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Interview No. 1655

Newton P. Matthews

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**Newton P. Matthews**

Born in North Carolina in January of 1941, he grew up in Goldsboro, NC, site of Seymour Johnson Air Base. He graduated from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC in 1962. He describes the cold war tension in the early 1960s, when he joined the U.S. Air Force to avoid being drafted into the Army. He was selected for Officer Training School as a navigator, although he wanted to be a pilot but needed 20/20 vision at the time. He was in training during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Navigator bombardier training followed, and he was assigned to Shaw Air Force Base, SC in 1965 to fly in EB-66s in a reconnaissance role. The base had no planes as they had all been deployed to Southeast Asia to support the Vietnam War. He deployed to Thailand in early 1966, where 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, to see his 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 the unit had orders to deploy to Southeast Asia again, but 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 for a staff job in the Panama Canal Zone; his 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; he 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**