



SPECIAL U-208A MARKS 100 YEARS OF ITALIAN AIR FORCE

This SIAI-Marchetti U-208A (S-208M) from the Aeronautica Militare's (AM; Italian Air Force's) 60° Stormo (Wing) in flight over Forlì, northern Italy, sporting a special livery to celebrate the air arm's centenary. This sortie was the first aviation culture course of 2023. Such courses are held around Italy every year to promote aviation, the AM and to provide insight into the careers of aviators for young people. The AM was founded on March 28, 1923, and to mark the centenary, four U-208As from 60° Stormo – all based at Roma-Guidonia Air Base – were given this new livery **Simone Ba**

FINAL EX-RAF SENTINEL DEPARTS WADDINGTON

THE FIFTH and final ex-RAF Raytheon Sentinel R1 battlefield surveillance aircraft departed RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, UK, on March 21, almost two years after the platform was withdrawn from operational service and sold as second-hand assets to an unconfirmed US customer.

The aircraft (formerly ZJ690, now registered as N690BD) was initially due to leave Waddington in 2022, later postponed to January of this year, but issues identified during multiple air tests led to its final departure being delayed. After departing the Lincolnshire base, the Sentinel was flown to Hawarden Airport in North Wales, where it will likely undergo some work with Raytheon before it continues its journey across the Atlantic.

ZJ690/N690BD is the last of five ex-RAF Sentinel R1s to depart

Waddington, which served as the type's home base while the fleet was operated by No 5 (Army Cooperation) Squadron from 2005 to its retirement in March 2021. The first to leave was ZJ692 (now N692BD), which completed an air test on May 30, 2022, and departed Waddington on June 7. The second was ZJ691 (now N691BD), which completed its air test on July 13, before appearing on static

display at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire, and departing on July 18. The third aircraft (ZJ694, now N694BD) completed its air test on July 15, before leaving Waddington on July 20. The fourth was ZJ693 (now N963BD), which flew an air test on September 22 and departed Waddington five days later.

In November 2021, *AirForces*

Monthly reported that the UK MOD had signed a sales agreement to deliver the five Sentinel airframes to a US-based consortium, but details of the agreement were withheld for commercially sensitive reasons. There have long been reports that this consortium is Raytheon USA and Bombardier, who aim to make the aircraft airworthy again before delivering them to the US Army, the rumoured end customer.



Raytheon Sentinel R1 (formerly ZJ690, now N690BD) bids a final farewell to its former home at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, UK, on March 15, 2023, as the last example of the type is flown to Hawarden Airport, North Wales, before being transferred to a customer in the US **Michael Hiley**