



WEIRD WARS



10 Weirdest Wars in History

War has followed humanity ever since it existed. It has been a constant throughout history, shaping nations, cultures, and societies. Wars like the Battle of Megiddo, World War II, and the Vietnam War have impacted mankind forever.

But not all conflicts are monumental clashes between two powerful, opposing sides. Some are so strange that they are unbelievable. War history includes some curious disputes that, though often humorous, seem bizarre. Here is a summary of 10 weirdest wars, including the shortest war in history, the war that started because of a dog crossing the border, and many more.

The Emu War (November 2, 1932- December 10, 1932): When Flightless Birds Defeat Australians

Emus are flightless birds, mostly found in Australia, that stand more than six feet tall. They are solitary animals and won't hurt you unless provoked or if they get hungry—which, unfortunately, did happen.

In 1932, mobs of emus trampled through Australian crops in search of food. The people, already having economic problems, took it personally and asked the army for help. They used machine guns to combat the emus, but unfortunately, the latter adjusted to the threat and even had lookouts for soldiers. Their speed of thirty miles per hour made it easy for

them to escape. The army killed fewer than one thousand emus, which hardly reduced the population. Because there was nothing they could do at that point, the war ended on December 10, 1932. The problem persisted for a few more years, but they finally found a solution. By building a 135-mile fence in 1953, the emus were kept out.

The Anglo-Zanzibar War (August 27, 1896): The Shortest War in History

During this time, the British placed a puppet sultan, the pro-British Hamad bin Thuwaini, in Zanzibar. After his death, his brother, Khalid bin Barghash, became the new sultan and started ruling the island without the approval of the British. Britain issued a request for the new sultan to step down, but he refused.

The British did not like that and gave him until the 26th to leave the palace. On the 27th, at 8 am, Khalid still did not leave. So at 9 am, the British navy, led by Rear Admiral Harry Rowson, opened fire. At 9:02 am, most of Khalid's artillery was destroyed, and some people believe that at 9:05 am, he fled, leaving his soldiers. At 9:40 am, Khalid's remaining soldiers retreated. In the war, around 500 people in Zanzibar were killed or injured, and one sailor was injured by falling off a boat on the British side. This war lasted roughly 38 to 45 minutes, making it the shortest recorded war in history.

The Football War (July 14, 1969- July 18, 1969): The War Where Riots and Suicide Happened Over a Ball Game

El Salvador, which can be found in Central America, was mostly populated by farmers, and unfortunately, there wasn't enough space. But since the country of Honduras was just there beside them, people started going there. So in the 1960s, a huge group of El Salvadorians illegally immigrated to Honduras and claimed property.

Years later, a corrupt leader in Honduras blamed the illegally immigrated El Salvador people for stealing all the land and jobs and ruining Honduras. Because of this, the government of Honduras began evicting El Salvador immigrants. The Salvadoran elite got mad, saying that Honduras was ruining lives, but in reality, they were just getting too crowded.

While that was happening, it was time for the 1970 World Cup qualifiers. Both countries finished at the top of their qualifying tables, so they would be having three matches against each other. The first one was set in Honduras.

The night before the match, Hondurans started making noises and taunting the El Salvador team's hotel. The next day, because the Salvadorans were exhausted, the Honduras team won with a late 90-minute goal. After that, a young fan (Amelia Bolanos), devastated about her country's defeat, shot herself. Disturbingly, the Salvadoran government glorified her death and made her a national hero. In the next game, in El Salvador, fans brought pictures of her to the stadium. Unfortunately for Honduras, the tables were turned.

While the Honduras team was sleeping in a hotel, the Salvadorans started making noises and taunting them the night before the match. During the game, Salvadorans raised a dirty rag instead of the Honduran flag. El Salvador won that match while spectators fought in the stands. The Honduras team had to leave El Salvador with a bulletproof bus because of the rocks being chucked at them. Back in Honduras, the natives harassed El Salvador settlers even more, and in some cases, threw them off their lands and burned their homes which led to more immigrants going back to El Salvador.

The last match in Mexico will determine who will go to the World Cup. After an epic game, El Salvador won and riots started. Back in Honduras, attacks on Salvadoran immigrants increased. Because of this, El Salvador declared war.

On July 14, 1969, the Salvadoran Air Force attacked targets in Honduras, and ground forces moved across the border. The war lasted about 100 hours, with significant casualties, and ended with a ceasefire mediated by the Organization of American States. The war ended on July 18, 1969.

The War for the Stray Dog (October 19, 1925- October 29, 1925): The War Where Invasions and Compensations Happened Over a Dog That Crossed the Border

Bulgaria and Greece were in an era of invading each other and crossing borders to raid neighboring villages. There are two versions of this story.

The first version was about a Greek soldier who went across the border to catch his dog that ran away. The Bulgarians saw him and shot him dead.

The second version was about the Bulgarians crossing the Greek border, attacking a Greek outpost at Bellastisa, and killing a Greek captain and sentry.

The Greeks got angry and demanded that Bulgaria make a public apology, prosecute the soldiers that were involved, and compensate the victims' families two million French francs. Bulgaria refused but expressed their regret for killing the soldier.

Because of this, Theodoros Pangalos, a Greek military dictator, invaded Bulgaria and occupied the town of Petrich until Bulgaria accepted its demands. Bulgaria, on the other hand, went to the League of Nations asking for help.

Fortunately, the League sent telegrams to the opposing parties, ordering them to stop their actions hours before the attack. They said to cease fire and ordered the Greeks to leave the territory and pay a compensation of £45,000. British, French, and Italian troops were sent to ensure compliance. The Greeks agreed with the League's demands and withdrew from Bulgaria. Over 50 people died, all because of a dog.

The Cod Wars (September 1, 1958- June 1, 1976): The War About the British Wanting Fish

This war had three parts. The First Cod War (1958-1961); the Second, and the Third.

Cod War I

For background, the UK doesn't like oily fish, so they prefer to eat cod and haddock. Because of this, fish and chips became a cheap and nutritious meal for working-class people. Unfortunately, these types of fish can mostly be found in the northern waters, up to Iceland. Ever since the British acquired more fishing vessels, they preferred Icelandic waters for fishing because they were more viable.

Iceland was a poor country that heavily relied on fish for food and export. Because they were poor, they only used small, wooden boats for fishing. Now that the British and other European countries were going to Iceland to catch fish, fewer fish were left for them.

To protect its vital fishing industry, Iceland extended fishing limits from 3 to 12 nautical miles around the coastline. The British took no notice. Because of this, Icelandic coast guard vessels would try to arrest the British sailors on ships. It was quite comical since according to some fishermen, the British would pelt the Icelandic vessels with eggs, potatoes, and flour. If the Icelandic vessels couldn't board the ships, they would resort to ramming, hoping the captains would be too scared of the damages and go away. This continued for around three years until 1961.

On September 1, 1961, the British finally agreed and recognized Iceland's territory of 12 nautical miles and, in return, gained rights to fish there during certain months. The First Cod War was over.

Cod War II

The peace didn't last long. Since it wasn't only the British who were fishing there but also other European countries, they had a problem. Those countries' ships caught loads of cod in the months they were allowed to fish, risking overfishing. Because of this, the newly elected Icelandic government declared their right to fish fifty nautical miles. The British, again, ignored their claims and continued to fish in Icelandic waters. In response, improved Icelandic vessels started shearing the nets of British trawlers. This prompted the Royal Navy to intervene and try to cut off the Icelandic ships. So the ships were kind of playing this cat-and-mouse game. The Second Cod War lasted just over a year, ending in November 1973, when the British agreed to limit its annual catch to 130,000 fish for the next three years.

Cod War III

In 1975, when the years of the agreement ended, the British started catching more fish again. Iceland then extended its fishing zone to 200 nautical miles to protect its fish stocks. And again, the UK ignored it.

When the Royal Navy deployed again, the Icelandic government pulled a card from its sleeve. Iceland was very important to NATO because of an important US Air Force base there. So they said if America didn't help Iceland with this issue, they wouldn't be too inclined to continue the lease on the US military provisions on their property. America did its part and pressured the European governments to resolve the issue, preferably in Iceland's favor.

The Third Cod War (1975-1976) began when Iceland extended its fishing zone to 200 miles to protect its fish stocks. Icelandic coastguard ships cut British fishing nets, leading to tensions. Eventually, Iceland threatened to close a NATO base. The UK conceded to Iceland's demands, granting Iceland control over its waters.

The Jenkins Ear War (October 22, 1739- October 18, 1748): A War That Started Because of a Captain's Ear

In the 18th century, over 50,000 soldiers from Britain and Spain died and around 500 ships were sunk or captured because of an ear. The war was triggered when a Spanish buccaneer chopped off the ear of the British captain, Robert Jenkins after he was accused of smuggling. Jenkins presented the ear to the British Parliament, igniting a conflict from 1739 to 1748.

The British declared war. The fighting mainly took place in the Caribbean and along the Spanish coast, involving naval battles and raids. The war ended in 1748 with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, resulting in no important territorial changes but worsening relations between the two countries.

The Pig War (June 15, 1859- October 1874): The War That Was Caused by Killing a Pig

The Pig War of 1859 was a boundary claim between the United States and Britain over the San Juan Islands, located between Vancouver Island and the mainland of North America. The conflict started on June 15 when Lyman Cutlar, an American farmer, shot a pig that was rooting in his garden that belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company of Britain. This incident escalated as both nations sent military forces to the area and triggered a standoff. Over the next few months, more troops came, though none of them pursued any major battles.

Fortunately, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany, acting as a neutral third party, ruled in favor of the United States in October 1872. The decision established the current boundary line between the United States and Canada in the region, ending the military standoff and stopping any further escalation between the two nations. Thus, the conflict finally ended in 1874.

The War of the Golden Stool (March- September 1900): The British Wanted a Stool

The War of the Golden Stool, also known as the Yaa Asantewaa War, took place in 1900. The conflict was sparked when the British colonial governor demanded the Golden Stool, a sacred symbol of the Ashanti Kingdom, which was seen as an insult to the Ashanti people's rights and religious beliefs. Offended, Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu, motivated the Ashanti people to defend their heritage.

She led an army of about 5,000 warriors in a rebellion against the British. Although they were doing fine, the Ashanti forces were eventually overpowered by the British, who brought in reinforcements. The Ashanti capital, Kumasi, was captured, and Yaa Asantewaa, along with other leaders, was exiled to the Seychelles. The war ended with the Ashanti Empire being taken into the British Gold Coast colony. The Golden Stool, however, remained hidden and was never captured by the British.

The Kettle War (October 8, 1784- November 8, 1785): The War That Started Over Losing a Soup Kettle

In 1781, Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, demanded the return of territory in the Overmaas, the reopening of Scheldt, and other things. He sent two ships to the Scheldt led by one huge merchant ship, “Le Louis”. The Dutch, in the face of the mighty, powerful, Roman Empire didn’t send two ships, not three ships, not four ships, but one ship named “De Dilfijn”.

On the 9th of October, the one, singular ship De Dilfijn fired one shot at Le Louis, heavily injuring a soup kettle. This terrified the Austrians on board and they quickly surrendered. Joseph wasn’t pleased with that and officially declared war on the Dutch Republic on October 30, 1784. He began invading Dutch territory.

However, after the pressure European nations put on Joseph to stop the invasion, the Dutch Republic and the Holy Roman Empire signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1786, which marked the end of the Kettle War.

The Whiskey War (1973- June 14, 2022): The Most Peaceful

War in History

This is another war about territory. Canada and Denmark have an island 18 km far from each country called Hans Island. In 1984, Tom Hoyem, a Danish minister from Greenland, landed on the island, planted his national flag, and left a bottle of Schnapps and a note saying “Welcome to the Danish Island”.

You might think Canada would be pissed and wage war on Denmark, but no. Canadian soldiers dropped on the island, replaced Denmark’s flag with their own, and left a bottle of Canadian whiskey and a note saying “Welcome to Canada”.

This back-to-forth whiskey and flag trading went on for decades until June 14, 2022.

They decided to divide the island and made this a border between countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, history is not only defined by monumental wars but also by bizarre and humorous conflicts. From Australia's Emu War to the brief Anglo-Zanzibar War, these strange clashes reveal human conflict's unpredictable and often absurd nature. Driven by

animals, sports, territorial disputes, and even inanimate objects, these peculiar wars highlight the diverse reasons humans have fought. Though less impactful than major wars, these weird wars offer insights into human behavior and add a fascinating, lighter dimension to military history.

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