

JANE'S, The GREATEST AIRCRAFT REFERENCE BOOK of ALL TIME

by Jay Miller

Born on August 6, 1865, in Richmond, Surrey, England, and eventually to become the prescient, patron saint of aircraft and military ship identification, John Frederick Thomas Jane started life as the intellectually gifted son of a Devonshire clergyman. Jane's great imagination, stellar memory, and most notably, his superb intellectual skills became the hallmarks of what soon would become an extraordinary life.

Jane fathered a plethora of aircraft, ship, and miscellaneous other books that would set precedent for all time. Today, these world-famous tomes sustain his memory and serve as primary specification and reference resources for everyone from the casual airplane and military ship buff to the national intelligence agencies of virtually all of the world's military services and governments.

Jane's brilliance first came to the fore early in his life. Among the many childhood signs, he created - while playing with friends and undertaking imaginary sea battles on a pond near his Surrey home - a unique visual signal system that permitted silent communication between participating "combatants." The system proved so sensible and intuitive, the British Royal Navy later adopted it for use during full-scale ocean maneuvers.

Jane also proved a gifted chemist, albeit with a primary interest in the more aggressive side of the science...explosives. After several destructive, but non-injurious experiments, one of his instructors at Exeter school, where he was enrolled as a student, noted "He can expect to go a long way...in one direction or another."

By the time he was a teenager, Jane had become an exceptional warship artist. The quality of his work was in fact considered among the best of its era. As the drawings accumulated, so was planted the seed for his first literary work...a proposed book entitled, *Ironclads of the World*. By the late 1880s, his reputation as a nautical artist had reached the point where many of the most prestigious magazine and book editors of the day were demanding his ship renderings to accommodate their myriad illustration requirements.

During 1889, a British news magazine commissioned Jane to provide drawings depicting the combined British and German fleets then gathering for participation in war games scheduled to take place off of Spithead, near the Isle of Wight in England. Kaiser Wilhelm II (Germany's last monarch) was to inspect this awesome fleet prior to the initiation of the exercise. Nearly 100

ship sketches resulted...and an additional batch of mural paintings got left behind on wardroom bulkheads as tokens of Jane's appreciation for the accommodations that had been provided aboard *H.M.S. Northampton*.

Jane's work as a nautical artist proved considerably more important than even he realized at the time. In 1898, combined with his original idea for *Ironclads of the World*, it gave birth, some nine years after the war games at Spithead, to the first edition of *Jane's All The World's Fighting Ships* - later to become known the world over as simply, *Jane's Fighting Ships*. It was a

precedent-setting publication, and one that would confirm Jane's sense of direction and his *raison d'être* for the remainder of his life.

At approximately the same time as the advent of the first *Fighting Ships*, Jane went to Russia to study that country's ship-building techniques and ship building industry. A year later, in 1899, he began work on a book describing in great detail the equipment and hierarchy of the Imperial Russian Navy. In 1904, a similar work, describing the then-little-known Imperial Japanese Navy, followed. Both books were released to considerable local military and public acclaim.

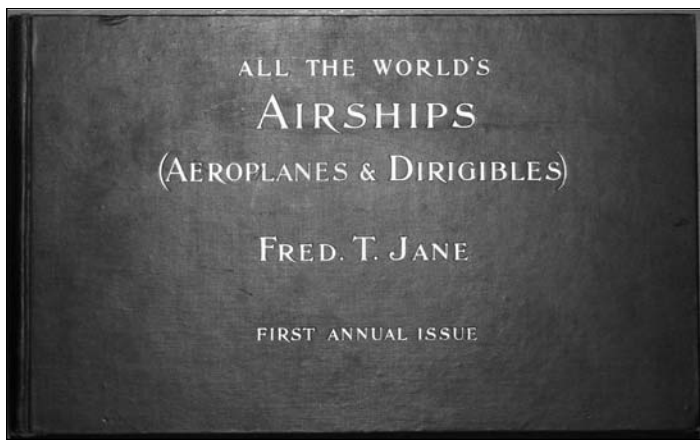
The success of *Fighting Ships* eventually gave Jane incentive to explore other opportunities of similar merit. In 1909 (a historically

seminal year in the history of aviation in its own right) only six years after the Wright Brothers' momentous first flight on December 17, 1903, the first *Jane's All The World's Airships (Aeroplanes and Dirigibles)* rolled off the presses. By the advent of the third issue in 1912, this title - like that of *Fighting Ships* - had been simplified, becoming *Jane's All The World's Aircraft*...and without a doubt the single most influential aviation reference annual in history.

In the preface to the first edition, Jane set precedent for all of the many volumes to follow. He was reluctant to herald the new book as the ultimate reference on its respective subject, but he acknowledged that he would do all in his power to make the book everything its all-encompassing title implied. "A few words may be desirable in introducing this the first annual edition of *All the World's Airships*," he noted. "Aviation is yet in an early stage, and it may or may not be many years yet before it is on a practical commercial or even military footing. On the other hand the number of dirigibles and aeroplanes of various kinds in existence is



John Frederick Thomas Jane, creator and editor of *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*



already very large and continually increasing, hence the idea that a standard work of reference, giving uniform statistics, should already have a market."

It is extremely doubtful Jane had even the vaguest idea just how very big that market would become...or how many aircraft his enormously important annual would eventually attempt to document over the following century. In conceiving and producing *All the World's Aircraft*, Jane had effectively set the standard for virtually every aircraft identification book to follow. For the first time, each aircraft type around the world was described historically and technically, and each was provided with specification and performance tables. The latter listed such particulars as length, wingspan, height, engine type and horsepower, and maximum speed and altitude capability. Perhaps most significantly, each was illustrated not only by at least one photograph, but also by a meticulous three-view drawing usually rendered by Jane himself. The latter, consisting of top, side, and front views of each specific aircraft type would, over time, become the universal standard for identification. It remains very much in vogue as these words are written.

Jane took his commitment to document all of the world's aircraft quite literally. He - and the five editors that since have followed him - left no stone unturned...and his early annuals have since become practically the only published records documenting the existence of some of the world's most obscure early aircraft types. There were, of course, aircraft that failed to surface in timely fashion in *JAWA*, but these were relatively few and far between. Many, when they were discovered, were documented in later editions of the book.

Jane went on to great fame and fortune by the time of his untimely and premature death as a result of heart failure brought on by influenza on March 9, 1916. He was 51 years old. In addition to his famous annuals, he had authored numerous other books including titles describing subjects as futuristic as television and laser holograms. He had even sagely predicted the development of the atomic bomb in a fictional work entitled, *The Violet Flame*. Perhaps most importantly, by the time of his demise, Jane had acquired a reputation for reporting accuracy that would

hold his legacy publications in good stead for the rest of the 20th century and well into the 21st.

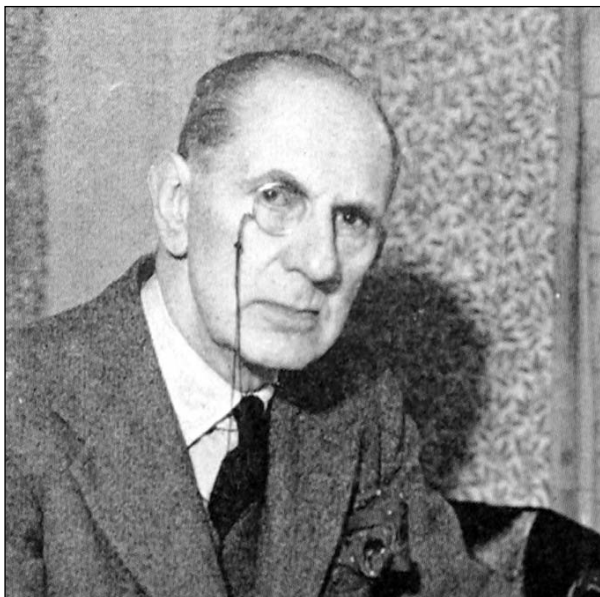
Fred T. Jane became only the first of a short, but distinguished list of editors who would command the tiller of the world's most famous aviation annual. Upon Jane's demise in 1916, an associate, Charles G. Grey, took the helm. As noted in the introduction to the 1959/60 edition of *JAWA* written by then-editor, Leonard Bridgeman, "Charles Grey was a great man. He was witty, incisive, challenging, funny, thought-provoking and altogether incorrigible." He was, in fact, a difficult and headstrong personality, but as founder of the weekly magazine *The Aeroplane* in 1911, he had arrived at *JAWA* with many of the appropriate production and editorial skills.

Grey's *JAWA* tenure was long and tumultuous, and lasted from the 1916 through the 1935 editions...and thus through much of the very difficult and depression-hobbled-early 1930s. Miraculously, *JAWA* survived this financially difficult period...due in no small part to Grey's bulldog-like tenacity and a no less solid commitment to perseverance.

With the decision to move Grey's long-time assistant, Leonard Bridgeman, into the editor's seat upon publication of the 1936 edition, a true aviation editor took control of the annual for the very first time. Unlike Grey...and Jane before him...Bridgeman had the correct education and technical background for the task at hand. He had served in the British military during World War I, and later had served in the Royal Air Force. He knew and understood the more pragmatic side of aviation and he understood the engineering fundamentals of flight and aircraft design. Most importantly, his knowledge of aircraft types was encyclopedic and his artistic and writing skills, under the watchful eye of his mentor, Grey, were well honed. He had, in fact, worked with Grey at *The Aeroplane* and, beginning in 1919, had served as Grey's assistant *JAWA* editor.

Bridgeman guided *JAWA* through some of its most difficult years mechanically and spiritually as it was his burden to edit the annual throughout all of World War II and during the immediate post-war era. Still later, he was at the helm during the course of the Korean War, and following that, through the burgeoning period of jet-powered flight witnessed by *JAWA* during the early and mid-1950s. In time for the 1956/57 edition, Bridgeman invited noted aviation writer and historian John W. R. Taylor to become his assistant, and by the advent of the 1960/61 edition, this protégé had taken over and become editor in his own right.

The gregarious Taylor, an articulate aviation writer and meticulous historian, would guide *JAWA* for the following thirty editions. It would prove, as Taylor later would say, "a marvelous experience," and would cover an extraordinary span of aviation history. Perhaps most importantly, Taylor, over time, would elevate *JAWA's* status by expanding its coverage, upping the ante on the detail of its content, and expanding the book in size to the point where it was at long



Charles G. Grey, *JAWA* editor from 1916 to 1935

last not only intellectually, but physically worthy of its exalted stature among all the world's great aviation books. During Taylor's long tenure the book grew from 693 pages in 1960, to over 1,000 pages by the time the 1987/88 edition was released. It was...and today still is...truly a tome...and a reflection of Taylor's stellar conduct as editor.

When Taylor, as a result of declining health, elected to step down in 1990, Mark Lambert, who had worked as an assistant editor starting with the 1989/90 edition, made a game attempt to fill his shoes. Lambert, like Taylor, had a strong aviation background and knew and understood aircraft with considerable intimacy. He had no difficulty assuming the demanding task of running the world's most famous and prestigious aviation annual.

The fates, however, dictated that Lambert's tenure be short. On September 27, 1994, he was felled by a heart attack just as the 1994/95 edition was going to press. Lambert's was a difficult loss, as he was well liked by all who had worked with him. His *JAWA* stewardship, though cut short by his death, resulted in a number of subtle but important changes and improvements.

Paul Jackson, another Taylor protégé and a noted aviation writer and historian in his own right, quickly came on board to fill Lambert's vacant seat. Jackson had authored more than a few first-class references of his own describing British and world aircraft, and his credentials were well-nigh perfect for the *JAWA* editor's job. He quickly proved his mettle at running the great aviation reference, and he continues in the editor's slot as these words are written.

Not surprisingly, *JAWA*'s stature has increased steadily as time has passed and editors have come and gone. With the ever-increasing importance of aircraft to the world economy, the paramount importance of aircraft as weapons of war, the irreplaceable capabilities of aircraft as transports of commerce, the commercial capabilities of aircraft as people movers, and the less visible but nevertheless critical functions of aircraft as reconnaissance/surveillance platforms and diplomatic/political chess pieces, an authoritative and consummately accurate reference such as *JAWA* has become not only a tool, but an indispensable bible.

JAWA, through the years, has become one of the more collectible aviation publications in a market jam-packed with aviation books. As a result, early first editions (most notably those of Sampson-Low, Marston) have become nearly priceless. Pristine copies of pre-1920s volumes, when they surface (which is rarely), routinely sell for \$1,000 or more. And because no complete run of first edition books is known to have been sold during the past twenty years, it is difficult to assess a value on a complete set based on contemporary values.

However, working on the basis of prices realized on individual volumes that have sold in recent years, and the continuing demand for out-of-print *JAWAs*, it can be safely concluded that a complete set - on the low-end - probably would be worth in the vicinity of \$65,000. In a bidding war, a near-perfect set might bring a lot more...probably as much as \$75,000 to \$90,000 (please note that condition would be critical for these higher prices to be realized).

It is worth mentioning that the first *JAWA*, printed in 1909, had a retail price of around \$3.90 new. Today's most recent *JAWA*, the 2003/2004 edition, retails for approximately \$650 in the U.S. There have been editions of *JAWA* published in several countries other than Great Britain. In the U.S., McGraw-Hill and the Macmillan Co. each had the rights to *JAWA* on and off for many years. There also were Canadian editions, several foreign lan-



Leonard Bridgeman, editor of JAWA starting with the 1936 edition and through the 1959/1960 edition.

guage editions, and in at least a few cases, illegal facsimile printings in Taiwan. Among the latter, Rainbow Bridge was the most notorious...and notable for using tissue-thin paper and for leaving out the section allocated to China and Chinese aircraft!

There have been approved facsimile reproductions of various early editions (particularly the 1909 through 1922 and 1945/46 editions) by Arco and David & Charles Reprints, among others. Not surprisingly, these latter books in recent years have begun to appreciate in value in their own right.

Being able to quickly access information pertaining to an aircraft's capabilities and performance figures are all critical reference points...particularly in times of military confrontation. With the age of the computer, Internet access, and an electronic-dependent world, *JAWA* has become more important than ever...and electronic versions of this extraordinary book have been brought online as a result. Regardless, *Jane's All The World's Aircraft* in its current book form is still - now just a few years shy of a century since its first appearance - the only place to go for one-stop shopping. No other book even comes close.

The following table is a complete listing of all first edition *JAWA*'s published to date and their approximate collector's market values as of 2003/2004:

About the Author

Jay Miller is the retired director of the American Airlines C. R. Smith Museum and the author of 36 aviation books. He is currently working on several new book projects and serves as a consultant to the aerospace community.

Year	Title	Publisher	Editor	Pages	Value (2003)
1909-10	All The World's Airships (Aeroplanes & Dirigibles)	Sampson-Low	Jane	374	\$1,500/\$2,500
1910-11	All The World's Airships (Aeroplanes & Dirigibles)	Sampson-Low	Jane	489	\$1,500/\$2,500
1912	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Jane	420	\$1,500/\$2,500
1913	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Jane	303	\$1,500/\$2,500
1914	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Jane	281	\$1,500/\$2,500
<i>No Jane's was published in 1915 due to Fred Jane's death.</i>					
1916	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	383	\$1,000/\$1,500
1917	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	605	\$1,000/\$1,500
1918	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	657	\$1,000/\$1,500
1919	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	793	\$1,500/\$1,750
1920	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	465	\$900/\$1,250
<i>No Jane's was published in 1921 due to format and content changes.</i>					
1922	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	383	\$900/\$1,250
1923	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	436	\$900/\$1,250
1924	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	446	\$900/\$1,250
1925	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	588	\$900/\$1,250
1926	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	516	\$900/\$1,250
1927	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	542	\$900/\$1,250
1928	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	510	\$900/\$1,250
1929	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	630	\$900/\$1,250
1930	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	655	\$900/\$1,250
1931	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	658	\$900/\$1,250
1932	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	712	\$900/\$1,250
1933	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	656	\$900/\$1,250
1934	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	656	\$900/\$1,250
1935	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey	691	\$900/\$1,250
1936	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey/Bridgeman	688	\$750/\$900
1937	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey/Bridgeman	733	\$750/\$900
1938	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey/Bridgeman	724	\$750/\$900
1939	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey/Bridgeman	656	\$750/\$900
1940	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Grey/Bridgeman	550	\$450/\$750
1941	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	561	\$450/\$750
1942	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	618	\$450/\$750
1943/44	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	598	\$450/\$750
1945/46	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	694	\$750/\$950
1947	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	577	\$275/\$500
1948	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	608	\$275/\$500
1949/50	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	572	\$275/\$500
1950/51	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	548	\$275/\$500
1951/52	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	572	\$275/\$500
1952/53	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	437	\$275/\$500
1953/54	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	481	\$275/\$500
1954/55	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	512	\$275/\$500
1955/56	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	571	\$275/\$500
1956/57	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	613	\$275/\$500
1957/58	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	633	\$275/\$500
1958/59	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	658	\$250/\$375
1959/60	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Bridgeman	692	\$250/\$375
1960/61	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	693	\$250/\$375
1961/62	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	639	\$250/\$375
1962/63	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	608	\$250/\$375
1963/64	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	611	\$200/\$225
1964/65	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	627	\$200/\$225
1965/66	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	636	\$175/\$200
1966/67	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	643	\$175/\$200
1967/68	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	715	\$175/\$200

Year	Title	Publisher	Editor	Pages	Value (2003)
1968/69	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	793	\$175/\$200
1969/70	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	1,065	\$175/\$200
1970/71	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	947	\$100/\$150
1971/72	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	861	\$100/\$150
1972/73	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	877	\$100/\$150
1973/74	All The World's Aircraft	Sampson-Low	Taylor	900	\$100/\$150
1974/75	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	900	\$100/\$150
1975/76	All The World's Aircraft	Franklin Watts	Taylor	906	\$100/\$150
1976/77	All The World's Aircraft	Franklin Watts	Taylor	936	\$100/\$150
1977/78	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	978	\$75/\$125
1978/79	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	886	\$75/\$125
1979/80	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	902	\$75/\$125
1981/82	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	928	\$75/\$125
1982/83	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	933	\$75/\$125
1983/84	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	986	\$75/\$125
1984/85	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	1,028	\$75/\$125
1985/86	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	1,054	\$75/\$125
1986/87	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	1,088	\$75/\$125
1987/88	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	1,092	\$75/\$125
1988/89	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	842	\$75/\$125
1989/90	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Taylor	858	\$75/\$125
1990/91	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Lambert	848	\$75/\$125
1991/92	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Lambert	844	\$75/\$125
1992/93	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Lambert	784	\$75/\$125
1993/94	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Lambert	733	\$75/\$125
1994/95	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Lambert	856	\$75/\$125
1995/96	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	880	\$75/\$125
1996/97	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	888	\$75/\$125
1997/98	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	920	\$75/\$125
1998/99	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	848	\$75/\$125
1999/2000	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	856	\$75/\$125
2000/2001	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	928	\$75/\$125
2001/2002	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	877	\$525 Retail New
2002/2003	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	827	\$575 Retail New
2003/2004	All The World's Aircraft	Jane's Yearbooks	Jackson	837	\$650 Retail New

