



The sight of a Mirage taxiing along a public road as troops hold up the traffic was once commonplace in Switzerland, but is now consigned to history. Buochs will no longer host operational deployments, and by the end of 2003 the Mirage will have retired. Until then, Fliegerstaffel 10 at Dübendorf remains Europe's last front-line Mirage III user.

course at Lackland AFB, after which they move to NAS Lemoore for the flying course. After some 60 flying hours they are cleared to fly the Hornet and upon their return to Switzerland two pilots will be assigned to each of F1St 11, 17 and 18. The other Turmann-assigned squadron – F1St/Esc Av 6, a reservist unit with pilots from the Romandie region – will move to Payerne to replace Fliegerstaffel 13, which will be the second Tiger squadron to be disbanded by the end of 2003 under the Armee XXI plan.

Goodbye Buochs

Buochs lies in the region of Kanton Nidwalden at an elevation of 1,473 ft (449 m). With its alternate name of Stans-Buochs, the airfield is located near to Luzern, close to the shore of the Vierwaldstättersee. The airfield was built in the 1940s as a Militärflugplatz (military airfield) for the Schweizer Armee. Besides its use by the military, the airfield has played host to a growing aviation industry complex. For more than 60 years, Pilatus Flugzeugwerke (now Pilatus Aircraft Ltd.) has had its main



plant at Flugplatz Buochs, and has been joined by Ferner, RUAG Aerospace (previously known as Schweizerische Unternehmung für Flugzeuge und Systeme/SF) and Aerolite. The joint civil-military airfield has two parallel runways, one measuring 2000 m (6,560 ft) in length.

Between 24 March and 4 April 2003 the 'wartime' airfield at Buochs was reactivated for the last time for a full WK by Fliegerstaffel 10, the Swiss Air Force's last Mirage III RS reconnaissance unit, and Fliegerstaffel 19, a reserve unit flying F-5E Tiger II. Each squadron oper-

ated from its own cavern, and four Tigers fitted with single ACMI pods operated from a ramp on the south side of the airfield. Flugplatz Abteilung 10 operated the airfield during the exercise, Fliegerkompanie 16 (FKp 16) serviced the Mirage III RS aircraft, and Fliegerkompanie 20 serviced the Tigers.

A F1St 10 Mirage III RS is towed from the squadron's cavern at Buochs. The aircraft's engine is running and the tow truck is about to be disconnected. At the 'last chance' before the runway the protective covers for the Sidewinder missile will be removed.

