder hard enough for 40 minutes to get 3 green lights. Near the end of his career he was one of the few pilots qualified to fly the Beech Starship. In his long aviation career he flew 19,800 hours including 1143 in combat without firing a shot. Of the 78 types of airplanes he flew he likes the F-86 and P-51 best. He still occasionally rents a Cessna 182.