

Military Academy, Oak Ridge Military Academy ^[1]

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State Military Academy of North Carolina: Oak Ridge Military Academy

By Amy Kemp

Government and Heritage Library, 2017

See also: [North Carolina State Symbols and Official Adoptions main page](#) ^[2]; [Oak Ridge Military Academy](#) ^[3]



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^[4]

The General Assembly of 1991 adopted the [Oak Ridge Military Academy](#) ^[3] in the city of Oak Ridge in [Guilford County](#) ^[5] as the official State Military Academy (*Session Laws 1991, c. 728* ^[6]).

Selection as State Military Academy

The bill to designate Oak Ridge Military Academy as the official State Military Academy was sponsored by several congressmen, including senator Bob Shaw of Guilford County. Though Oak Ridge is the only military academy in the state, Shaw believed it should receive the honor due to its service in training thousands of leaders from all over the country and world. The school's president at the time, Robert R. Rossi, claimed the fact that Oak Ridge was the only military academy left after all others failed was precisely why it deserved the recognition.

About Oak Ridge Military Academy

Oak Ridge is the third oldest military high school in the country, and was the first military boarding school to admit girls.

The School was founded in 1852 as the Oak Ridge Male Institute as a two-year boarding school for men. By 1854 it had changed its name to the Oak Ridge Institute, admitting female students as well. The school remained co-educational until 1929. Oak Ridge was closed for several years during the Civil War, as most eligible students were either enlisted or conscripted into the Confederate Army. The school faced closure in 1914 when a fire destroyed the main schoolhouse and chapel, but was rebuilt and continued on. In 1917 the school became military under the supervision under the war department, and trained boys who went on to serve in WWI. In 1926 the school became a designated Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp unit.

In 1929 the name was officially changed to the Oak Ridge Military Institute, and was limited to males only. Oak Ridge founded an additional two-year junior college in 1932 which operated until 1966. In 1971 the school became co-educational once more and changed its name to the Oak Ridge Academy. The final name change occurred in 1981 when the school became the Oak Ridge Military Academy again. Both boys and girls were uniformed at this time. By 1991, at the time of state symbol adoption, the school had just under 200 cadets in grades 7-12. The late 2000's brought declining numbers, however, as the school enrollment dropped from 200 to just 45. The school faced closure in 2008-2009, but a renewed focus on the recruitment of international students and an emphasis on the school's College preparatory academic program has recently revitalized the school. As of 2014, enrollment was at 80 students.

Oak Ridge's mascot is the Cadet. Notable alumni include Navy Cross recipient George Fountain Parrott and Nascar driver Dale Earnhardt Jr.

For more information on the school's history, see [Oak Ridge Military Academy](#) [3].

Additional resources:

Oak Ridge Military Academy, official website: <https://www.oakridgemilitary.com/> [7]

Tiberi, Jeff. "162-Year-Old Oak Ridge Military Academy marches on." WUNC.org, 2014.
<https://www.wunc.org/education/2014-09-04/162-year-old-oak-ridge-military-academy-marches-on> [8]

Patterson, Donald W. "Oak Ridge Academy Awaits Salute - Bill Would Declare it the State Military School," *Greensboro News & Record*, July 11, 1991: C1

Image credit:

"Oak Ridge Military Academy." 2007. Photo by Flickr user twbuckner. Online at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/twbuckner/1519254039> [4]

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