

A large military helicopter is shown in flight, lifting two smaller helicopters and a tank. The large helicopter is at the top, with its rotors blurred. It is connected to two smaller helicopters and a tank below it by thick green slings. The smaller helicopters are also in flight, and the tank is suspended in the center. The background is a clear blue sky.

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Lifting by Helicopter
Maintaining Safety Standards in the Air

L. James Chant
Testimonial to an Inventor

St. Pierre Manufacturing
Forging a Legacy of Horseshoes, Anchor Chain, & Wire Rope

The Legacy, Vision and Innovations of an Inventor: A Lifetime Tribute to a Brilliant Engineer and Testing Machine Builder, L. James Chant

by Christi G. Chambers & Laura F. Chant

Born in December 1927, Leonard James "Jim" Chant, was destined to be a leader. Jim grew up as an only child in the quaint little Borough of Lewisham located in Southeast London, England along with his mother and father, Sidney and Doris (Barnes) Chant.

**L. James Chant Dec. 7, 1927-Jun. 15, 2017
Founder of Chant Engineering Co. Inc.**

Back in 1937, homes in Lewisham were being wired for electricity. When Jim was just a young lad at age 10 he observed several electricians at work, and when all the work was completed and the lights switched on, Jim knew at that very moment exactly what he wanted to do with his life. When Jim was only 11 years old, he earned a merit scholarship to attend Bancroft's School, a boarding school for boys which was originally founded in 1737.

At the onset of World War II and upon his graduation at age 17, Jim had planned to join the Royal Airforce to help fight for his country. WWII began after Adolf Hitler's soldiers invaded Poland in September 1939 and following that invasion Great Britain and France declared war with Germany. WWII was one of the deadliest wars in our history, lasting over six years. An estimated 45-



Jim and Barbara Chant's Romance started in 1949 and lasted until his passing. They were married for 56 years.



60 million lives were claimed. Hitler's plan of "World Domination" caused the Nazi soldiers to exterminate nearly 6 million Jews who were also held in his horrific concentration camps during what was known as the "Holocaust". Thankfully, WWII ended before Jim's graduation, so he was able to continue his education vs. joining the war efforts.

While Jim definitely had a passion for all things engineering, he also loved photography and loved to photograph architecture, landscapes and anything that was interesting to look at or slightly unique. He was even a member of a local photography club. (see photo on page 6).

Jim was a very driven young man who attended the University of London where he earned a B.Sc. degree in Elec-

trical Engineering in 1949. He was the first in his family to attend a university. Jim became a Chartered Professional Engineer and later the founder of Chant Engineering Co. Inc.

While working for London Transport, he was in charge of hosting the social club for the staff. He found out there was a young woman, named Barbara, in a different department who should join the social club. Jim went over to her office to invite her to join the club in person. It was the first time the two laid eyes on each other. While Barbara knew instantly that Jim was the one for her, it wasn't until two co-workers intervened the following Valentine's Day by sending both of them an anonymous Valentine to each other, that they found true

love. They just needed a little encouragement from their friends.

In 1959, as a young British engineer, Jim was recruited to be part of the nascent US space program. In October of 1959, Jim and his wife Barbara, along with their three sons, Steven, Peter and Michael, immigrated to the United State on the ocean liner Hanseatic. The Hanseatic was a luxury ship that could carry up to 1,350 passengers in style from Hamburg to New York and is best known for the ship's fire in New York Harbor in 1966 which destroyed its engine room and five of its decks. The family first settled in New Jersey before moving a few years later to Pennsylvania. After settling down in the U.S., Jim and Barbara continued to

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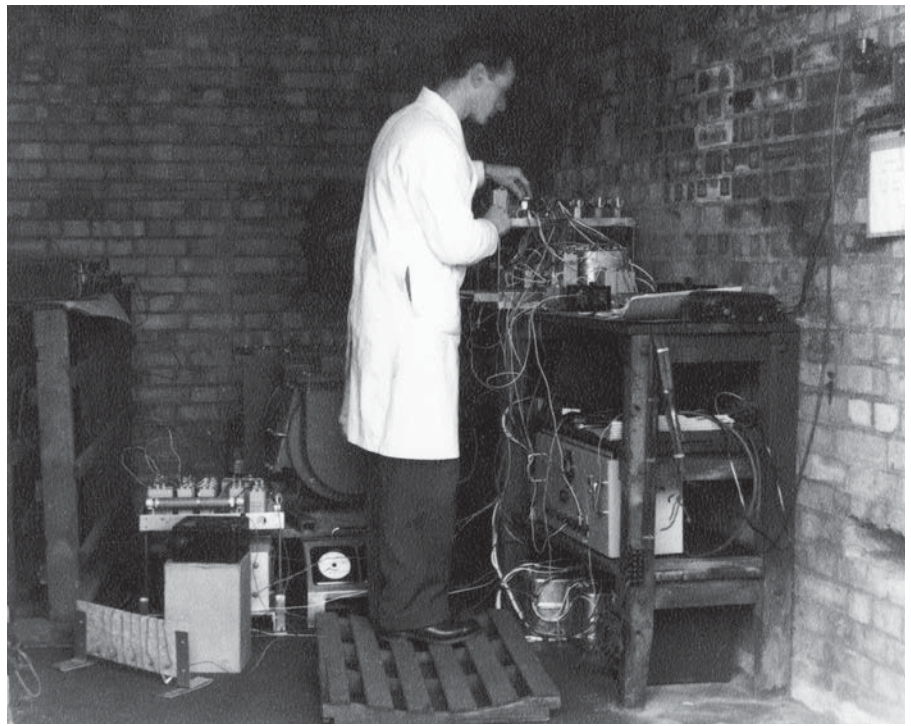
grow their family with the addition of their fourth son, Philip, and their only daughter, Christine. They had a total of five children.

In 1962 Chant was hired as the Chief Engineer at Boonshaft and Fuchs Co., a small but well-known Government testing equipment and machinery manufacturer. Jim was one of the designers of the human centrifuge at the Johnsville Naval Air Station, where NASA astronauts Alan Shepard and John Glenn, part of the renowned “Mercury Seven,” came to Bucks County, PA to train for the early 1960’s Mercury Space Missions. The Johnsville Centrifuge was the largest and most powerful human centrifuge ever constructed and is now on public display at the Penn State Anechotic Chamber in Warminster, PA after being hidden from the public in the Smithsonian storage facility for more than 45 years.

For eight years he was also the U.S. Representative of the British Institution of Engineering and Technology, one of the world’s largest and most prestigious engineering institutions. He regularly attended board meetings in both the United States and England.

After working for other engineering companies, Jim founded L. J. Chant and Associates in 1970 in the basement of his Hatboro home. This company later became Chant Engineering Co., Inc., from where he just recently retired as CEO. A serial entrepreneur and developer, Jim was always involved in something and constantly seeking his next project.

In 1976 the company moved to a rented garage, a technician was hired to help out and the name was changed to Chant Engineering Co. Inc. The com-



Jim Chant, Engineer, Footscray, Kent, England. Working on a project c1956.

pany remained unchanged until 1986 when Philip Chant, Jim’s fourth and youngest son joined the company as a full-time employee.

Jim had an entrepreneurial spirit which allowed him to take his knowledge, expertise, and experience from his previous jobs in the space program and start his own business. He foresaw an industry need, so he used his forward thinking intuition and vision to create a company to design and manufacture testing machinery for the wire rope industry. He was a true inventor, Jim even designed the first Chant test beds to be introduced into the marketplace with touch screen controls. This

was during a time in history which was before cell phone technology. Customers initially didn’t like the technology and wanted to revert back to manual controls because they couldn’t understand it. They thought touch screens were too hard to use. Today all Chant machines are touch screen controls. His innovations were decades ahead of their time.

In 1988, Chant moved its location to New Britain, PA where they built their first new 10,000 sq. ft. facility. Chant products are still to this day manufactured in the U.S.A. in a larger 55,000 sq. ft. facility just a few blocks away from the original factory. His employees saw Jim as a great person, mentor and teacher and their testimonials reflect the impression and impact he made on each of them, both professionally and personally.

“Mr. Chant, “Call me Jim” is what he said whenever I called him that, he was a wonderful, kind and caring man. He honestly cared about everyone who worked for him, and you knew it. You wanted to go the extra mile for him. He understood what it took for you to do your job, because he lived and breathed it. He was a brilliant, multi-disciplined engineer, company founder, mentor and genuinely a good person. I am grateful to have known him. He has done so much for so many and he will be missed. But more importantly, he will be remembered...”

-George Andress, Chant employee (9+ years)

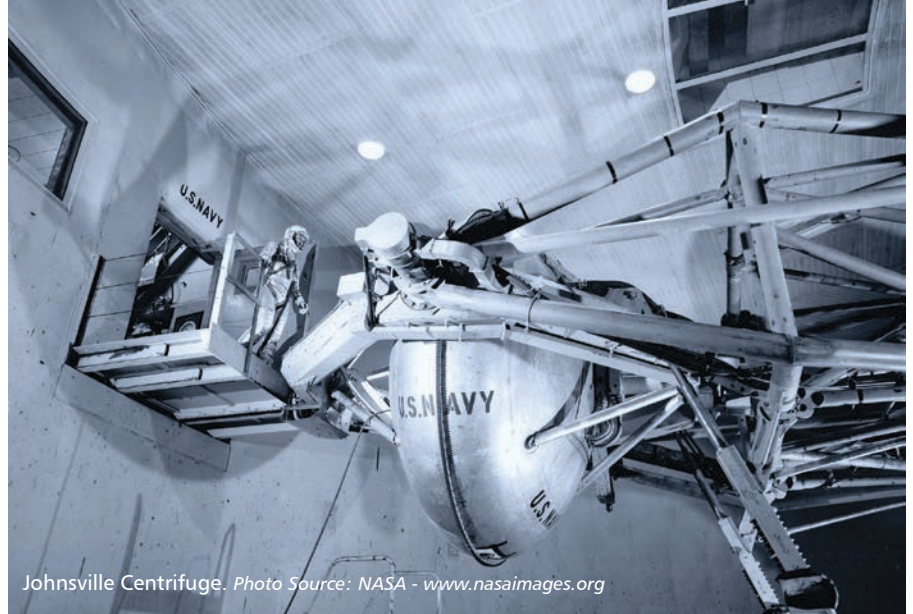
“He was a really patient, easy-going man, always very respectful to everyone. He was extremely approachable, in



Jim and his family boarding the Hanseatic Ocean Liner. c1959

fact you could talk to Jim about virtually anything. You could tell him about problems on the shop floor or even ask him for advice. If he saw you doing something wrong, instead of yelling at you, he'd offer helpful hints or positive constructive criticism. He would work side-by-side to show you how things were done, get his hands dirty to mentor us. In all the years I have worked here, I only saw Jim blow his lid once, and it was actually funny, because it was so out of character for him.”
- Israel “Izzy” Guzman, current Chant employee (12+ years)

“Although Jim’s area of expertise was Electrical Engineering, he had such a strong grasp of all engineering disciplines. At times, he could discuss a mechanical engineering problem with me with such simple approaches to it, to the point where I would leave slightly embarrassed, wondering why I hadn’t thought of that. The clearest engineering lesson I learned from Jim is to always question what makes things “tick” and to ask questions or research the subject until it is thoroughly understood. The clearest personal lesson I learned from Jim is that it is possible to operate a



Johnsville Centrifuge. Photo Source: NASA - www.nasaimages.org

successful business while treating others with respect, honesty and patience.”
- Rob Schuyler, Chant employee and Jim’s son-in-law (12+ years)

“Everyone who worked with Jim, remember Jim as being a brilliant engineer and respected by all in the industry. A few will remember back when Chant Engineering was a small startup company, with fewer than 15 employees, Jim made it a point to

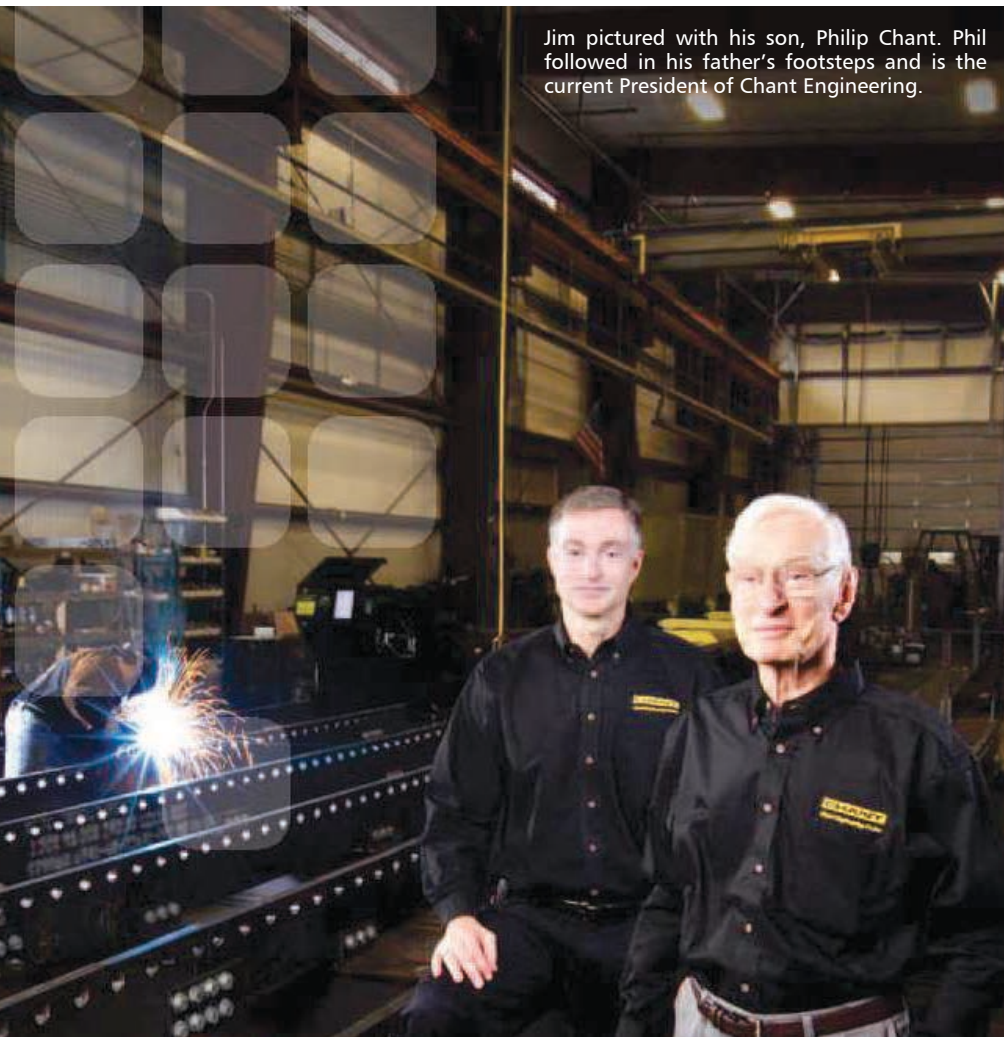
make every employee feel like part of his family. This became more difficult for Jim as the company grew and grew, but it wasn’t for a lack of trying. So, for every employee on their birthday, Jim made sure that the entire company would gather in the engineering office for a surprise birthday cake and Jim’s personal rendition of “Happy Birthday”. At first, Jim made this a nice surprise for all. But, eventually everyone caught on to Jim’s little surprise. No matter how hard he tried, he could only fool his engineering staff for so long. Such fond memories.”
- David Patrick, Retired Chant Employee (25 years)

In 1996, Chant manufactured their largest test machine, a 5 Million Lb. Capacity Horizontal Test Bed.

In 1999, Jim decided to add a second product offering when he acquired Hull Industries, a leading plastics and composite processing manufacturer founded in 1950. As an affiliate company of Chant Engineering, Jim loved a challenge and had the foresight to understand Hull Industries would become a complimentary product line to design transfer, compression, deflashers and other plastics molding equipment.

For over twenty years, Jim and his wife Barbara were also very involved with their local New Britain Borough community. They recently donated land to expand the nature preserve in New Britain Borough and in recognition of their donation, the Borough named this section of the nature preserve, Chant’s Woods.

Jim touched many lives. He was intelligent, pragmatic, generous, confident, wise, caring, a willing advocate for others, and went out of his way to support the endeavors of others without judgment. He expected the best



Jim pictured with his son, Philip Chant. Phil followed in his father’s footsteps and is the current President of Chant Engineering.

from individuals, businesses, and government.

Unlike many people, when he found a problem he would take the initiative to address it trying to make a positive change. Jim would attempt to engage others with private chats, and if necessary finding and talking to supervisors, CEOs, writing letters to government officials, congressmen, even the President of the United States. In these discussions, Jim often got results as he was always a gentleman, never argued, and treated everyone with polite respect. He honored his word and expected others to do the same. He believed in the innate goodness in people and maintained a positive outlook and attitude throughout his life.

Mr. Chant's ability to talk to employees, customers, and government officials on all levels, clearly understand goals and testing needs, provide unique and custom solutions, and his strong vision ultimately drove the company to become a leading manufacturer of testing machinery, reeling machines, test stands and other related rigging shop accessories. He was not only an innovator ahead of his time but also an iconic figure in our industry.

Jim left behind his legacy and today, Chant Engineering is still a family owned and operated business run by Jim Chant's son, Philip Chant (Fig. 8). Phil has served as its President since 2000 and over the past seventeen years,



Charlton House Doors. Photo taken by Jim Chant in 1950. He always believed "when one door closes, another opens", quote by Alexander Graham Bell.

Phil has been able to preserve his father's vision. He was fortunate to be able to work side-by-side with Jim for over 35 years to learn the business from the ground up, to help cultivate its corporate culture and to facilitate the company's growth to nearly 60 employees. Chant has become a global manufacturing facility serving customers testing equipment needs worldwide.

Jim died peacefully at home on Thursday, June 15, 2017 at the age of 89 and was surrounded by his loving family (Fig. 9). He was a unique, funny little gentleman from England who

loved engineering, his family, friends, and employees and let his passion drive his path to become an industry icon and inventor. Of course, Jim was also a great husband, father, mentor, and friend to all who knew him and he will be greatly missed by all.

"It is a very sad time and we all have a heavy heart as we mourn Jim's passing. He has touched and impacted so many people over the years. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Chant family and staff."
- Jules DiRienzo, Vice President of Operations for Chant Engineering Co. Inc.

"It is with great sadness we mourn the passing of our founding father, Jim Chant. He truly was an extraordinary man. I am honored to have known and worked with him."
- Patrick Shire, Vice President Sales and Marketing for Chant Engineering Co. Inc.

"Mr. Chant was the best boss I ever had. He was patient, honest, smart and genuinely a great guy. I loved working for him and will really miss talking with him."
- Garret Rigler, Chant employee (5+ years)

Jim leaves behind his beloved wife Barbara after 65 years of marriage, children Steven (Kaoru), Peter, Michael, Philip (Lori) Chant and Christine (Rob) Schuyler, ten grandchildren and one great-grandson.

For more information about Chant Engineering, please visit www.chant-engineering.com. **WRN**

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