

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 112

BY SENATOR MORRISH

SENATE. Designates May 6, 2014, as "Battle of Calcasieu Pass Day" in the Louisiana Senate.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To designate May 6, 2014, as "Battle of Calcasieu Pass Day" in the Louisiana Senate.

3 WHEREAS, May 6, 2014, is the sesquicentennial of the Civil War battle of
4 Calcasieu Pass in Southwestern Louisiana; and

5 WHEREAS, this battle was a skirmish fought on May 6, 1864, near the mouth of the
6 Calcasieu River in Southwestern Louisiana which resulted in a victory by the Confederate
7 States of America; and

8 WHEREAS, though involving no more than five hundred soldiers and sailors and
9 taking place in a remote area of the Confederacy, this battle was a significant part of the
10 successful effort by Confederate coastal defense troops to defend the western coast of the
11 Gulf of Mexico from Union forces; and

12 WHEREAS, along the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico, the continuing
13 Confederate effort to deny the Union access to the lands bordering the western Gulf of
14 Mexico was successful in tying up thousands of Union troops and in denying sporadic
15 attempts at invasion from the sea; and

16 WHEREAS, upon orders from their commanders, in April 1864, the *U.S.S. Granite*
17 *City* and the *U.S.S. Wave* bombed the Confederate fort at the mouth of the Calcasieu River
18 and traveled about two miles up river to the pass, where they disembarked several Union

1 infantrymen to round-up livestock from surrounding farms, believing farmers in the area to
2 be Union sympathizers; and

3 WHEREAS, the *Wave* and the *Granite City* traveled to Calcasieu Pass, located in an
4 area where the bend in the river formed a peninsula on the land; and

5 WHEREAS, the Union soldiers sought to secure the areas adjacent to the pass where
6 their ships were anchored by destroying the bridges over Mud and Oyster bayous and
7 posting guards around their perimeter; and

8 WHEREAS, the Confederate garrison forty miles west at Sabine Pass was apprised
9 of the situation in Louisiana and assembled a force to expel the Union ships and their
10 infantrymen from Confederate soil; and

11 WHEREAS, on the afternoon of May 4, 1864, the Confederate foot soldiers began
12 their trek from Texas to Calcasieu Pass, arriving along the Calcasieu River area in the early
13 morning hours of May 6; and

14 WHEREAS, in order to support the infantry, artillery was ferried from Fort
15 Manhasset across Sabine Lake, into Johnson Bayou in Louisiana, and eventually to within
16 firing range of the Union gunboats in the Calcasieu River; and

17 WHEREAS, as the day dawned on May 6, the Confederate forces completely
18 surprised the Union troops, their guards having abandoned their posts in the face of
19 Confederate activity in the area, beginning an artillery bombardment and shelling the ships
20 in the river; and

21 WHEREAS, the Union naval forces returned fire and the Confederate artillery was
22 caught in deadly crossfire between the ships and heavy fire on the artillery resulted in a
23 direct hit on one cannon, demolishing the cannon and injuring the three artillerymen; and

24 WHEREAS, a quick-thinking Confederate lieutenant moved the remaining cannon
25 closer to the river, thus avoiding any more damage from the crossfire; and

26 WHEREAS, withering fire demolished the *Granite City's* wheel house and sixteen
27 Confederate shells penetrated her hull near the waterline, causing her lieutenant to hoist a
28 white flag over the ship and to lower a boat to take on the victors; and

29 WHEREAS, with the surrender of the *Granite City*, the Confederate soldiers turned
30 all their artillery on the *Wave* while her sailors hastened to gather enough steam to escape

1 down river; and

2 WHEREAS, the Confederate shells crashed through the *Wave's* pilot house, engine
3 room, and boilers, followed by a direct hit on the gunboat's 32-pound cannon, ending the
4 gunboat's ability to return fire, and resulting in the raising of a white flag of surrender on the
5 mast of the Union boat; and

6 WHEREAS, the Union infantry who were camped on shore, surrendered without
7 firing a shot in defense of their positions and became somewhat willing prisoners of the
8 Confederate troops; and

9 WHEREAS, the Confederate forces gathered the Union prisoners and took control
10 of the gunboats; and

11 WHEREAS, Confederate casualties totaled fourteen dead and, at least eleven
12 wounded and Union casualties totaled six sailors and, at least twenty-one injured; and

13 WHEREAS, the total number of Union dead was difficult to determine as Union
14 sailors were believed to have weighted down some bodies and thrown them in the river; and

15 WHEREAS, the Confederates took command of the two gunboats, also a total of one
16 hundred seventy-four prisoners, sixteen cannon, the stolen livestock; and

17 WHEREAS, once the soldiers, prisoners, and the two gunboats returned to the
18 Confederate Fort Manhasset across the Sabine River, the gunboats were converted to
19 blockade runners and prowled the waters of the western Gulf of Mexico until the end of the
20 war in April 1865.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
22 does hereby designate May 6, 2014, as "Battle of Calcasieu Pass Day" in the Louisiana
23 Senate.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

DIGEST

Morrish

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