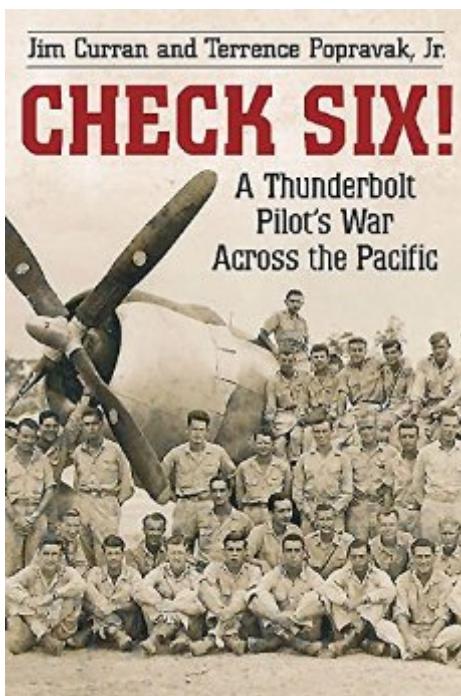


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# Check Six!: A Thunderbolt Pilot's War Across The Pacific



## Synopsis

There were no mission limits for a pilot in the Pacific during World War II; unlike in Europe, you flew until it was time to go home. So it was for James "Jug" Curran, all the way from New Guinea to the Philippines with the 348th Fighter Group, the first P-47 Thunderbolt outfit in the Pacific. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Curran volunteered to try flying in the blue yonder, and trained as an Army fighter pilot. He got his wish to fly the P-47 in the Pacific, going into combat in August 1943, in New Guinea, and later helping start the "Black Rams" fighter squadron. The heavy U.S. Thunderbolts were at first curious to encounter the nimble, battle-hardened Japanese in aerial combat, but soon the American pilots gained skill of their own and their planes proved superior. Bombers on both sides could fall to fighters, but the fighters themselves were eyeball to eyeball, best man win. *Check Six!* is an aviation chronicle that brings the reader into flight, then into the fight, throughout the Pacific War and back. This work, from someone who was there, captures the combat experience of our aviators in the Pacific, aided by pertinent excerpts from the official histories of units that "Jug" Curran flew with. It is a tale of perseverance, as Curran flew over 200 combat missions, and with the men of the 348th Fighter Group proved the Thunderbolt's great capability as they battled their way against a stubborn and deadly foe. This work increases the body of knowledge on the critical role of aviation in the Pacific War, as U.S. fighter pilots took the lead in our counteroffensive against the short-lived island Empire.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are a lot of books out there from flyers during WWII, but Jim Curran's work stands out as unique for its depth and content. Curran, a Chicago native, joined the 348th FG in 1943 and flew with them through 1945 from New Guinea to the Philippines. Curran, who passed on prior to publication, had his work completed by Terrance Popravak in great fashion; and is a treasure for what "Kearby's Thunderbolts" achieved in the South West Pacific area. Curran talks at length about missions and the drudgery of surviving in the jungle areas the 5th AF dealt with. Popravak includes tremendous "what really happened" foot notes that really fill in the narrative. Photos include 16 pages of B&W shots, mostly unpublished before. This is a tremendous book; and worth reading if you're interested in 5th AF, T-bolts or the Pacific Campaign.

A first hand account of the air war in the Pacific and the insights of a P-47, Thunderbolt pilot; what a treasure. I found this book from Jim Curran to be both a compelling and interesting read. It was written quite conversationally, which I appreciated, and the references were easy to understand. I was easily able to follow the narrative and often felt like a fly on the proverbial wall. I think that this memoir belongs on many collector's bookshelves; it is not only an excellent chronicle of events, but a vital piece of history. I so appreciated the chance to have read it.\*I received my copy through NetGalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

I enjoyed the book, it was like sitting with Jim Curran as he told his story. Unbelievable of what Jim and other airmen had to endure from living conditions to their missions. Great footnotes! An awesome look into the P-47's! What an aircraft! Thank you to Terrence Popravak for completing Jim Curran's story. Another great book to add to anyone's WWII collection!!

This story would have been so much more readable had all of the coauthors comments and facts been left for the end of the book instead of intermixed with the original author's story. Just when the tale was getting interesting, a pause to hear the "actual" facts brought all to a screeching halt. If you enjoy that sort of story, this is the book for you. I would have much preferred the original author's unbroken memoirs, holding the nitpicking until the end. Rated it four stars out of respect for the

sacrifice and service of the main character.

Check Six is an interesting book about a man who flew P47s Thunderbolts and P51 Mustangs during the war against Japan. It's a quick, well written read, put together from the authors own notes and recollections mixed with actual unit history. One of the more interesting aspects of this book concerns the supply chains and issues receiving both war related materials and food. The author writes regularly about the lack of decent food and how it affected both the moral of his fellow airmen and their physical condition. The basic logistics of the Pacific made things harder for these men. He also gives a nice view of what life was like in Australia and the concerns they had about being invaded by the Japanese. None-the-less there is plenty of action. Sometimes this is viewed from the author's personal perspective and also from the unit history. He certainly favored the Thunderbolt's ability to take damage and give a blistering attack of its own. Included in this a very interesting description of watching one of his leaders earn the Medal of Honor by shooting down several Japanese aircraft in one action. I liked this book because it provided a different perspective on the war in the Pacific. If you enjoyed this book I would strongly suggest reading Thunderbolt: Memoirs of a World War Two fighter pilot by Marvin Bledsoe. Both books prove just how fast and dangerous war in the air can be.

I found this to be an insightful, informative book detailing the exploits of a P47 fighter pilot who climbed into his single-engine fighter more than 200 times to fly over the open ocean of the South Pacific during WWII and live to tell about it. His retelling of his exploits is very straight-forward; his story, supported by the Squadron History, is an interesting technique to validate the descriptions of his missions. His story captures the sentiments of a young Chicagoan as he struggles to get into the AAC, how he makes it through the rigors of training, and how he survives the elements and enemy of the Pacific Theater. If you are looking for a no frills, first-hand explanation of what it was like to be a WWII fighter pilot in the Pacific, this is a perfect place to start.

A glimpse into what the Pacific air war was like for the 99% of fighter pilots who were not leading aces. This book captures the daily grind of air operations at forward fighter bases where a pilot was more likely to succumb to navigational errors, capricious weather, mechanical failure and bad flying decisions than enemy fighters. A good read for WW II aviation buffs.

Jim Curran, of Chicago, Illinois, was a young fighter pilot flying a Republic P-47 Thunderbolt in the

Southwest Pacific with the 5th Air Force under the command of General Douglas McArthur. He was a member of the 341st fighter squadron of Colonel Neel Kearby's the 348th fighter group. Later, he transferred to the 460th fighter squadron, the "Black Rams", which received its personnel from the 382nd. Jim's story receives the benefit of an editor, Terrence G. Popovak Jr., also from Chicago, Illinois. Interspersed with Jim "Jug" Curran's thoughts and experiences are historical squadron diary entries and other interesting and valuable insights which add perspective to the story. Mr. Popovak did a great deal of supporting research as evidenced by chapter end notes and twelve appendices! Several black and white photos augment the text. I read this book concurrently with John Stanaway's "Kearby's Thunderbolts" which I also highly recommend! Both books are valuable as many aviation enthusiasts do not realize that the P-47, as well as the North American P-51 Mustang were employed in the Pacific theater! Jim saw plenty of action from New Guinea to the Philippine islands and ultimately achieved the rank of Captain piloting the P-51 Mustang. He passed away in June of 2012. He left behind a testament to his courage, duty, and sacrifice in this volume which deserves to be read.

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