

Prince Harry's Great Afghan Shooting Party

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

Global Research, January 09, 2023

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [History](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name.

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

What to make of it? History is filled with the deeds of blood-thirsty princes bold in ambition and feeble of mind. Massacres make the man, though there is often little to merit the person behind it. The Duke of Sussex seemingly wishes to add his name to that list. In what can only be described as one of his "Nazi uniform" moments, Prince Harry [has revealed](#) in his memoir Spare that he killed a number of Taliban fighters. (In the same memoir, the weak-willed royal blames his brother for the uniform idea, though not for organising the Afghan shooting party.)

The prince, wishing to show that he was no toy soldier or ceremonial ornament of the British Army, puts the number of deaths at 25. "It wasn't a statistic that filled me with pride but nor did it make me ashamed." He recalls being "plunged into the heat and confusion of battle", and how he "didn't think about those 25 people. You can't kill people if you see them as people." Doing so from the security of a murderous Apache helicopter certainly helps.

The prince continues to show that he is nothing if not unworldly. "In truth, you can't hurt people if you see them as people. They were chess pieces off the board, bad guys eliminated before they kill good guys." Then comes a bit of cod social theory. "They trained me to 'other' them and they trained me well." A dash of Meghan; a smidgen of postcolonial theory.

There it is: the killer aware about his Instagram moment, the social media miasma, the

influence of cheap Hollywood tat via Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex. He killed but was merely performing his duty as conditioned by the Establishment or, to put it another way, the army of his late grandmother.

The response from the Establishment was not one of praise. Adam Holloway MP, [writing](#) in *The Spectator*, did not find the statistic distasteful or troubling, but the fact that Prince Harry had mentioned it at all. Good soldiers did not publicise kills. "It's not about macho codes. It's about decency and respect for the lives you have taken."

Retired British Army Colonel Tim Collins also seethed. "This is not how we behave in the Army," [he tut-tutted](#) to *Forces News*, "it's not how we think." That's Prince Harry's point: more a doer than a thinker.

That doing involved, as Collins put it, "a tragic money-making scam to fund the lifestyle he can't afford and someone else has chosen." Harry had "badly let the side down. We don't do notches on the rifle butt. We never did."

Collins became something of a poster boy for revived wars of adventurism in the Middle East with his speech to the 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment (1 R IRISH) battle group in March 2003. It was the eve of an international crime: the invasion of a sovereign country by colonial powers old and new. As with any such crimes, notably of vast scale, it was justified in the name of principle and duty, otherwise known as the civilisational imperative. "We go to liberate," [declared](#) Collins with evangelical purpose, "not to conquer. We will not fly our flags in their country. We are entering Iraq to free a people and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own."

In the Middle East, and elsewhere, such gifts of imposed freedom by armed missionaries tend to go off. In July last year, the BBC news program Panorama [reported](#) that, "SAS operatives in Afghanistan repeatedly killed detainees and unarmed men." The report disturbed the amnesiac effect of two investigations by military police that saw no reason to pursue prosecutions. But the allegations were sufficiently publicised to prompt the [launching of an independent statutory inquiry](#) by the Ministry of Defence last December. "This will take into account the progress that has already been made across defence in holding our Armed Forces personnel to account for their actions, and the handling of allegations that were later found to have insufficient evidence for any prosecutions."

Collins must also be aware that [commencing a prosecution](#) against British army personnel operating overseas for war crimes, let alone succeeding in one, is nigh impossible. It's all marvellous to claim that the armed forces play by the book and operate to the sweet chords of justice, but it is rather easier to do so behind sheets of protective glass and exemptions.

Australia, as one of Britain's partners in military adventurism, has also done its bit to bloat the war crimes files in its tours of Afghanistan. The four-year long investigation culminating in the [Brereton Report](#) identified at least 39 alleged murders of captured Afghan troops and civilians, and cruel mistreatment of two more locals by SAS personnel. To date, however, the Office of the Special Investigator [has made no referrals](#) to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, a tardiness that is likely to be repeated by British counterparts.

The war criminality theme was bound to be picked up by Afghanistan's Taliban officials. Anas Haqqani, a senior Taliban figure, [suggested](#) to the prince via Twitter that those he had

slain “were not chess pieces, they were humans; they had families who were waiting for their return.” But astute enough to sense a public relations moment for his government, Haqqani heaped mock praise. “Among the killers of Afghans, not many have your decency to reveal their conscience and confess to their war crimes.”

In this whole affair, Prince Harry did perform one useful function. He removed the façade of decent soldiery, the mask of the supposedly noble liberator. On this occasion, it took a prince to tell the emperor he had no clothes. “The truth is what you’ve said,” [continued](#) Haqqani, “[o]ur innocent people were chess pieces to your soldiers, military and political leaders. Still, you were defeated in that ‘game’ of white & black ‘square’.”

We can certainly agree with Haqqani on one point: no tribunal will be chasing up the royal. “I don’t expect that the ICC [International Criminal Court] will summon you or the human rights activists will condemn you, because they are deaf and blind for you.” Some of that deafness and blindness might have been ameliorated.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share buttons above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He currently lectures at RMIT University. He is a regular contributor to Global Research and Asia-Pacific Research. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

Featured image: Harry in New South Wales, May 2015 (Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0)

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#), Global Research, 2023

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Dr. Binoy
Kampmark](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca

