The Department of Military Science at Duke University was started in the spring of 1974 as an extension center of the North Carolina State University Army ROTC. Its initial cadre strength was one officer and one non-commissioned officer. Classes began during the following fall semester and included students from the University of North Carolina and North Carolina Central University. The detachment became a host institution in the fall of 1982 and was augmented with another officer and two additional non-commissioned officers. At the same time, the first Duke 4-year Army ROTC scholarship winner was enrolled. By the close of School Year 1982-83, enrollment reached 62 cadets. The next year the detachment received additional personnel bringing the cadre strength up to four officers and four non-commissioned officers.

From the inception of the Blue Devil Battalion, UNC students comprised a significant portion of the cadet ranks. Starting in 1984, freshman military science courses were taught on both the Duke and Chapel Hill campuses. ROTC continued to thrive at UNC, and in 1989 the university recognized the Army ROTC program. Over the next ten years, the program at UNC grew significantly, gaining extension center status in the 1994-95 school year. Finally, in 1998, UNC-CH became its own host institution, ending the official partnership between Blue Devils and Tarheels.

Students from North Carolina Central University were in cadet ranks from the beginning as well. In 1985, an office and classes were added at North Carolina Central University, in the hopes of increasing the number of NCCU students in the program. In August of 1995, the program signed an official cross-enrollment agreement with NCCU, making the Eagles an official partnership school with Duke ROTC. In turn, NCCU granted the program departmental status concurrent with this agreement. The partnership is still in effect, with cadets from both universities comprising the ranks of the Blue Devil Battalion.

Throughout its history, the cadets and cadre of the Blue Devil Battalion have supported the Army in ways beyond the typical duties of ROTC. In August of 1990, two cadets from the Blue Devil Battalion were mobilized with reserve units in support of Operation Desert Shield. Later, two officers from the cadre deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm. Currently, the battalion has numerous cadets in the National Guard and Army Reserve through the simultaneous membership program.

The Blue Devil Battalion has maintained a high standard of training for its future lieutenants. This standard has manifested itself repeatedly when cadets have participated in additional training programs. Blue Devil cadets have regularly earned high honors at Advance Camp, Airborne and Air Assault School, and later in the Officer Basic Course. Its Ranger Challenge teams have also performed well. In 1994, the Ranger Challenge team placed 2nd in the Brigade. The battalion fielded two teams in 2000, with one team capturing first place in the second division. In 2001, the battalion’s team again captured first place in the second division.

The Army ROTC program at Duke University and North Carolina Central University continues to prepare and train the future leadership of the Army and looks forward to the challenges of the 21st Century.
On Defending America

War is an ugly thing but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feelings which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.

--John Stuart Mill

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Sources: www.nccu.edu
October 2008