

(Right) At 4:30 am, Dr Dave was the only one in this hangar feeling "Really Jolly Good" ... Note the dentist chair in the bottom left-hand corner.

(Below left) Dave reckons that an hour and a half at 11,000 ft is the perfect time to conduct hypoxia experiments — hence the name of the medical building at Motueka.

(Below right) The flying medicine man at Mt Cook.



Dr Dave

— the flying medicine man from Bulls



By Callum Macpherson

The sign on the door read "No Circulars" but finding this hangar would take a very determined delivery boy indeed. Located south of Bulls, the casual graffiti scribbled on the inside of the hangar doors gives the only clue as to its whereabouts: "Top Secret Skunk Works" ...

It was 4:30 am and Dave Baldwin, aka Dr Dave the flying doctor, was taking great delight in watching me suffer at this uncivilised hour as he does a final preflight of his Hawk XP "Really Jolly Good" (ZK-RJG). The aircraft was prepared the night before but a final check is always in order. I noticed in the front right-hand corner of the hangar was sitting a dentist chair arc-welded to a large metal base.

"I sit on that some lunchtimes and watch the aircraft movements, to clear my head ..."

Dr Dave's "Bulls Flying Doctor Service" is not one in which Mrs Bradey calls up on the wireless needing an emergency lobotomy but a mobile aviation medical service. Tuesday is his flying day and the route typically takes Dr Dave through Motueka, Hokitika, Fox Glacier, Haast and Mount Cook. If the idea of trekking to your local aviation doctor for a medical seems elementary, spare a thought for those pilots in the more remote areas of New Zealand.

The service is run from the Bulls Medical Centre, a centre like no other that I have seen in all my visits to the doctor. Instead of generic still life and landscape prints (or worse, posters of "interesting" ailments and afflictions), and an abundance of *Women's Weekly's*, this place could easily be mistaken for an aviation museum. Aviation paraphernalia is scattered throughout the entrance, waiting room, and examining rooms. Models, aircraft parts and instruments, photographs, some RNZAF-4 anniversary port wine, and even a Nazi ID card ...

Dr Dave is not so much an aviation enthusiast, but an aviation fanatic. And he is definitely one of New Zealand aviation's characters.

He has slowly and methodically worked out a "system" for his flying medicals. *Really Jolly Good* is kitted out with full IFR panel, including two GPS receivers, an autopilot and a "storm scope" for spotting the odd cumulonimbus hidden in the distance in the night sky.

"The only thing I really need to make the set-up complete is an HF radio, as the VHF, being line of sight, is not all together reliable way-down south. And perhaps an electric AH, just in case the vacuum system fails."

A couple of oxygen tanks are strapped into