

1 State of Arkansas
2 89th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2013

As Engrossed: H2/19/13

HR 1013

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

7 **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
12 IN CISTERNA PARK, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

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15 **Subtitle**

16 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
20 A STATUE IN HIS HONOR IN CISTERNA PARK,
21 FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

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24 WHEREAS, William Orlando Darby was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on
25 February 8, 1911, graduated from the United States Military Academy with a
26 bachelor of science degree, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in
27 the Field Artillery on June 13, 1933; and

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29 WHEREAS, William Darby was promoted to captain on October 1, 1940,
30 following intensive artillery training while attending Field Artillery School
31 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and as World War II progressed saw rapid promotion to
32 the grade of lieutenant colonel while training with the United States troops
33 in Northern Ireland where he became interested in the British Commandos and
34 the United States Army assigned him to direct the organization and training
35 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
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15 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby and his 1st 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 5th 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, 3rd degree (Soviet
7 Union), and the British Distinguished Service Order (United Kingdom); and

8
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

16
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

23
24 WHEREAS, General George S. Patton called General William O. Darby "The
25 bravest man I ever knew"; and

26
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