



# **INFLATION APPARATUS**

## **OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

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## 1 Introduction

The Inflation Apparatus is a novel test apparatus used to analyze the mechanical response of aortic rings to internal pressure. The apparatus features an inflatable silicone tube connected to an airflow system consisting of a air inflow valve and an air outflow valve. The air inflow valve is set to a constant rate during testing. The air outflow valve is controlled by a servo. When the servo closes the valve, the air is trapped inside the airflow system, thus causing the silicone tube to inflate. Opening the outflow valve allows the silicone tube to deflate. An aortic ring is fitted onto the silicone tube so as to inflate with the silicone tube. A force sensor is placed between the silicone tube and the aortic ring to measure the internal pressure acting on the aortic ring. An edge-detecting camera is aimed at the aortic ring to measure the diameter of the aortic ring throughout the test.

An application developed with LabVIEW on a Windows 10 Home Operating System (OS) is used to interface with the test operator. The LabVIEW application also interfaces with a National Instruments (NI) multi-function Data Acquisition (DAQ) device and the USB camera. The NI DAQ device is a USB-6211 and it both controls the servo through Pulse-Width Modulation (PWM) and acquires data from the force sensor. An additional LED light is controlled by the NI DAQ device to alert the test operator of test initiation.

The operating instructions of the Inflation Apparatus application are described herein along with installation instructions for the application. Please direct any questions or bug reports to the application developer, Jason Harwerth ([jharwert@umd.edu](mailto:jharwert@umd.edu)), or Dr. Haslach ([haslach@umd.edu](mailto:haslach@umd.edu)).

## 2 Installation

The application requires the use of a Windows 10 Home edition OS. An installer is used to install all necessary runtime drivers to run the application along with the application itself. The installer is the only necessary file needed to obtain a running application. To calibrate the camera, Vision Assistant also needs to be downloaded from NI. Vision Assistant is the only download external to the installer needed to have access to all features of the application.

### 2.1 The Installer

The Inflation Apparatus installer is packaged in a zip file titled "InflationApparatusInstall.zip". Currently, the zip file is not set up to be self-extracting, so the following steps need to be taken to run the installer:

1. After obtaining the zip file, right click on the zip file and press "Extract All.." in the windows explorer menu.
2. Select the extraction location and extract the files.
3. Once the files are extracted, open the created folder and double click on "InflationApparatusInstall.exe" to run the installer.

Completing this process will launch the installer wherein the process listed below should be followed:

1. A dialog asking permission to allow the installer from an unknown publisher will appear. Press "Yes".
2. The installer prompt will appear and display the destination directory. Press "Next".
3. An installer initialization prompt will appear and display the programs to be installed. Press "Next".
4. The installer will begin installing all programs. Do not interrupt this process.
5. When the installer finishes, an installation complete prompt will be displayed. Press "Finish".

At the end of this process, the Inflation Apparatus is installed to the PC and the executable will be located in the "C: \Program Files (x86) \Inflation Apparatus" directory. A shortcut to the application automatically appears in the Windows Start Menu. Additional shortcuts to the application can be created and placed anywhere on the PC.

## 2.2 Vision Assistant

Vision Assistant is obtained through downloading NI's Vision Development Module (linked below). An installation walkthrough will not be laid out here because the installation process is standardized. However, NI often prompts users to download more than what is necessary, so it is recommended to ensure that only the Vision Development Module is downloaded. A development license will be required to use Vision Assistant (free with UMD-NI accounts).

<https://www.ni.com/en-us/support/downloads/software-products/download.vision-development-module.html>

## 3 The Inflation Apparatus

If the installer has completed without errors, the Inflation Apparatus application will be executable with or without hardware components. This section will go through all components of the application and how to use them.

### 3.1 Initialization

Upon opening the application, a hardware and control initialization prompt appears before entering the main application (Fig. 1a). The operator selects physical channels for the force sensor, servo, LED, and camera along with the sampling rates for the channels. The camera has an additional color pane that can be changed. The controller type and parameters are also selected in this prompt. At the time of writing, only the PID controller has been implemented into the application. The operator presses the continue button when they are ready to move onto the main application.

If there is an error with the hardware selections, the application notifies the operator with the hardware components that have errors (Fig. 1b). The application will only continue when there are no hardware errors. If the operator wishes to run the application without physical hardware interfaces, simulated hardware can be selected. Simulated hardware will generate random data for testing modes in the application.

Past the hardware and control initialization prompt, the acquisition hardware (ie. the camera and force sensor) runs continuously at the defined frequencies. The application will always retrieve latest value of the acquired data when the operator requests the data through the various features of the application. The servo and the LED will also be in a running state, but they will wait for commands from the application.

### 3.2 The Main Window

Once the hardware is selected, the application moves onto main window. Several Graphical User Interface (GUI) components comprise the main window (Fig. 2) including:

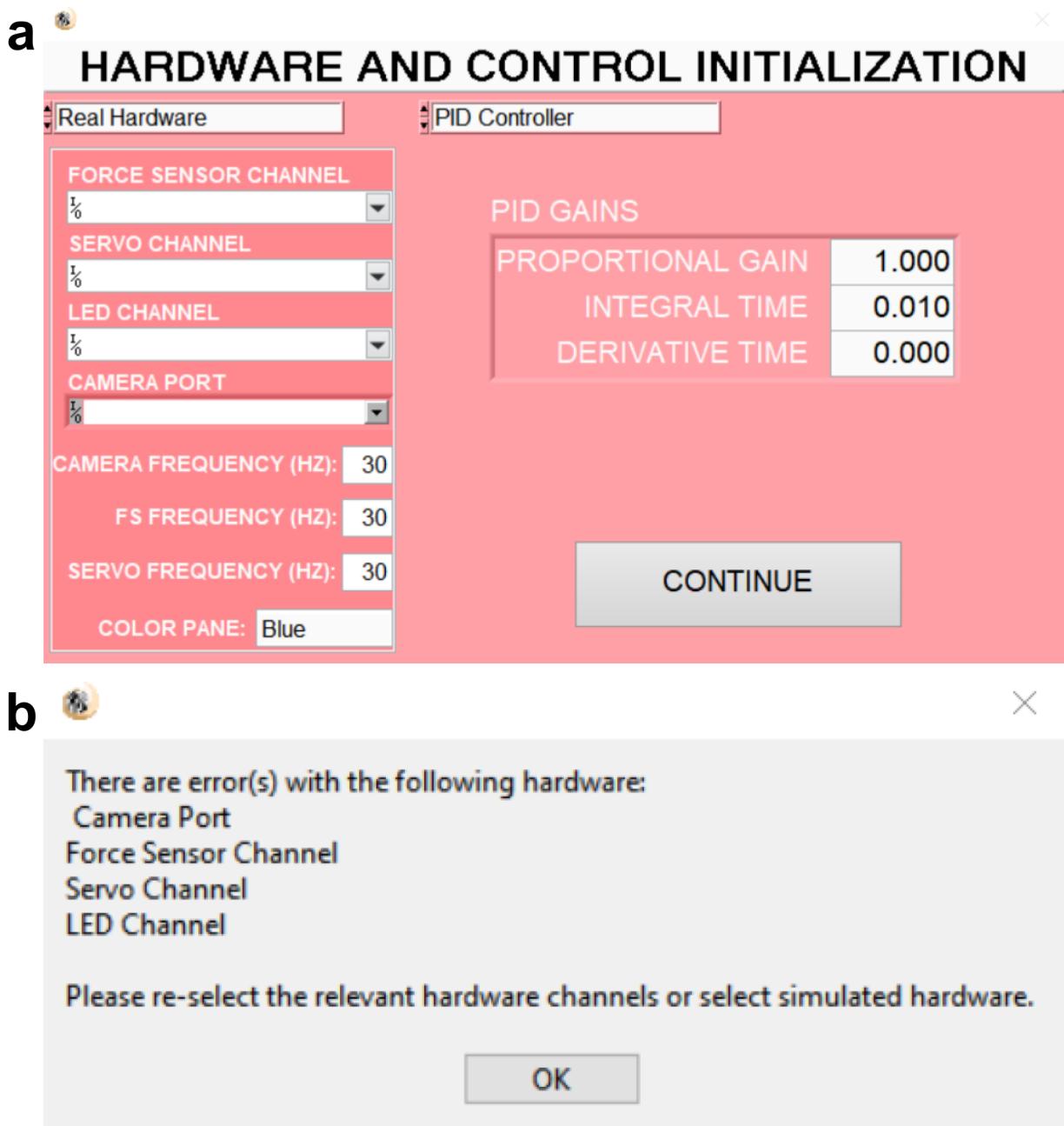


Figure 1: (a) The initial prompt that appears when opening the Inflation Apparatus application. (b) The error prompt that appears if there are issues with the hardware selection.

1. The menu (Fig. 2a). General application features are located in the menu such as exiting the application or accessing help. Additionally, an option to change the controller used for the inflation test is available.
  2. The banner (Fig. 2b). The banner controls the state of the application. Currently, the operator can switch between inflation testing, force calibration, camera calibration, and equipment testing. Switching between these states determines which GUI elements appear on dynamic panels.
  3. The static inflation test controls (Fig. 2c). Inflation test controls relating to setpoints, timing, and abort parameters are located here. These controls will always be displayed regardless of the selected banner state.
  4. The static hardware controls (Fig. 2d). Hardware parameters are located here. A scroll bar will appear when the mouse enters this panel. When the parameters are changed, a "Refresh HW?" button will appear above the hardware parameters.

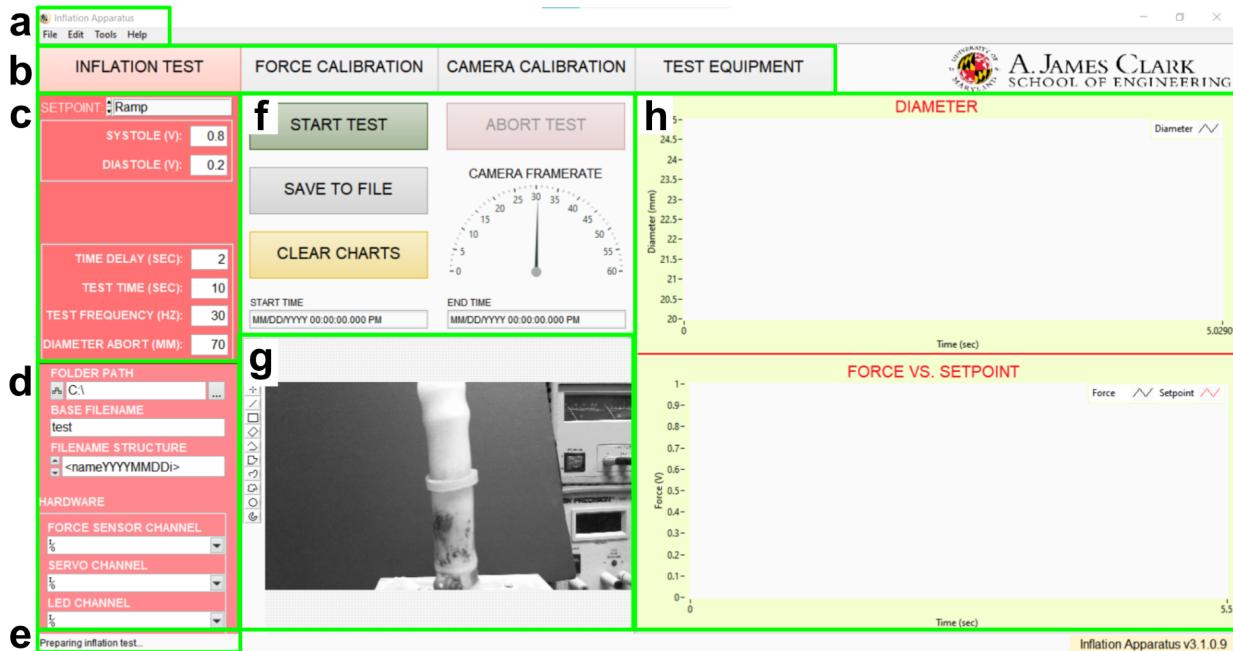


Figure 2: The components of the main window, including the (a) menu, (b) banner, (c) static inflation test controls, (d) static hardware controls, (e) status bar, (f) dynamic controls, (g) dynamic indicators, and (h) dynamic panel display.

Pressing the refresh button will re-initialize all hardware with the selected parameters.

5. The status bar (Fig. 2e). The last application status will appear here. It is intended to give the operator information on any actions performed by the application.
6. The dynamic controls (Fig. 2f). Controls that differ between banner selections are located here. Additional indicators are also placed here when relevant.
7. The dynamic indicators (Fig. 2g). Indicators that differ between banner selections are located here. Additional controls are also placed here when relevant.
8. The dynamic panel display (Fig. 2h). Panels that differ between banner selections are located here. Graphs most commonly appear in the dynamic panel display.

The entire main window is resizable to fit most window sizes. When resizing, the static hardware controls, dynamic indicators, and dynamic panel display will resize with the main window. All other components will remain static. The sizes of text, buttons, and tables will not scale with the main window.

### 3.3 Inflation Testing

To begin inflation testing, several controls need to be defined prior to testing. Additionally, the force sensor and camera need to be calibrated prior to inflation testing. Details on calibration processes are found in the *Force Calibration* and *Camera Calibration* sections. A live video feed of the inflation apparatus is displayed in the dynamic indicators panel. The current camera framerate is also displayed in the dynamic controls panel. The controls immediately relevant to the inflation test are defined below:

1. The setpoint. Options for different setpoints are available and added as needed. For each setpoint, there are relevant controls to define the specific function. For example, a ramp setpoint has systolic and diastolic voltage values to define the beginning and end points of the ramp setpoint.
2. The time delay. The time delay specifies an amount of time to wait before beginning the test after starting the test. During this time, the setpoint is equal to the defined

diastolic value.

3. The test time. The test time defines the amount of time that the test runs for.
4. The sampling rate. The sampling rate defines the sampling frequency of the test. If the sampling rate is greater than the frequency of hardware components, the application will disregard the hardware components that have not acquired data new data within the specified sampling rate.
5. The diameter abort. The diameter abort specifies the maximum allowable diameter in the inflation test. If the camera reads a diameter value greater than the diameter abort value, the test will be aborted.
6. The folder path, base filename, and filename structure. The folder path specifies the location to save test data. The base filename specifies the main name for the test data txt file. The filename structure specifies filename saving structure for the test data txt file.

After the inflation test parameters have been set, an inflation test can be started by pressing the "Start Test" button. After starting the test, all controls will be disabled other than the "Abort Test" button (Fig. 3a). The recorded diameter, force, and setpoint values are displayed on the dynamic panel display charts. The start and end times of the inflation test are updated on the dynamic controls panel. The test will run uninterrupted unless the abort button is pressed or the diameter abort condition is met.

When the test is finished, a test comment prompt will appear requesting the operator to save any relevant information with the inflation test (Fig. 3b). The operator can input the suggested information or any other information that is deemed to be more relevant to the test. This prompt will not appear if the test is aborted. The operator can also choose to discard the test, in which case the test data will not be saved. When the operator is satisfied with the test comments, pressing "Save Test" will save the test data to the specified folder location with the specified filename and structure.

If the test is not saved because the test was aborted or the operator chose to discard the test, the operator can press "Save to File" to manually save any data displayed on the

charts. The test comment prompt will appear for the operator to save comments. When the operator is satisfied with the test comments, pressing "Save Test" will save the test data to the specified folder location with the specified filename and structure.

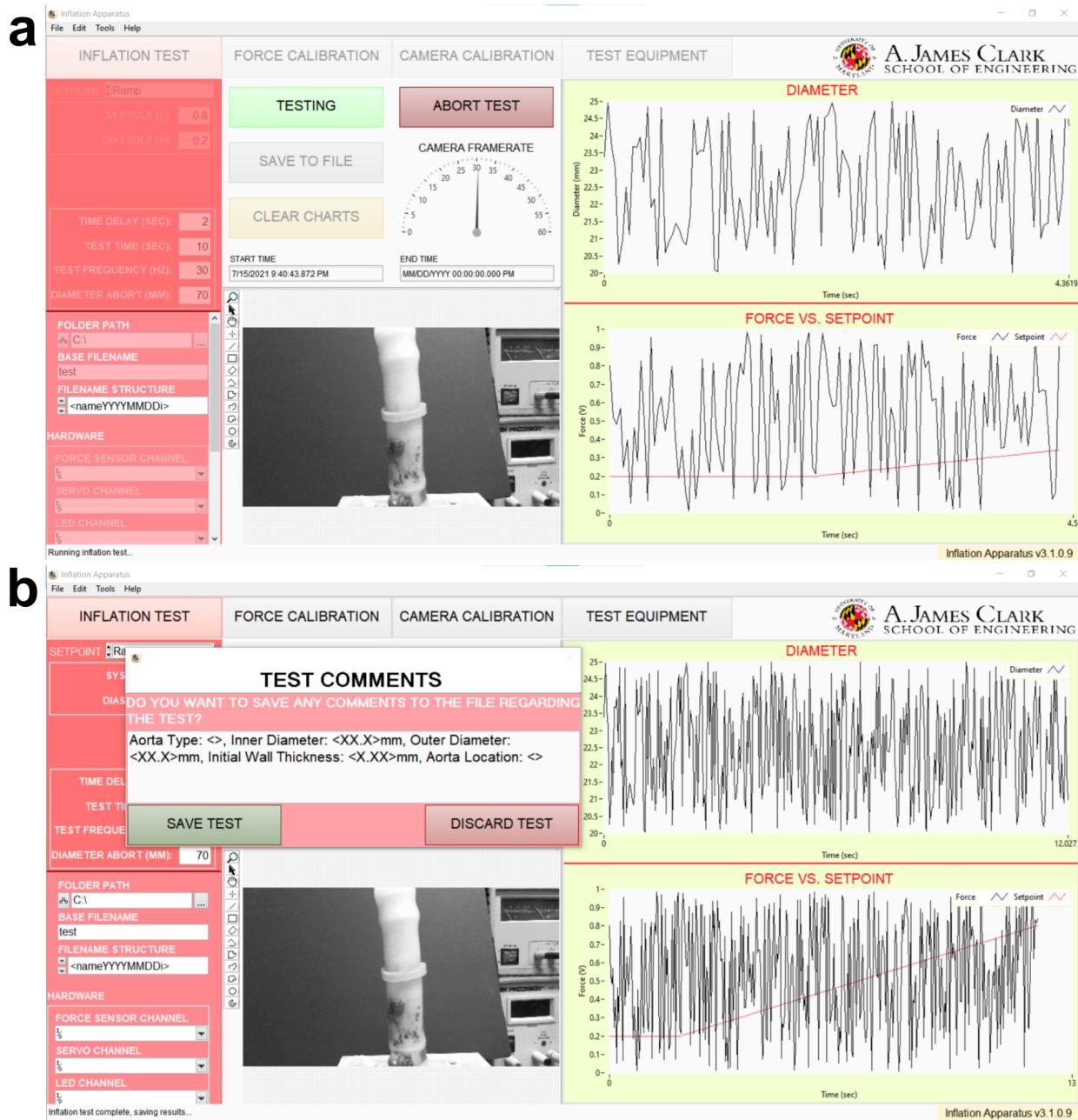


Figure 3: (a) The inflation testing window when running an inflation test. (b) The prompt that appears after a completed test.

The operator can also press the "Clear Charts" button to clear any data from the dynamic panel display charts at anytime. The charts will also be cleared automatically at the start of tests.

### 3.4 Force Calibration

Before inflation testing, the force sensor needs to be calibrated to obtain force units from voltage values. When the Force Calibration banner state is selected, the main window will display controls and indicators relevant to force calibration (Fig. 4). The latest acquired force sensor data will automatically display on the force chart. To calibrate the force sensor, follow the process listed below:

1. Tape the force sensor flat on the benchtop surface.
2. Line up the wooden calibration block with the force sensor such that the calibration pencil is centered with the force sensor.
3. Load the calibration pencil with 50g of weight.

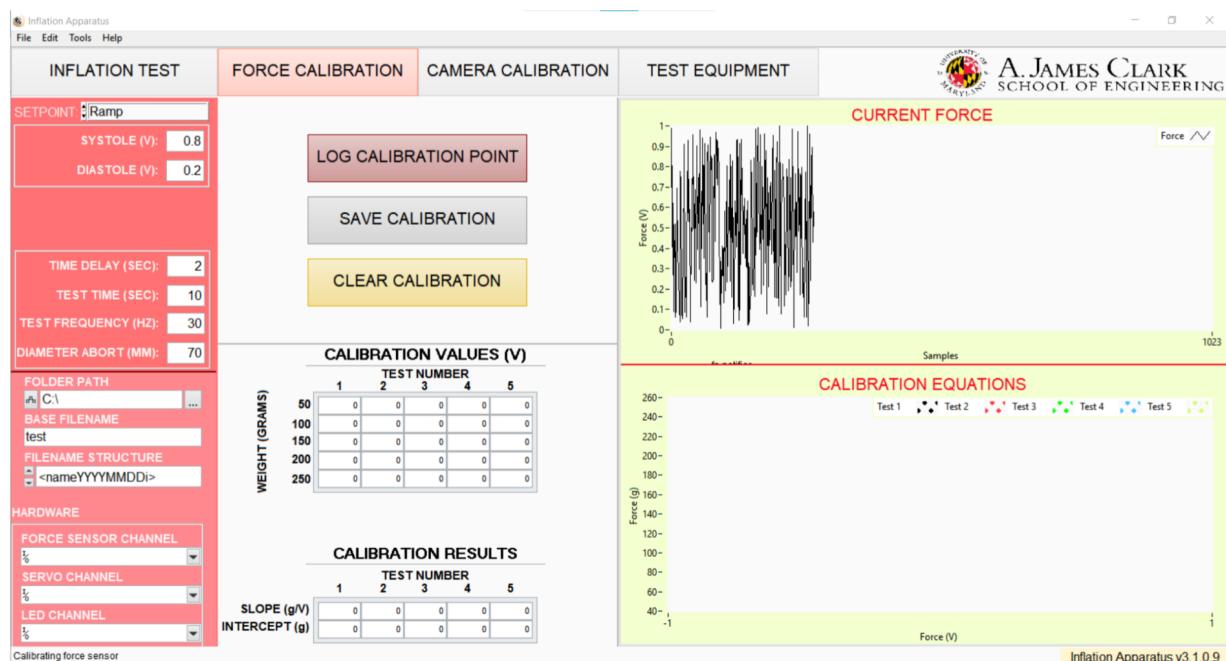


Figure 4: The force calibration window.

4. Wait for the force sensor voltage to level out (approximately 10 seconds) and record the voltage by pressing the "Log Calibration Point" button. The voltage value will appear in the "Calibration Values" table.
5. Successively repeat steps 3 and 4 with 100g, 150, 200g, and 250g of weight. After each weight has a voltage, the linear fit for the data is automatically calculated and displayed in both the "Calibration Results" table and the "Calibration Equations" chart.
6. Repeat steps 3, 4, and 5 to complete four total calibration tests prior to inflation testing. The fifth and final calibration test is completed after inflation testing.

The calibration can be saved at any time by pressing the "Save Calibration" button. A prompt will appear asking the operator to choose a folder location and a filename for the calibration txt file. The entire calibration table can also be cleared by pressing the "Clear Calibration" button.

### 3.5 Camera Calibration

Before inflation testing, the camera needs to be calibrated to obtain diameter values from the camera feed. When the Camera Calibration banner state is selected, the main window will display controls and indicators relevant to camera calibration (Fig. 5a). The last logged camera picture will be displayed in the dynamic panel display. The camera picture can be updated by pressing the "Update Image" button. To calibrate the camera, follow the process listed below:

1. Slide the camera in front of the ruler.
2. Make sure the ruler is aligned with the silicone tube. Keep the ruler aligned with the cross-section of the silicone tube (where the aorta will be placed). The ruler should be about 10 cm away from the camera.
3. Update the camera picture.
4. Open Vision Assistant by pressing on the "Launch Vision Assistant" button.
5. Click on Image Calibration under the picture. Select New calibration and keep click-

- ing next until you get to an enlarged image of the ruler.
6. Zoom in (tools are at the bottom toolbar) until you are able to get a clear image of the mm marks. Select (left click) on a mm mark on the ruler and then click (left click)

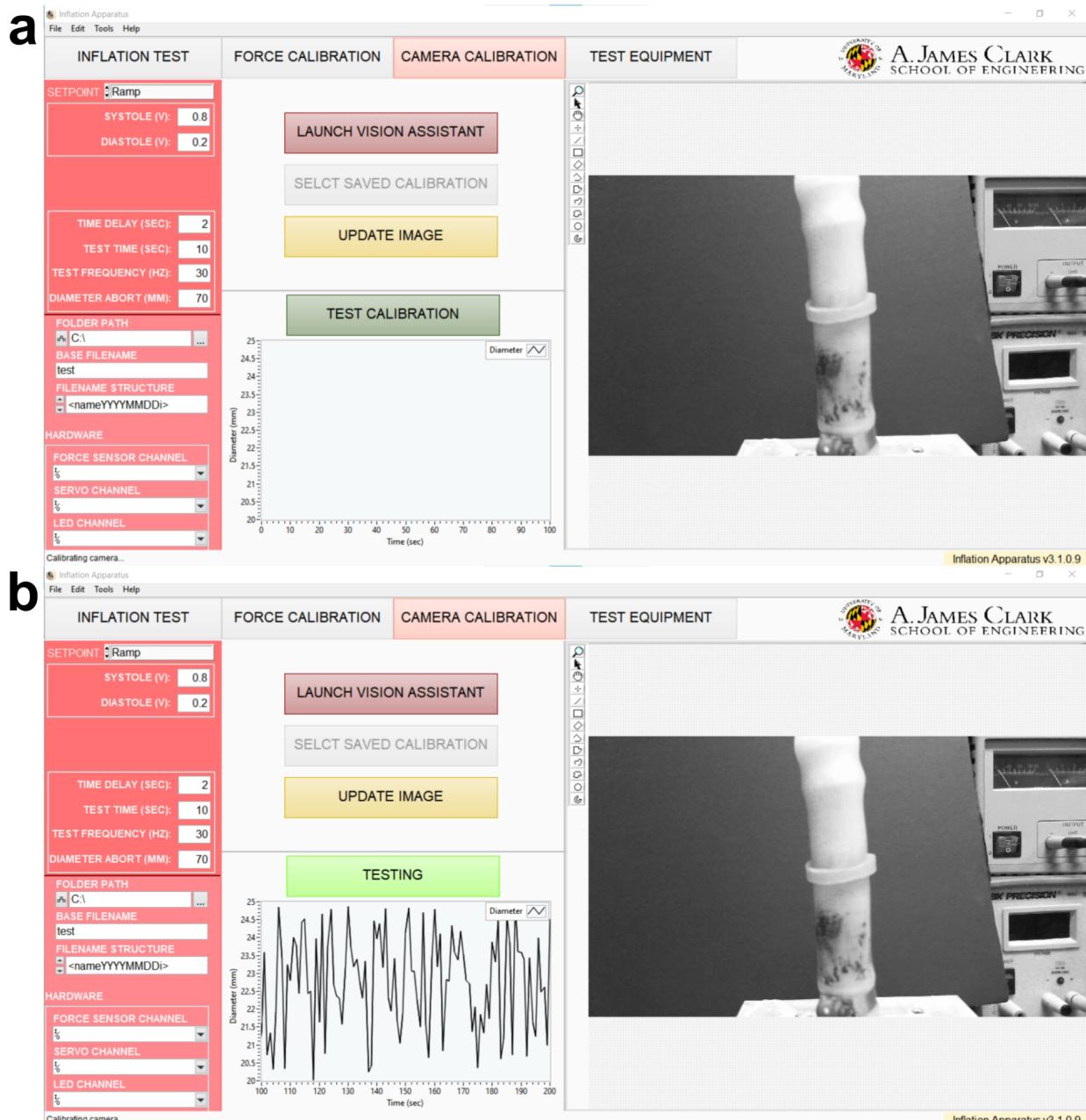


Figure 5: (a) The camera calibration window. (b) The camera calibration testing graph.

on another mm mark that is exactly 10 mm away. Type in 10 mm into the specified distance box. Click next until you reach step 6 and save the calibration in a specified folder, titled by your name (this folder is used to store all past calibrations).

7. Once the aorta ring is on the silicone tube, get another picture and follow the same above steps to get into Vision Assistant (make sure that the correct calibration is selected). Click on Clamp option under the photo and a green box will show up. Left click and drag to select the region to enclose the area that the aortic ring is expected to occupy during the test.
8. On the left side, there will be a graph with a yellow horizontal line. Hover over the yellow line and drag it up, aiming to have it piercing the largest right most and left most peaks. See image below. This adjusts the sharpness of the image. Changing the gap value (located above the graph) up or down can reduce noise in the peaks.
9. When satisfied with the image quality, click on “OK” in the bottom left corner and then “Finish” in the bottom right corner. Return to the front panel window.
10. Once calibrated, the camera has a known pixel to millimeter relation associated with its image output.
11. Test the calibration by pressing the “Test Calibration” button (Fig. 5b). Verify that the diameter measurements are correct. If the diameter data has significant noise, change the color plane to different colors to try to reduce noise. The most accurate color plane will most likely be blue.

An additional option to select a saved camera calibration from the main application instance is disabled because the feature has not yet been implemented.

### 3.6 Equipment Testing

If the operator wishes to test equipment, the equipment testing window allows the operator to test the various hardware used in the inflation test. The LED can be tested by using the switch control. A live camera feed of the camera picture is displayed in the dynamic indicators panel. The force sensor measurement is displayed on the dynamic

panel display. The servo can be sent any desired PWM signal within the defined range on the slider.

### 3.7 Menu Options

The menu currently has the following options:

1. File ↗ Exit: Exit the application. The application will prompt the operator to confirm the exit request and then continue on with closing the application.
2. Edit ↗ Choose Controller: Choose a new controller for the inflation test. A window will be displayed and request the user to input controller parameters (Fig. 7).
3. Tools ↗ Vision Assistant: Open Vision Assistant. Vision Assistant will be opened.
4. Help ↗ Inflation Apparatus: Open the inflation apparatus operating instructions. This pdf will be opened.
5. Help ↗ LabVIEW: LabVIEW information will be displayed.

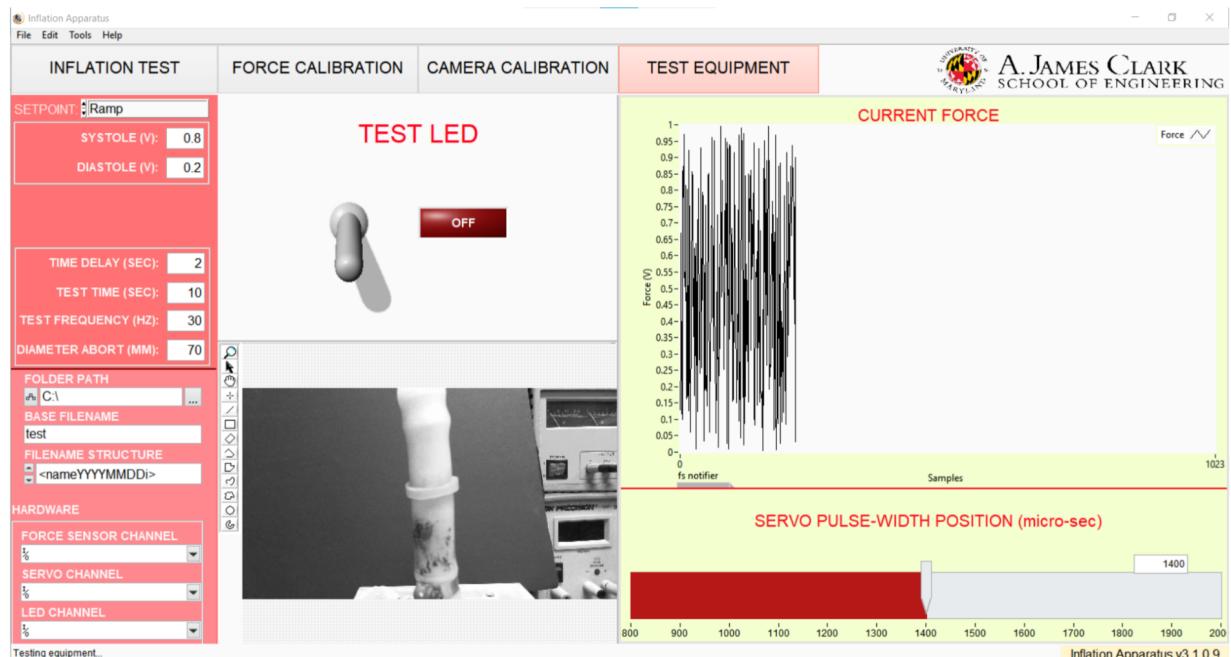


Figure 6: The equipment testing window.

### 3.8 Exiting and Error Handling

To exit the application, the user can either use the exit option in the menu or the close panel button in the top right corner. In either case, the application will open a window asking the operator to confirm the exit request. If confirmed, the application shuts down all hardware and closes the application window. Otherwise, the application continues running.

In the case that there is an error, a prompt telling the operator the error message and source appears. The operator has three options: Stop, Continue, or Hard Shutdown. If stop is selected, the application will go through the normal exit application case. If continue is selected, the application will disregard the error and attempt to continue on with the running the application. If Hard Shutdown is selected, the application will close without going through the normal exit application case. This is not recommended because the hardware will not be shutdown in the correct manner.

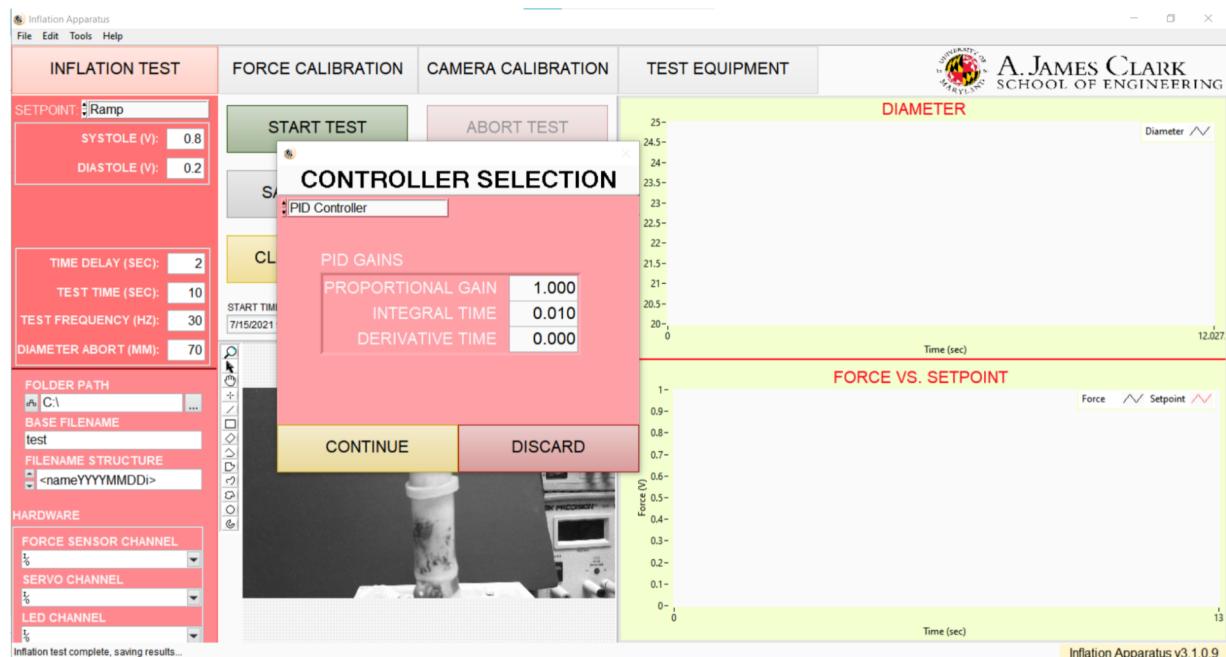


Figure 7: The controller choice window.