

# Inspector Rex's History Snippet #11

## What was the most brutal military tactic in history?

<https://www.quora.com/What-was-the-most-brutal-military-tactic-in-history>

Daniel Kaplan, Teacher (1998-present)

### Blowing from a gun.

A victim is tied to the muzzle of a cannon, whereupon the charge (there is rarely a ball since the charge is enough) is detonated, typically vaporizing the body but leaving the arms, legs, and head... somewhere.



This is a spectacularly horrific method of execution that is intended to break the will of the victim's allies. I don't think it is currently used anywhere, but it wouldn't surprise me to find that some of the most barbaric, backwater hellholes in the world would use such a tactic... except that cannons aren't very common anymore.

The prisoner is generally tied to a gun with the upper part of the small of his back resting against the muzzle. When the gun is fired, his head is seen to go straight up into the air some forty or fifty feet; the arms fly off right and left, high up in the air, and fall at, perhaps, a hundred yards distance; the legs drop to the ground beneath the muzzle of the gun; and the body is literally blown away altogether, not a vestige being seen.<sup>[1]</sup> While this tactic was employed throughout the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and parts of Southeast Asia by local militaries, it was also used by imperialist forces like Britain (through the East India Company) and Portugal.

## Retribution on the Indian Mutineers in the Uprising in 1857



Suppression of the Indian Revolt by the English which depicts the execution of mutineers by **blowing from a gun** by the British, a painting by [Vasily Vereshchagin](#) c. 1884. Note: This painting was allegedly bought by the British crown and possibly destroyed (current whereabouts unknown). It anachronistically depicts the events of 1857 with soldiers wearing (then current) uniforms of the late 19th century.

### Comment by Inspector Rex

Are there more inhumane atrocities?

See article by Edward Hall, also at <https://www.quora.com/What-was-the-most-brutal-military-tactic-in-history>