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Interview no. 1655

Newton P. Matthews

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Newton P. Matthews

Interviewer: n/a

Project: Veterans History Project

Location: Santa Teresa, NM

Date of Interview: January 16, 2006

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1655

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Newton P. Matthews was born in North Carolina, in January of 1941; grew up in Goldsboro, NC, site of Seymour Johnson Air Base; he graduated college at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC in 1962; he describes the cold war tension in the early 1960s, he joined the U.S. Air Force to avoid being drafted into the Army; he says he was selected for Officer Training School as a navigator, he wanted to be a pilot but at the time needed 20/20 vision; he mentions being in training during the Cuban Missile Crisis; he recalls navigator bombardier training and follow on assignment to Shaw Air Force Base, SC in 1965 to fly in EB-66s in a reconnaissance role, no planes at the base as they had all been deployed to Southeast Asia to support the Vietnam War; he recounts deploying to Thailand in early 1966, he explains his role of EB-66 in Surface to Air Missile and Anti-Aircraft Artillery suppression using electronic warfare, he outlines the crew roles; Mr. Matthews reveals that you had to complete a hundred missions before being allowed to return home, flew 103 missions in eight months; he tells of one mission to fly a plane back to Tulsa, OK for modifications, got to see wife and daughter; he describes socializing with other Airmen; he recalls next assignment to 603rd Air Commando Squadron in England AFB, LA flying A-26s and explains his role; he says unit had orders to deploy to Southeast Asia again, he did not want to go back so submitted separation from active duty; he reveals that he missed the military and requested to return, got a notification to return a for a staff job in the Panama Canal Zone; he states next assignment was to Grand Forks, ND to navigate B-52s, he describes time as the squadron navigator instructor; he recounts transition to an intelligence position, worked in Langley, VA and then Izmer, Turkey for NATO doing assignment target selection and identification; recalls last assignment at Offutt AFB, NE on the Joint Strategic Target Staff; Mr. Matthews' work for Strategic Air Command deciding targets and delivery system in the event of a nuclear war; details his having to translate targets to computers in the 1980s; he mentions he retired in 1995 and spends time with family and travelling across the country in an RV.

Length of interview 33 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a