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## THE HISTORY OF IWC PILOT'S WATCHES

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### **1936: SPECIAL PILOT'S WATCH, (REF. 436)**

The story of modern pilot's watches from Schaffhausen stretches all the way back to 1936, when the 'Special Pilot's Watch' (Ref. IW436) became the first wristwatch developed by IWC specifically for use in an aircraft. This project was launched by the two sons of IWC's then-owner, Ernst Jakob Homberger. They were both passionate pilots and knew what a watch used in the cockpit needed to offer. Its technical features included an antimagnetic movement and shatterproof front glass. What's more, the timepiece worked perfectly at any temperature between -40 °C and +40 °C, which was an essential advantage in the unheated cockpits of the time.

### **1940: BIG PILOT'S WATCH CALIBRE 52 T.S.C. (REF. 431)**

One thousand models of the Big Pilot's Watch, measuring 55 millimetres in diameter, were produced in 1940, meeting the strict functional requirements placed on military observation watches. To ensure it was as precise as it needed to be, it was equipped with the pocket watch calibre 52 T.S.C., designed around a central hacking seconds function. The seconds hand completely stopped when the crown was pulled out, which enabled times to be synchronised precisely. The high-contrast dial with sans serif numerals and markings, reminiscent of cockpit instruments, was easy to read, no matter the visibility or conditions. The large crown was designed so that pilots could use it easily, even when wearing their flight gloves.

### **1992: PILOT'S WATCH DOUBLE CHRONOGRAPH (REF. 371101)**

The age of civilian pilot's watches began in 1992. In a record-breaking few weeks, IWC's engineers developed a double chronograph movement based on the Valjoux calibre 7750. This highly complex mechanism made it possible to measure two different times, or an unlimited number of intermediate times, simultaneously. The Pilot's Watch Double Chronograph also established IWC's reputation as a manufacturer of robust chronographs. The black dial with white markings was inspired by the Mark 11, a navigation watch developed by IWC for the British Royal Air Force in 1948.

### **1994: IWC PILOT'S WATCH CHRONOGRAPH CERAMIC (REF. 3705)**

Beginning in the 1980s, IWC was one of the first watch brands to manufacture cases made of titanium and ceramic. This marked the beginning of a highly successful time in Schaffhausen, during which IWC built up the wealth of materials expertise that still defines it as a modern watchmaker to this day. In 1994, with the 'IWC Pilot's Watch Chronograph Ceramic', IWC presented the first pilot's watch with a case made of matte black zirconium oxide ceramic. The Vickers hardness test results show that this 'engineers' ceramic' is second only to diamond in its hardness. Only 999 models of reference 3705 were made, meaning it has become a highly sought-after collector's piece.

**2002: BIG PILOT'S WATCH REFERENCE 5002  
(REF. 5002)**

In April 2002, IWC launched the Big Pilot's Watch Ref. 5002, measuring 46.2 millimetres in diameter and 15.8 millimetres in height, and weighing in at 150 grams. The model is driven by the 'slow beat' calibre 5011 with a central hacking seconds function. The automatic movement featured a Pellaton winding system and provided a power reserve of seven days. The functional dial and striking conical crown were inspired by the Big Pilot's Watch from 1940. The uncompromisingly functional design has hardly changed in the intervening years. A number of special editions mean that the Big Pilot's Watch is now a cultural icon.

**2012: BIG PILOT'S WATCH TOP GUN  
(REF. 501901)**

Since 2007, TOP GUN models dedicated to the US Navy's legendary Fighter Weapons School have been an integral part of the IWC Pilot's Watch collection. They are made from tough, corrosion-resistant materials such as titanium and ceramic, enabling them to withstand the immense loads inside a supersonic jet and the harsh conditions of a lengthy deployment on an aircraft carrier. In 2012, IWC unveiled the Big Pilot's Watch, with its TOP GUN inspired design and black ceramic case measuring 48.6 millimetres in diameter, for the first time. The case back and conical crown were made of lightweight yet robust titanium, while the red end of the seconds hand replicated a Navy jet's shape.

**2012: BIG PILOT'S WATCH TOP GUN MIRAMAR  
(REF. 501902)**

The Big Pilot's Watch TOP GUN Miramar also made its debut in 2012, featuring a striking black case made of polished black zirconium oxide ceramic. The brown dial was inspired by military observation watches from the 1930s and 1940s. The outer edge only displays the minutes and seconds in an easy-to-read style, and the hours are displayed on a separate red inner circle. An olive green calf leather strap emphasises the 'military' look of the watch. The name pays homage to the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, where the Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) was originally founded in 1969.

**2012: BIG PILOT'S WATCH PERPETUAL  
CALENDAR TOP GUN (REF. 502902) -  
BIG PILOT'S WATCH PERPETUAL CALENDAR  
TOP GUN "BOUTIQUE EDITION 2013"  
(REF. 502903)**

The first Big Pilot's Watch with a perpetual calendar was unveiled in 2006. In 2012 it was followed up by the first TOP GUN edition of this model in a ceramic case with a diameter of 48.6 millimetres. Its large, high-contrast dial provides a stylish backdrop, offsetting the auxiliary dials for the perpetual calendar with the date, month, weekday and double moon phase perfectly. The Big Pilot's Watch with a perpetual calendar has been the inspiration for a number of special editions, such as the Big Pilot's Watch Perpetual Calendar TOP GUN "Boutique 2013" with red luminescent material on the dial.

## 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 can be downloaded at [press.iwc.com](http://press.iwc.com)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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