

By: McClendon

H.R. No. 1007

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, May 26, 2011, marks the centennial of the death of
2 United States Army Brigadier General John Lapham Bullis, commander
3 of the famed Black Seminole Scouts and a hero of the Texas frontier;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Born in Macedon, New York, in 1841, John Bullis
6 enlisted in the 126th New York Volunteer Infantry in 1862 and was
7 wounded and captured twice during the Civil War, in the battles of
8 Harpers Ferry and Gettysburg; following 10 months in the notorious
9 Libby Prison, he was released in an exchange of combatants and was
10 commissioned as a captain in the 118th Infantry, U.S. Colored
11 Troops, a volunteer regiment composed entirely of African American
12 enlisted men and white officers; and

13 WHEREAS, General Bullis briefly ran a business on the
14 Mississippi River after the war and was commissioned in the Regular
15 Army as a second lieutenant in 1867; although many other white
16 officers scorned African American regiments, he served with the
17 41st Infantry and then requested a transfer to the new 24th
18 Infantry, a consolidation of three Colored Infantry regiments; he
19 was stationed at Fort Clark in the borderlands, where property
20 raids and attacks on settlers were a regular occurrence, and
21 assumed command of a remarkable group of scouts, skillful trackers
22 descended from escaped slaves who had intermarried with members of
23 the Seminole tribe and eventually settled in the Santa Rosa
24 Mountains of northern Mexico; and

1 WHEREAS, Resolute and resourceful, General Bullis earned the
2 nickname "the Whirlwind," leading the Black Seminole Scouts during
3 the Red River War and on numerous missions to track raiders from the
4 Comanche and Apache tribes; in one celebrated battle, he and three
5 scouts took on more than two dozen Lipan Apaches before they ran low
6 on ammunition and were forced to retreat; General Bullis's horse
7 was lost, but his comrades returned for him under fire and he was
8 able to leap up behind his sergeant and escape on his steed; the
9 scouts were awarded Congressional Medals of Honor; and

10 WHEREAS, The stoicism, valor, and fairness General Bullis
11 demonstrated won the complete loyalty of his men; he lived off the
12 land and suffered severe privations alongside them, and they gladly
13 followed him even on a pursuit all the way to New Mexico Territory,
14 which kept them in the saddle for 80 days and more than 1,200 miles;
15 over the course of 8 years, he led his scouts in 26 battles, yet not
16 one was killed or seriously injured; he received brevet citations
17 for his gallant service, as well as recognition from the Texas
18 Legislature, and the people of West Texas and residents of Kinney
19 County showed their gratitude by presenting him with engraved
20 swords; and

21 WHEREAS, Once the area had become comparatively calm, General
22 Bullis was transferred to Indian Territory, and he was later
23 appointed the paymaster at Fort Sam Houston, with the rank of major;
24 he served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War and in the
25 Philippines during the Philippine Insurrection; the day before his
26 retirement in 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt promoted him to
27 brigadier general in recognition of his outstanding achievements;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, John Bullis settled in San Antonio and established
3 himself as a successful businessman, investing in real estate and
4 the Shafter silver mines, and he helped to promote the settlement of
5 West Texas; in addition, he remained a stalwart advocate for the
6 Black Seminole Scouts, trying in vain to obtain for them the
7 military benefits and land grants that the federal government had
8 promised; he died in San Antonio on May 26, 1911, and is buried in
9 the San Antonio National Cemetery; a military camp just north of San
10 Antonio was named Camp Bullis in his honor in 1917; and

11 WHEREAS, An extraordinary figure in the history of the Lone
12 Star State, Brigadier General John Bullis fought bravely to secure
13 the frontier, and he set an inspiring example of integrity and
14 dedication; it is indeed fitting to commemorate the centennial of
15 his passing; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
17 Legislature hereby recognize May 26, 2011, as Brigadier General
18 John L. Bullis Day and encourage all Texans to learn more about his
19 life and service to the Lone Star State; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That official copies of this resolution be prepared
21 for the Shafter Silver Mine John L. Bullis Library at the STAR DAY
22 Foundation, for the Fort Sam Houston Museum, and for the New York
23 Macedon Public Library Bullis Collection as an expression of high
24 regard by the Texas House of Representatives.