

Claude J. Benner

**President - Aerospaceal
Helicopter**

1940 to 1976

Jake was born September 16, 1917 in Dorrance Township, Pennsylvania. He attended Myer's High School, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 1931-1935. At the age of 18 he was in business for himself as the owner and operator of a Trucking Company delivering coal, wood, ice, and providing general hauling services. From the age of 20 to 21 he worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad in the Roundhouse where he saved his money for college. After graduating from Casey Jones School of Aeronautics in Newark New Jersey with an Associate Aeronautical Engineering Degree in 1940 he joined Chance Vought Aircraft as a stress analyst. Blessed with a superb ability to work with people and get the job done Jake rose steadily from assignment to assignment through the Vought organization from stress analyst in 1940 to President of Aerospaceal Helicopter in 1974, an off shoot from LTV Aerospace that began as Vought Helicopter.



Jake's rise through the ranks began in 1942 when he became Supervisor of the Structures Test Laboratory. He held that position until 1954. During the period 1948-1951 he also was on special assignment coordinating the move of the Engineering Department from Stratford Connecticut to Dallas Texas and establishing the requirements for and overseeing the construction of new Engineering office and Test Laboratory buildings at the Dallas Facility. In the 1954-1957 time period he was Project Engineer for the F7U-3 Cutlass Navy Fighter, Assistant Facilities Manager 1957-1959, Assistant Director of Business Planning 1959-1962, Assistant to the President for administration 1962-1963, and in 1963 named Director of Administration, LTV Corporation. In June of 1968 Jake was promoted to Vice President for Administration LTV Aerospace Corporation with responsibility for Facilities, Industrial Relations, Policy and Procedures, and Cost Reduction.

Jake's next major step up the Corporate ladder came in 1973 when he was given a two year leave of absence from LTV Aerospace and appointed president of Vought Helicopter Incorporated (VHI). VHI had been organized in 1969 as a wholly owned Subsidiary of LTV Aerospace Corporation. The plan was to market, sell, and support the French Aerospatiale line of helicopters in the U S and Canadian markets. The intent was to lead VHI into becoming a prime helicopter company and participate in new helicopter designs in cooperation with Aerospatiale for both commercial and military markets world wide.

At the end of 1973 LTV Aerospace decided to sell the VHI assets to Aerospatiale and in January of 1974 a new subsidiary, consisting of VHI assets was formed as a wholly owned subsidiary of Aerospatiale. It was named Vought Helicopter Corporation, (VHC), and Jake Benner was elected president. In 1976 VHC was renamed Aerospatiale Helicopter (AHC). At about this time Jake's two year leave of absence from LTV Aerospace expired. He retired from LTV Aerospace and continued as president of AHC.

Under Jake's leadership AHC bid and won a major U S Coast Guard contract in 1979 for 96 SA-366-SRR search and rescue helicopters, (Coast Guard designation HH-65A). AHC was in competition with Bell Helicopter for this contract. Retiring from AHC in 1980 Jake continued as a member of AHC's board of directors and as a consultant through 1991. In addition to serving on the board of

directors of AHC 1980-1991 Jake also served on the board of directors for Henry Energy Corporation of Arlington Texas 1982-1985 and Aircraft Gear Corporation of Chicago 1983-1996.

In 1993 in recognition of his service performed as President of AHC Jake was named "Chevalier de L' Ordre National Du Merit" by the President of France, Francios Mitterrand.