

House Resolution 1796

By: Representatives Harbin of the 80th, Fleming of the 79th, and Burmeister of the 96th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Declaring August 30, 2004, as David Bushnell Day in Georgia; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, David Bushnell was born on August 30, 1740, in Saybrook, Connecticut, and
3 attended Yale College; and
- 4 WHEREAS, while studying at Yale, David Bushnell invented a method of exploding timed
5 charges of gunpowder underwater and hoped to use his invention to challenge the British
6 ships blockading the harbors of the American colonies during the Revolutionary War; and
- 7 WHEREAS, in order to deliver his mine to the blockading ships, David Bushnell created the
8 Turtle, a one-person, human-powered craft capable of underwater navigation with the
9 assistance of the government of the State of Connecticut, the Continental Congress, George
10 Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin; and
- 11 WHEREAS, on September 6, 1776, the Turtle, piloted by Continental Army Sgt. Ezra Lee,
12 navigated New York Harbor and attacked the flagship of the British blockade, the HMS
13 Eagle; and
- 14 WHEREAS, the Turtle was spotted by British sailors and Sgt. Lee was unable to attach the
15 mine to the HMS Eagle, but the mine detonated near the ship and so unnerved the British that
16 the blockade was repositioned further from shore, thereby reducing its effectiveness; and
- 17 WHEREAS, this is recognized as the first use of a submarine in combat, nearly 100 years
18 before the successful attack by the Confederate submarine Hunley which became the first
19 submarine to sink another vessel in war; and
- 20 WHEREAS, David Bushnell was later appointed by General Washington to the Corps of
21 Miners and Sappers, the predecessor to the United States Army Corps of Engineers; and

1 WHEREAS, after the Revolutionary War ended, David Bushnell's friend and former Yale
2 student Abraham Baldwin, who founded the University of Georgia, convinced Bushnell to
3 move to Georgia; and

4 WHEREAS, under the assumed name of David Bush, Bushnell opened a private academy,
5 became a physician, and lived the remaining 30 years of his life in what was then Columbia
6 County, Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, David Bushnell died in 1824 at the age of 84 and is buried in what is now
8 Warrenton, Georgia; and

9 WHEREAS, Rick and Laura Brown, graduates of the University of Georgia and now
10 professors at the Massachusetts College of Art, have constructed a replica of the Turtle which
11 will be exhibited in Georgia this year; and

12 WHEREAS, the accomplishments of this remarkable individual are worthy of recognition
13 and study.

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
15 August 30, 2004, is hereby declared to be David Bushnell Day in Georgia.