



Amendola moving on Integrating the 5th gen F-35 in Italian ops



32 Stormo badge



13 Gruppo badge

With deliveries of the F-35 well underway, Italian defence is making a further firm basement for the country's 5th generation fighter aircraft operations into the coming future. The operations with this new stealthy fighter carried out from Amendola Air Base show the ambition and enthusiasm of the military professionals in the further integration of the airframe and working towards Full Operational Capability (FOC) status as we visit the Italian air base.

Italy, as a major global player in the F-35 programme with a F-35 assembly/production facility in its country, had its first "Lightning II" aircraft delivered in 2015. Together with 3 follow-on production aircraft, it was assigned for pilot training purposes in the USA and left Italy to make the trans-Atlantic crossing. By the end of 2016 another milestone was achieved when the first two F-35's were delivered to the 32 Stormo (wing) at Amendola Air base to become part of

operational unit 13 Gruppo (squadron). Here we meet the 13 Gruppo Commander Lt.Col. Luca V. who has logged more than 2500 flight hours on aircraft types like MB-339, HAWK 115, AMX and of course the F-35. Before his current assignment as 13 Gruppo Commander, Lt.Col. Luca, with so-called combat name "Decker", was involved as Instructor Pilot in the US based F-35 pilot training for the Italian Air Force and tells us more about this programme.