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21 Sqn technician A Gnat being brought in for maintenance. Note the heavy curtains to help keep the heat in the hangar

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pretty brisk handling of the air-
craft in and out of the big heated
hangars. Care has to be taken in
landing and taxying on the hard,
frozen runways and perimeter
tracks. It is not normal practice
to use the brake chute, and a
touchdown with any appreciable
cross-wind component requires
a deft touch and a delicate use of
the brakes. As the heat from the
efflux is inclined to melt the top
layers of snow—which naturally
freeze again as solid ice—especial
care is taken when taxying
always to use the dead centre of
the track so that the area affected
in this manner can be kept to a
minimum.

Both airframe and engine
minor inspections are carried out
by the squadron's technical
flight; and this also applies to the
ten Vampires which are on the
unit's strength. Major overhauls
are carried out at Valmet OY,
the state-owned aircraft and aero-
engine factories at Tampere.
High powerplant servceability
is not merely desirable but
essential in cases where the
number of operational aircraft
is relatively small. In this con-
text, the Orpheus has proved
itself to be exceptionally reliable.
Only one unscheduled engine
change has been made since the
aircraft first went into service
with the Finnish Air Force in
1958—and that was due to
ingestion of a foreign body.
Being basically a simpler engine
than many of its counterparts,
there are fewer parts both to go
wrong and to inspect and main-
tain, all of which leads to greater
utilization.

In conclusion, it is worth
noting that the other country
successfully using the Gnat 1 as
an operational weapon is India.
A greater contrast with Finland
could hardly be found.

Ground running—with chocks belayed by chains

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The squadron's communications aircraft—Saab Safir

—and Fouga Magister