



*The First RI Regiment in Providence, 1780  
by David Wagner, used with permission*

## Promoting Heritage Today

The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association (W3R-US) is a non-profit [501(c)3] corporation dedicated to identifying and preserving the documents, routes, and associated historic sites and to helping the public enjoy and understand the W3R. Since 1999 the W3R-US has helped focus and coordinate the efforts of individuals and of like-minded history, lineage, and government groups in developing the W3R as a public resource.

Following a six-year National Park Service study Congress designated the W3R as a National Historic Trail in March of 2009.

*The W3R-US welcomes your interest, your participation in W3R activities, your donations, and your membership in a chapter of the W3R-US.*

## Completed Projects that Develop the W3R's Potential

- research reports for eight of nine states
- several books for various audiences
- a Web site with an extensive history of the W3R, touring information, calendar of upcoming events, and photo-reports of recent events
- dozens of educational presentations
- several historical and cultural symposia
- sixty illustrations by a commercial artist
- several DVDs of video dramatizations
- a play and several musical events



*Boy Scouts pass flags down the W3R, 2006*

- hundreds of route-marking signs
- dozens of interpretive signs
- several state-issued tourist guides
- a re-enactment march along the entire route from Newport to Yorktown
- many group hikes over shorter sections
- grave markings and commemorations for allied soldiers who died on the W3R

You are invited to explore the



## Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail

From 1774 to 1783 the W3R was a major route for communications, troops, and supplies. In 1781 ten thousand U.S. and French troops marched south on it to the last major battle on U.S. soil -- **Yorktown**.



*Land and Sea Routes to Yorktown [Nat Park Service]*

## French Aid Brings Victory

In June of 1781, after a year camped at Newport, Rhode Island, 4,000 French troops under General Rochambeau marched 230 miles to the main U.S. camp near White Plains, New York. Here the allies learned that a French fleet might sail to Virginia to help trap General Cornwallis and 9,000 British troops who were already being harassed by 5,000 Continental and militia troops under American General Lafayette.



Re-enactors of French troops in Newport RI, 2006

While the New Jersey militia built bread ovens to make the British garrison in New York City think that French troops were about to attack them, Generals Washington and Rochambeau led 2,000 Continental troops and the French force on a rapid march and sail south 460 miles to Yorktown, Virginia.

Cornwallis hoped to be relieved by a British fleet of 25 ships-of-the-line (one-quarter of the British navy). This hope was crushed when a comparable French fleet under Admiral de Grasse (one-quarter of the French navy) fended off the British fleet and blockaded the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.



Carleton Bridge over the Housatonic River CT by David Wagner, used with permission

The French fleet brought transports carrying 3,000 more French soldiers fresh from an allied victory at Pensacola, Florida. A French squadron under Chef d'escadre de Barass sailed from Newport, Rhode Island with Rochambeau's siege cannon. Soon allied siege lines surrounded the fortified town of Yorktown.

After enduring ten days of continuous bombardment Cornwallis surrendered his army on October 19, 1781 -- a day celebrated here for over 225 years.

During their thirty months in the U.S. the French paid in silver for food and repairs. More than 10% died, and a comparable percentage remained here.



Washington and Rochambeau at Yorktown (detail from a painting by Auguste Coubert)

## What is the W3R?

1. **A physical trail** -- Walk along paths on which the allied troops marched. You can walk, bike, and drive along this trail to appreciate the hardships they faced in marching and camping for weeks at a time.

2. **A "string of pearls"** -- Many major Revolutionary War sites are located on or close to the trail. As you travel south on the W3R you can visit sites that follow the sequence of the war -- first in Massachusetts at Lexington, Concord, and Boston; then Newport, Providence, Hartford, West Point, Princeton, Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Annapolis, Washington DC, Mt. Vernon, and Williamsburg; lastly Yorktown, Virginia.

3. **A tribute to the vital role of our strong ally, France** -- As the only nation that formally recognized U.S. independence before the war's end. France provided substantial military and monetary support from 1775 to 1783; preventing early military defeat or the collapse of U.S. paper currency.

4. **Many cultures with one goal** -- The diverse religious, language, and racial groups in the U.S. at the time of the Revolution united to fight for the common goal of independence to gain liberty, justice, and opportunity for all.

[www.w3r-us.org](http://www.w3r-us.org)

brochure date = 2009 July 14