

W3R Activities at US National Level

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Kim Burdick, National Vice Chairman and Project Coordinator

What Is the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War Route ?

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War Route is the Yorktown Campaign trail followed by the allied forces of George Washington and French General Rochambeau in 1780-1783. The route begins in Newport, Rhode Island and ends in Yorktown, Virginia. The soldiers, camp followers and many animals walked, sailed, and came on baggage wagons more than 600 miles to defeat British General Cornwallis in the last definitive battle of the American Revolution.

What Is the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War Route Association (W3R-US)?

The W3R-US is an emerging all-volunteer, non-profit organization composed of representatives nine state plus Washington, DC and France. We are working hand in glove with the National Park Service to complete a 9 volume research set for the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution in October 2006, and to mark the route with appropriate interpretive panels, kiosks, and public programming. Our target market is families of 4th-10th grade students and scouts. The Board and honorary board is extremely interested in the global and multicultural aspects of the American Revolution.

What Projects Are Planned For 225th Anniversary?

(1) 9-volume set of Robert Selig's research completed, beautifully designed and bound, illustrated with David Wagner's illustrations (2) Traveling exhibit including artifacts, maps, interactive exhibits, and David Wagner's illustrations (3) Traveling musical, "Billy Lee's George Washington" (4) State and local commemorative activities, including Brigade of American Revolution and tall ships.

Who Is Involved In This Effort?

Kim Burdick, MA, MPA, of Delaware is W3R's National Vice Chairman and Project Coordinator. The National Founding Chairman is Jacques Bossiere, PhD, a retired Yale University professor and Episcopalian minister who lives in both Connecticut and in France. We work closely with the National Park Service's Boston Support Office (Larry Gall) and NPS Staff members in Philadelphia (Julie Bell, Rivers & Trails); DC (Gary Scott, Regional Historian); Yorktown (Karen Rehm, historian). The National Park Service's scholar of choice for this project is Robert Selig, PhD, a resident of Holland, Michigan who speaks and reads German, French and English.

W3R-US's managing board and honorary board are composed of representatives primarily from the 9 states along this more than 600 mile route as well as from Washington, DC and France. Board Members include scholars and museum professionals, military men and women, hereditary society officers and the honorary French consuls representing the nine states.

The Executive Committee (as of April 2004) is: Jacques Bossiere, PhD, (CT); Chairman; Kim Burdick, National Vice Chairman and Project Coordinator, (DE); Secretary; Ed Greenwald (PA); Treasurer, Carl Nittinger (NJ); Co-vice chairmen Colonel James Johnson (NY); Caroline Lareuse (NJ) and Colonel Serge Gabriel (CT). Our webmaster is Dominique de Roquefeuil of France.

Some of the most active members (as of October 20, 2004) are Jim Rees, Executive Director of Mount Vernon; Philander Chase, Editor of the George Washington Papers at University of Virginia; Betty Jane Washington Gerber, Chairman of the Nation's Capitol Bicentennial; Rhonda Roberson, Black Patriots; Robert Reyes of Maryland, archivist of the United States Postal Service; James McCafferty, International W3R Chairman of Sons of the American Revolution; Eugenia Eleuthera duPont Carpenter Fiechter of Delaware; Win Carroll of Philadelphia; Carl Nittinger of New Jersey; Colonel James Johnson of West Point; Admiral Robert J. Lunney; Colonel Serge Gabriel of Connecticut and State Representative Nicholas Gorham and his wife, Roseanna, in Rhode Island.

Where Does This Route Go?

The route follows the 18th century transportation corridor along the Atlantic coastline from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia.

Why Are These People Doing This?

HR 2237, the enabling legislation for the 225th anniversary celebration has not yet passed Congress. The companion bill, SB 108, passed the Senate in the Spring, 2004.

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000 (PL-106-473) directs the National Park Service, through the Secretary of Interior, to submit to Congress a study of the 600 mile route followed in 1781 and 1782 by American and French armies under generals Washington and Rochambeau. The legislation was introduced in the House by Congressman John Larson (CT), in the Senate by Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) and co-sponsored by 42 members, including seven outside the project area.

The study is undertaken in consultation with state and local preservation groups, state historic preservation offices, national heritage organizations (primarily SAR and DAR); and public agencies on local, state and federal levels.

When Is the 225th Anniversary?

The kick-off celebration will be held July 8-10, 2005 in Newport, Rhode Island. The Grand Finale will be held October 19-22, 2006 in Yorktown, Virginia. The states in between these anchor states are in the process of developing celebratory plans.

How Do Will These Goals be Accomplished?

Each state is individually contracting, usually through the SHPO's office, with Bob Selig, PhD, to carry out a detailed study of that state's archives, public and private records, plus 18th century French and German records. To date research reports have been released for CT, NY, and Delaware. Dr. Selig will begin work in NJ on November 7, 2004. Rhode Island and Pennsylvania have funding in the pipeline. Each of the 9 states is developing a statewide 501 c-3 to carry out the work and link, mostly via e-mail and telephone with National Vice Chairman and Project Coordinator, Kim Burdick who is headquartered in Delaware. Mrs. Burdick is a Cooperstown-trained public historian with an MPA in Agency Management. The all volunteer group is now exactly one year old. The first 9-state meeting was held in Wilmington, DE in October 2003, followed by a second national meeting in Washington DC in April 2004. Regional meetings been held in 2004 in Philadelphia, Wethersfield, Connecticut and Richmond Virginia.