

The "War of Jenkins' Ear": A Bizarre Conflict Triggered by a Severed Ear

By Melkisedeck Leon Shine · July 3, 2023

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? March 8, 1739: The sun was beginning to set on the bustling port of Kingston, Jamaica, casting a warm golden hue across the horizon. Little did the inhabitants know that a seemingly insignificant event would soon plunge them into a bizarre conflict, forever etching their names into the annals of history. This is the story of "The War of Jenkins' Ear" - a peculiar war ignited by a severed ear. ???

? Word of this incident spread like wildfire, fueling anti-Spanish sentiment in Britain. Jenkins became a national hero and his severed ear a symbol of Spanish aggression. Diplomatic channels were exhausted, leading to the Convention of Pardo on January 14, 1739. Yet, peace was short-lived. ?

? On March 8, 1739, Britain, under the command of Admiral Edward Vernon, declared war on Spain. The conflict was not solely about Jenkins' ear; it was a culmination of mounting tensions and an opportunity for Britain to extend its influence. The War of Jenkins' Ear had begun, a peculiar name for a peculiar war. ?

? The war quickly engulfed the Caribbean and spread to Spain's colonies in America. Naval battles and sieges ensued, with both sides seeking to gain the upper hand. The island of Portobelo in present-day Panama became a focal point of the conflict. British forces, bearing the weight of Jenkins' ear, launched a daring assault on the heavily fortified Spanish stronghold. ?

? The Battle of Portobelo on November 21, 1739, was a fierce encounter. British ships bombarded the Spanish defenses, shattering the silence of the tropical night. In this pivotal moment, the British secured victory, capturing the once-mighty fortress. The severed ear had proven its strange power once again. ?

??? Years of conflict ensued, with both sides suffering heavy losses. However, the War of Jenkins' Ear eventually merged into the larger conflict known as the War of the Austrian Succession. The peculiar name faded into obscurity, but the impact of this bizarre war would forever be remembered. ?

? May 13, 1748: The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, bringing an end to the War of the Austrian Succession and, consequently, the War of Jenkins' Ear. The severed ear had played its part, setting off a chain of events that reshaped history. Though peculiar, this bizarre conflict reminded the world that even the smallest incidents can ignite the flames of war. ??