
TEACHING THE ELITE

Schaffhausen, 15th October 2020 – The Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) program, in which the US Navy trains the top naval aviators, is a classic American success story. Since its formation in 1969, it has taught the best naval aviators in America how to become better pilots and, above all, outstanding instructors.

In response to their performance during the Vietnam War, the US Navy leadership decided to develop a new tactical doctrine for air combat. The Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) program was established on 3rd March 1969 at the former Naval Air Station Miramar in San Diego, California. Every second month, four F-4 Phantom crews were trained there in air-to-air tactics. After completing the course, they returned to their units to pass on what they had learned. This concept proved so useful that it remains in place to this day. In 1996 the TOPGUN program was integrated into the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center (NSAWC) at Naval Air Station Fallon in Nevada, which was later renamed to Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC).

Nowadays, TOPGUN conducts about three to four classes of twelve weeks' duration per year. The course is designed to train experienced pilots and flight crews. It encompasses all aspects of strike-fighter aircraft tactics and techniques. Air-to-air combat (dogfight)

training, which pits the students against skilled TOPGUN instructors, is a key element. Rather than only perfecting the flying skills of individuals, the emphasis of the course lies in teaching each participant how to become a better instructor. Even though TOPGUN trains only a select few, their knowledge and expertise will trickle down to every tactical fighter pilot and air crew in the US Navy and Marine Corps.

Since TOPGUN was established in 1969, over one thousand participants have successfully graduated from the program. They are part of an exclusive circle and arguably rank among the best strike-fighter pilots in the world. For them, TOPGUN is much more than just military training; it is also training that they can apply to their everyday life. Striving to pursue excellence, accepting failure and learning from it, are just some of the lessons that graduates take with them when they leave the Nevada desert.

IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

In 1868, the American watchmaker and entrepreneur Florentine Ariosto Jones travelled from Boston to Switzerland and founded the 'International Watch Company' in Schaffhausen. His visionary dream was to combine advanced American manufacturing methods with the craftsmanship of Swiss watchmakers to make the best pocket watches of his time. In doing so, he not only laid the foundation for IWC's unique engineering approach but also established the centralised production of mechanical watches in Switzerland.

Over its 150 year history, IWC Schaffhausen has developed a reputation for creating functional complications, especially chronographs and calendars, which are ingenious, robust, and easy for customers to use. A pioneer in the use of titanium and ceramics, IWC today specialises in highly engineered technical watch cases manufactured from advanced materials, such as titanium aluminide and Ceratanium®. Preferring the principle of "form follows function" over decoration, the Swiss watch manufacturer's timeless creations embody their owners' dreams and ambitions as they journey through life.

IWC sources materials responsibly and takes action to minimise its impact on the environment, creating intrinsically sustainable timepieces that are built to last for generations. The company prides itself in training its own future watchmakers and engineers, as well as offering an excellent working environment for all employees. IWC also partners with organisations that work globally to support children and young people.

DOWNLOADS

Images of the TOP GUN collection can be obtained at press.iwc.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

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