

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H2/19/13*

2 89th General Assembly

3 Regular Session, 2013

HR 1013

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5 By: Representatives McGill, *D. Altes, S. Malone*

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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

8

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF GENERAL WILLIAM ORLANDO DARBY;

9

TO RECOGNIZE HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT

10

OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY RANGERS; AND TO SUPPORT THE

11

DARBY LEGACY PROJECT TO ERECT A STATUE IN HIS HONOR

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IN CISTERNA PARK, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

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### Subtitle

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TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF GENERAL WILLIAM

17

DARBY; TO RECOGNIZE HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO

18

THE UNITED STATES ARMY RANGERS; AND TO

19

SUPPORT THE DARBY LEGACY PROJECT TO ERECT

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A STATUE IN HIS HONOR IN CISTERNA PARK,

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FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

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WHEREAS, William Orlando Darby was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on

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February 8, 1911, graduated from the United States Military Academy with a

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bachelor of science degree, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in

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the Field Artillery on June 13, 1933; and

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WHEREAS, William Darby was promoted to captain on October 1, 1940,

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following intensive artillery training while attending Field Artillery School

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at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and as World War II progressed saw rapid promotion to

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the grade of lieutenant colonel while training with the United States troops

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in Northern Ireland where he became interested in the British Commandos and

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the United States Army assigned him to direct the organization and training

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of the First United States Army Ranger Battalion; and

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1           WHEREAS, "Darby's Rangers" trained with their British counterparts in  
2 Scotland and were designed by their leader to be a special force, always  
3 taking the offensive, materializing as if from nowhere, and striking first  
4 confusion and then terror into the enemy; and  
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6           WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby led "Darby's Rangers" at Arzew on the  
7 African continent capturing prisoners and destroying a battery of self-  
8 propelled artillery and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his  
9 actions, including, according to the citation, "always conspicuously at the  
10 head of his troops... personally [leading] assaults against the enemy line in  
11 the face of heavy machine gun and artillery fire, establishing the fury of  
12 the Ranger attack by his skillful employment of hand grenades in close  
13 quarter fighting"; and  
14

15           WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby and his 1<sup>st</sup> Ranger Battalion saw  
16 further action in the Italian Campaign, where Darby received a second award  
17 (oak leaf cluster) of the Distinguished Service Cross in 1943 for his  
18 gallantry in Sicily by personally repulsing an enemy attack and destroying a  
19 tank; and  
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21           WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby, without regard for his personal  
22 safety, reconnoitered enemy positions and planned attacks revealing his  
23 initiative, courage, and devotion to duty, which is a credit to the Armed  
24 Forces of the United States, for which he was awarded the Silver Star; and  
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26           WHEREAS, in March, 1945, Colonel Darby returned to Italy where "Task  
27 Force Darby" spearheaded the breakout of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army from the Po River valley  
28 and reached Torbole at the head of Lake Garda; and  
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30           WHEREAS, on April 30, 1945, Colonel Darby was issuing orders for the  
31 attack on Trento to cut off a German retreat when an 88 mm shell burst killed  
32 Colonel Darby; however, relying on his inspiration, "Task Force Darby"  
33 continued with their mission where two days later, all German forces in Italy  
34 surrendered on May 2, 1945; and  
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36           WHEREAS, Colonel Darby, who was 34 at the time of his death, was

1 posthumously promoted to brigadier general and was buried at Fort Smith  
2 National Cemetery in Fort Smith, Arkansas; and

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4 WHEREAS, in addition to the Distinguished Service Cross with oak leaf  
5 cluster and Silver Star, General Darby was also honored with the Croix de  
6 Guerre with Silver Star (France), The Order of Kutuzov, 3<sup>rd</sup> degree (Soviet  
7 Union), and the British Distinguished Service Order (United Kingdom); and

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9 WHEREAS, General Darby's legacy includes Camp Darby, near Fort Benning,  
10 Georgia, which is home to the second part of the "Benning Phase" of Ranger  
11 School; two United States Army installations in Europe: W. O. Darby Kaserne,  
12 Fürth, Germany, and Camp Darby, near Livorno, Italy; the high school in  
13 Cisterna, Italy; an Admiral Benson Class transport ship, the USS Admiral W.  
14 S. Sims, renamed USAT General William O. Darby in the 1940s; and Darby Junior  
15 High School in his hometown, Fort Smith, Arkansas; and

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17 WHEREAS, General Darby's exploits are further memorialized in a book  
18 entitled "Onward We Charge: The Heroic Story of Darby's Rangers in World War  
19 II", published in 2007 by H. Paul Jeffers; the 1958 motion picture "Darby's  
20 Rangers", starring James Garner, which dramatized Darby's military exploits;  
21 and the 1968 motion picture, "Anzio", in which Wayde Preston also played a  
22 character role based on Darby; and

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24 WHEREAS, General George S. Patton called General William O. Darby "The  
25 bravest man I ever knew"; and

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27 WHEREAS, in honor of William Orlando Darby, who will always be  
28 remembered for his "Follow me!" and "Onward we stagger, and if the tanks  
29 come, may God help the tanks", a soldier as visionary as he was brave, the  
30 General Darby Legacy Project has been established to erect a statue of  
31 Brigadier General Darby in Cisterna Park in his hometown, Fort Smith,  
32 Arkansas,

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34 NOW THEREFORE,

35 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL  
36 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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THAT General William O. Darby, who courageously defended democracy and freedom, paying the ultimate price near the end of World War II, be honored for his brave leadership and inspirational role in establishing the United States Army Ranger as an elite special force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the House of Representatives recognize and support the General Darby Legacy Project to erect a statue of General Darby in Cisterna Park in his hometown of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

*/s/McGill*