

By: Senator Files

SENATE RESOLUTION

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF GENERAL WILLIAM ORLANDO DARBY;
TO RECOGNIZE HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY RANGERS; AND TO SUPPORT THE
DARBY LEGACY PROJECT TO ERECT A STATUE IN HIS HONOR
IN CISTERNA PARK, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

Subtitle

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF GENERAL WILLIAM
DARBY; TO RECOGNIZE HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE UNITED STATES ARMY RANGERS; AND TO
SUPPORT THE DARBY LEGACY PROJECT TO ERECT
A STATUE IN HIS HONOR IN CISTERNA PARK,
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

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

WHEREAS, William Darby was promoted to captain on October 1, 1940, following intensive artillery training while attending Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and as World War II progressed saw rapid promotion to the grade of lieutenant colonel while training with the United States troops in Northern Ireland where he became interested in the British Commandos and the United States Army assigned him to direct the organization and training of the First United States Army Ranger Battalion; and



WHEREAS, "Darby's Rangers" trained with their British counterparts in Scotland and were designed by their leader to be a special force, always taking the offensive, materializing as if from nowhere, and striking first confusion and then terror into the enemy; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby led "Darby's Rangers" at Arzew on the African continent capturing prisoners and destroying a battery of self-propelled artillery and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions, including, according to the citation, "always conspicuously at the head of his troops... personally [leading] assaults against the enemy line in the face of heavy machine gun and artillery fire, establishing the fury of the Ranger attack by his skillful employment of hand grenades in close quarter fighting"; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby and his 1st Ranger Battalion saw further action in the Italian Campaign, where Darby received a second award (oak leaf cluster) of the Distinguished Service Cross in 1943 for his gallantry in Sicily by personally repulsing an enemy attack and destroying a tank; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Darby, without regard for his personal safety, reconnoitered enemy positions and planned attacks revealing his initiative, courage, and devotion to duty, which is a credit to the Armed Forces of the United States, for which he was awarded the Silver Star; and

WHEREAS, in March, 1945, Colonel Darby returned to Italy where "Task Force Darby" spearheaded the breakout of the 5th Army from the Po River valley and reached Torbole at the head of Lake Garda; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 1945, Colonel Darby was issuing orders for the attack on Trento to cut off a German retreat when an 88 mm shell burst killed Colonel Darby; however, relying on his inspiration, "Task Force Darby" continued with their mission where two days later, all German forces in Italy surrendered on May 2, 1945; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Darby, who was 34 at the time of his death, was

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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 Senate 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.