



*During WK03 the F-5s mostly operated against Hornets from the Überwachungsgeschwader (air surveillance wing), which is essentially the full-time Swiss fighter force (including FIS1's F-5s).*

intercepts, air policing, and air-to-ground gunnery at the Axalp range. No distinction was made between the type of missions the professional and reserve pilots flew, although the professionals were usually tasked as lead pilots. A few years ago Swiss F-5s stopped flying night missions, something also no longer practised during Wks. Only limited night flying operations are allowed due to the noise nuisance they cause, and only the F/A-18s fly at night.

Some 600 soldiers were stationed at Turtmann for the duration of this last WK of Flugplatz Abteilung 3. Two aircraft received a text just behind the cockpit reading 'Bye bye airbase Turtmann, FlKp 8 14.03.2003' to commemorate the last WK at Turtmann by Fliegerkompanie 8. Many other aircraft received the non-standard air base badge on the right-hand side of the nose. At the end of WK03 the airfield was closed and the seven military personnel affected by the closure were either transferred to Sion or retired early.

Flugplatz Abteilung 3 based at Turtmann, as well as Fliegerstaffel 1, will be dissolved before the end of 2003. Since the latter is formed with professional pilots, the pilots will be either reassigned to Fliegerstaffel 16 or will convert to the F/A-18. Six pilots were selected to go to the USA at the end of May to begin the ground



*Turtmann lies in the narrow Rhône valley, surrounded by some of Europe's highest mountains - some of which top 4000 m (13,120 ft). The permanent airfield installations consisted of little more than a runway and taxiways to the cavern complex, so during the WK exercise additional airfield infrastructure elements were mobilised and deployed. These included air traffic control and GCA radar, and safety barriers and arrester gear for the runway ends.*

