



A pair of MB-339 AMLU at landing

The Italian way for the fast jet training: 61° Stormo

The Aeronautica Militare (AM-Italian Air Force) allocated considerable resources (in human, financial and material terms) in its Flying Schools to maintain its pilot training syllabus at the “state-of-the-art” in order to guarantee high training standards to its own pilots and for those sent by Allies and partner nations. Among the Flight Schools, a pivotal role is played by the 61° Stormo (61st Wing).

Since its establishment in September 1946, this prestigious unit is based at Lecce-Galatina Airbase, Puglia, in Southern Italy and nowadays, it is tasked for the fast jets training, in accordance with the characteristic “jet ab initio” training philosophy implemented decades ago which consist into train - after the basic training -all its pilots on jets instead using turboprops.

Due the effectiveness of its modular syllabus, the School gained a lot of interest from abroad, a fact confirmed by the growing number of foreign personnel posted in Galatina thanks to international training agreements between AM and other foreign air forces. Personnel from Argentina,

Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and USA flown in the past or are actually flying within 61° Stormo, attending the flying courses or working as instructors.

The daily flight activity at Galatina is very intense, an average of 40/50 missions carried out every day by the 212° Gruppo (squadron) 213° Gruppo and 214° Gruppo each one with a specific task within the fast jet training programme.



Frontal view of MB-339CD, the upgraded version of MB-339A. Note the different nose and the in-flight refueling probe