



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fort Smith General Darby Challenge

Sunday, April 26, 2026

Downtown Fort Smith | Cisterna Park

Time: 7:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (dead stop)

Distances: 13.1 Half Marathon, 10K, or 5K — Ruck, Run, or Walk

Registration: runsignup.com

Web: fortsmithmuseum.org | darbyhouse.org

Email: fsdarbychallenge@gmail.com

Mark your calendars for the **3rd Annual Fort Smith General Darby Challenge**, presented by the Fort Smith Museum of History in partnership with The Darby House and the City of Fort Smith. Taking place Sunday, April 26, 2026, at 7:00 a.m. in downtown Fort Smith, this military-inspired ruck march and race honors Fort Smith native General William O. Darby and celebrates the enduring bond between Fort Smith and its Italian sister cities, Cisterna and Nago-Torbole.

This non-sanctioned but timed event offers a half marathon (13.1 m), 10K, or 5K and welcomes participants of all abilities to ruck, run, or walk. A virtual participation option is also available, with finisher medals awarded to all who complete the challenge and special recognition given for top times.

Proceeds benefit the Fort Smith Museum of History and the new Darby House Organization.

The Fort Smith General Darby Challenge commemorates General Darby's sacrifice on April 30, 1945, in Nago-Torbole, Italy, during World War II. In 2023, Fort Smith and Nago-Torbole formalized a sister city partnership rooted in this shared history, and the Darby Challenge coincides with Nago-Torbole's Col Darby 40-Mile Ranger Challenge, reinforcing the international connection. A defining moment of the 2026 event is the *Silent Mile* along the Arkansas River waterfront, honoring 93 World War II Arkansans listed as KIA or MIA and interred near Fort Smith's sister cities in Italy.

The course begins and ends at the General William O. Darby statue in Cisterna Park, traveling along “A” Street to the Greg Smith River Trail, north along the Riverfront to Fort Smith Park, and returning to Cisterna Park, where participants are invited to reflect and pay their respects.

The 2026 Challenge will also honor Master Sergeant Joshua Lloyd Wheeler, a member of the Cherokee Nation and a native of Sequoyah County, Oklahoma, who was killed in action in Iraq during Operation Inherent Resolve. A member of the elite Delta Force, MSgt. Wheeler was the first American service member killed by enemy fire while fighting ISIS militants.

Registration opens January 25, 2026, at runsignup.com. Participants and spectators are encouraged to join in honoring service, sacrifice, and international friendship at this meaningful Fort Smith tradition.

Adding to the weekend is “Darby Days” on Saturday, April 25, 2026—a lively, family-friendly outdoor event presented by the Fort Smith National Historic Site and the Fort Smith Museum of History. Darby Days will feature historical reenactments, weapons demonstrations, static military exhibits, hands-on activities for all ages, and grilled foods, bringing history to life through engaging, interactive experiences.

For more information, sponsorship opportunities, or media inquiries, contact:

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More information about the hosting organizations is available at fortsmithmuseum.org and darbyhouse.org.