

David Cotterrell: Serial Loop (v)

Date: 8th January 2009

Materials:

Single Channel HD Video Loop.

A short seamlessly looped film portrayal of the inexorable arrival of casualties within conflict.

After two years of negotiations between the Wellcome Trust, Imperial War Museum and Ministry of Defence, Cotterrell was invited to observe the Joint Forces Medical Group at Camp Bastion in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He underwent basic training, was taught the rudiments of battlefield first aid and was issued with body armour. In November 2007, he flew in an RAF C17 from Brize Norton to Kandahar, the sole passenger in a plane loaded with half a million rounds of palletised munitions and medical supplies to join Operation Herrick 7.

Focusing on these experiences and their inevitable aftermath, Cotterrell produced a new body of photographic and video work. *Serial Loop* explores the transport and treatment of casualties during a Major Incident. The sound of a continuously arriving and departing Chinook helicopter accompanies images of a bleak and wasted landscape; the banality of the films fixed perspective masks the dramas that unfold within the ambulances as they travel to triage. A fire rages in the distance while antiquated ambulances lumber along to take wounded to treatment areas.

During Cotterrells stay in Helmand, two British soldiers died, 29 were wounded in action and 74 were admitted to the field hospital. 71 Aeromed evacuations were recorded and an undisclosed number of civilian, insurgent and Afghan National Army soldiers were treated.



Casualties arriving at Bastion by Chinook Credit: David Cotterrell (2007)