

2006

## Interview No. 1656

Robert W. Pitt

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Robert W. Pitt

Interviewer: n/a

Project: Veterans History Project

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: n/a

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1656

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Robert Pitt was born in Detroit, MI on November 20, 1933; his family relocated a lot, he first remembers living in Portland, OR, later moved to Phoenix, AZ where he remembers the bombing of Pearl Harbor and followed the progress of World War II at home; he recounts moving to Los Angeles, CA for a year, his time as a batboy for the Los Angeles Angels and his love of baseball; he moved again to Chicago, IL to attend Morgan Park Military Academy, his father died when he was fifteen. Mr. Pitt describes time at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL attending U.S. Air Force ROTC; he explains circumstances of him becoming a pilot and recounts going to Graham Air Force Base, FL for pilot training, requested fighter pilot training; he reveals he married his first wife while at Laredo AFB for T-33 jet fighter training; he says his first assignment was at Perrin AFB, TX as an instructor for the T-33; he mentions birth of his two sons; Mr. Pitt describes various fighter aircraft transitions over the years and recalls trying out for astronaut training in 1960; he states in 1962 went to Okinawa, Japan with the 15<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, in 1963 his unit began flying reconnaissance missions in Vietnam from Thailand; he explains that tours weren't set by time but by missions, had to have a hundred missions over North Vietnam; he describes mission over Hanoi where he was almost shot down; he recalls move to Langley AFB, VA then time in Holloman AFB, NM flying F-4s. He next explains that he returned to Okinawa again but flew mostly over Korea before eventually returning to Vietnam as the Air Force advisor to Army I Corps Commander in Hue; he goes over his first wife divorcing him and his mother dying in 1972; he explains he needed a joint command for promotion purposes so got a joint assignment at Fort Bliss, TX as Air Force Representative to the Army Air Defense School in 1974; he goes over various stories of crashes in his career; he reveals that he did not have much to do so attended schools and tells the detailed story of how he met his second wife with help from friends. After talking about other assignments he talks about his attaché duty in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he describes the selection process and circumstances that led the military junta to take over Argentina; he

recollects the Argentine Military invading the Malvinas (Falkland Islands), he explains their dispute with United Kingdom; he covers how U.S. relations with Argentina deteriorated for supporting the U.K.; he mentions last assignment at Nellis AFB, NV and his retirement as a Colonel in 1983; he gives a review of all the planes he flew in the Air Force and provides a brief history of all the civilian jobs he held in El Paso, TX., eventually settling on investments until he retired for good in 2000. Mr. Pitt concludes by saying he travels and watches baseball now.

Length of interview 101 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a