



The Flying Ace and The Radio Boy

Caroline Casey | MFA Thesis Exhibition

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WASHINGTON, DC – My Grandfather, William Casey was a Private 1stClass in the United States Army Signal Corp stationed in the Pacific Theater. My first cousin thrice removed, Kurt Bertram von Döring was a Luftwaffe Generalleutnant for Nazi Germany and Major General commanding the Jagdfliegerführer 2. These two relatives become points of reference as I interrogate the dichotomy of war, patriotic duty, national pride, family and loss. Cyanotypes printed on silk flags embed the imagery of my cousin Döring, The Flying Ace upon the same material that structured his parachute, a device that saved his life on more than one occasion. Chlorophyll prints depict my grandfather Casey, The Radio Boy in the small moments of reprieve and joy he could find, placed upon banana leaves, a fauna he was no doubt surrounded by during his many island battles on Papua New Guinea. Poetry carved into slabs relief from the wall tell a deeper insight of these soldiers and the harrowing experience of war.

These two are individuals of a greater whole, representing either side of the conflict and narrating their journeys through this collected archive. However, I know this collection is not complete and never could be. What is the past and how does it become recorded? How does nationality, upbringing and the personal change this recording into individual memory and how does this enter into the collective? How do these memories become distilled through time and reemerge in the present, and how much truth can we glean from them? These are questions I grapple with in my practice as I explore the archives left behind for me to fill in the blanks of the memories of these two individuals and the collective memories that we have come to inherit.



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