



# The Bulletin

*The monthly newsletter of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association*

**DECEMBER 2021**

**On the Web: [www.w3r-us.org](http://www.w3r-us.org)**

**Vol. 1, No. 12**

## **Volunteers clean up new Trail site in Rhode Island**

The sounds of tractors, stump grinders and chain saws drowned out the rakes of the 30 volunteers who arrived on a chilly but bright Saturday morning, Nov. 6, at Butts Hill Fort in Rhode Island to clean up vegetative overgrowth and debris. The walls of the historic, Revolutionary War fort are now visible from within the battlements.

Butts Hill Fort, commonly called Fort Butts, officially became a Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail site in early 2021 and is the largest remaining Revolutionary War earthen fort in southern New England.



*Volunteers take a break after clearing debris from Butts Hill Fort on Nov. 6. Photos by Joe Studlick*

The Portsmouth site was the command post for the American forces against the British and their Hessian mercenaries during the Battle of Rhode Island in August 1778. The fort later was occupied by French troops as part of the defenses of their main garrison in Newport, about six miles south, and the line of march of General Rochambeau's forces from Newport to Providence went right past the fort. One reason for the placement of the fort was that it provided observation of the two main ferry landings between Aquidneck Island and the mainland. Cannon there dominated these landings, which is why Rochambeau occupied it.



The site – too rocky for farming or house construction – was purchased by the Reverend Roderick Terry, Ph.D., and deeded to the Newport Historical Society. Overgrown when the state of Rhode Island took it

over in 1934, the fort was transferred to the Town of Portsmouth for one dollar in 1968. The Butts Hill Fort Restoration Committee and the Portsmouth Historical Society are trying to raise public awareness of the significance of the site and start a movement to develop the fort area into a public park to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the battle, in 2028. Restoration efforts began this year.

During a mid-morning break Nov. 6, Craig Clark, co-chair of the Restoration Committee, thanked the volunteers and discussed the committee's plans for 2022. These plans include establishment of a Battle of Rhode Island Web site to serve as a clearing house for information on the Rhode Island Campaign and the development of educational materials for schools.

Portsmouth Town Historian Jim Garman said he was happy to support the committee's efforts. These sentiments were echoed by Charlotte Taylor, archeologist of the Rhode Island Historical and Preservation Commission, which has been providing recommendations and guidance to the Restoration Committee.

A crew from Fort Adams, a large, complex fortress from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Newport, showed up in force, as it had in September. Crew members are now working on both forts, at



*State Representative Terri Cortvriend lends a hand to clean up Butts Hill Fort.*



*Scott Lemieux from Fort Adams cuts a stump.*

opposite ends of Aquidneck Island. Special thanks to Chris and Megan deBethune, who brought two tractors, which speeded up the work.

The volunteers were most happy to have state Representative Terri Cortvriend join the raking crew. The committee appreciated her physical support and her encouragement for the restoration efforts, which are expected to resume in the spring.

Anyone interested in joining the efforts to restore the fort and to broaden public knowledge of the Rhode Island Campaign should email Seth Chiaro at [seth.chiaro@gmail.com](mailto:seth.chiaro@gmail.com). To learn more, please visit <https://portsmouthhistorical.org/fort-butts/> and please look for Butts Hill Fort Restoration on Facebook.

*– Burton C. Quist,  
Butts Hill Fort Restoration Committee*

## **In Memoriam: Kurt D. Zwinkl, 1949-2021**

Kurt D. Zwinkl, 72, a longtime pillar of W3R-Pennsylvania, a former Board member of W3R-US and a former state legislator, died Sept. 1, 2021, at his home in Allentown, PA.

Kurt's passion for history was apparent to everyone who knew him, according to an obituary published Oct. 3 in *The Morning Call* of Allentown. He lived that passion, traveling the country to visit numerous presidential birthplaces and libraries with his family. He prized his collection of historical and political memorabilia and, if asked, could recount the story behind each treasured item.

A devoted family man, loyal friend and dedicated community servant, he was born in Allentown June 28, 1949, the son of William R. and Mildred K. Kranch Zwinkl. He was a graduate of East Stroudsburg University and earned his master's degree in American History from Lehigh University.



*Kurt D. Zwinkl in 2016.*

In 1973, at age 24, the 132<sup>nd</sup> District elected the Democrat as the youngest member ever of the state House of Representatives. He served 12 years in Harrisburg, earning a reputation for integrity, intelligence, humor and the ability to work across the aisle to advance the common good. Citing a desire to spend more time with his family, he did not seek re-election in 1984. Major accomplishments included bills to reduce government paperwork and to make library and museum theft a criminal act, he said in a 1982 interview with *The Morning Call*.

Kurt worked in the banking industry for the next 12 years, becoming senior vice president for public affairs and government at the former First Union National Bank. During that time, Governor Robert Casey appointed him to chair the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission from 1988 to 1995.

Beginning in 1996, he oversaw numerous revitalization projects in Allentown's central business district as president of the Allentown Economic Development Corporation, including the Arts Walk, PPL Center Plaza and Portland Place. He then served as executive director of the Schuylkill River Greenways National & State Heritage Area, with the goal of revitalizing and restoring the river's watershed and trails, from 2003 to 2015. Most recently, as president of the Allentown School District Foundation beginning in 2017, he established scholarships for Allentown students and grew the foundation's financial base.

A recognized expert in Pennsylvania history, Kurt published several articles on state and local history and, in 1989, he edited and wrote the text for *Taking Pictures*, a book of photographs by his father, a noted Lehigh Valley photographer.



“Kurt was so knowledgeable about all things history and Philadelphia, and was always there to advise and coach – and a kind and forthright man,” said Ellen von Karajan, executive director of W3R-US.

“He was a civic-minded guy, hooked on history, too, and in so many activities,” added Lanny Patten, a longtime colleague in W3R-PA.

Kurt shared his passion for his community through volunteer service to a wide range of organizations and received numerous awards and other honors. He was also an avid runner, a devoted fan of the Philadelphia Eagles football team and an admirer of former U.S. Attorney General and Senator Robert Kennedy, whose portrait hung in his office.

But more than his love for history, Allentown and public service, his love for his family outshone all else, said Barbara Goodliffe Zwinkl, his wife of 46 years, whom he met during his first campaign for state representative. “I think he’d mostly want to be known as an excellent father and grandfather, even over helping the general public,” she said. “His pride and joy were his children and grandchildren.” His children remembered a father who taught by example the importance of love, loyalty, and service to others.

Besides his wife, Kurt’s survivors include his daughter, Elizabeth Zwinkl Barnes; his son, Kent D. Zwinkl; his daughter-in-law Lisa Zwinkl, and grandsons Jacob Barnes, Justin Barnes, William Zwinkl and Charles Zwinkl.

A memorial service was held Oct. 9 at the First Presbyterian Church of Allentown, of which he was a member.

*Some of the information in this article is from “Kurt Zwinkl, former Pennsylvania state representative and fixture in Allentown for decades, dies at 72 years old,” The Morning Call, Sept. 29.*

## **Online Store Open for Business**

Director Sam Meredith, Chair of the Earned Income Committee, reports that the new W3R-US online store is open for business. The newest merchandise includes logo shirts and pens. Suggestions for merchandise should be sent to Sam at [memogroup1127@gmail.com](mailto:memogroup1127@gmail.com)

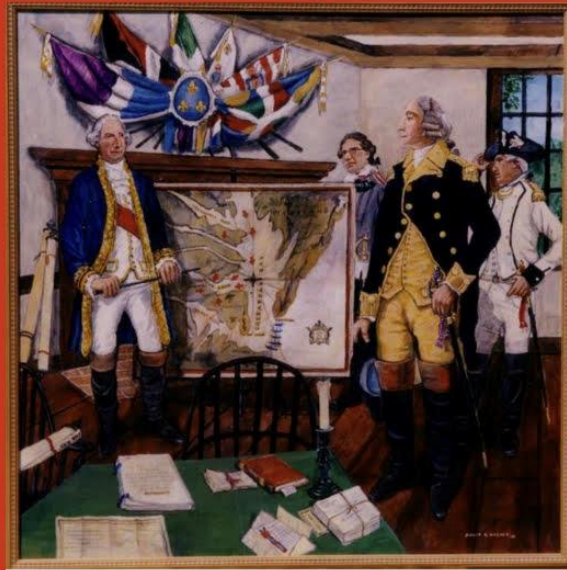
To visit the online store: <https://w3rus.qbstores.com/a/login>

In another online shopping matter, you can support W3R-US when you shop at Amazon. Here’s how. Instead of going to amazon.com:

1. Enter smile.amazon.com in your browser address bar.
2. Shop and place your order.
3. Amazon will donate a percentage of your order to W3R-US.

THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE SENDS GREETINGS

*Have a Happy Holiday!*



David R. Wagner Painting depicting Washington meeting Rochambeau at Odell House-Rochambeau Headquarters. Courtesy Dr. Frank T. Bumpus Collection of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College

## Membership Memo

Now is the time that we cordially invite you to renew your membership with W3R for 2022-23!

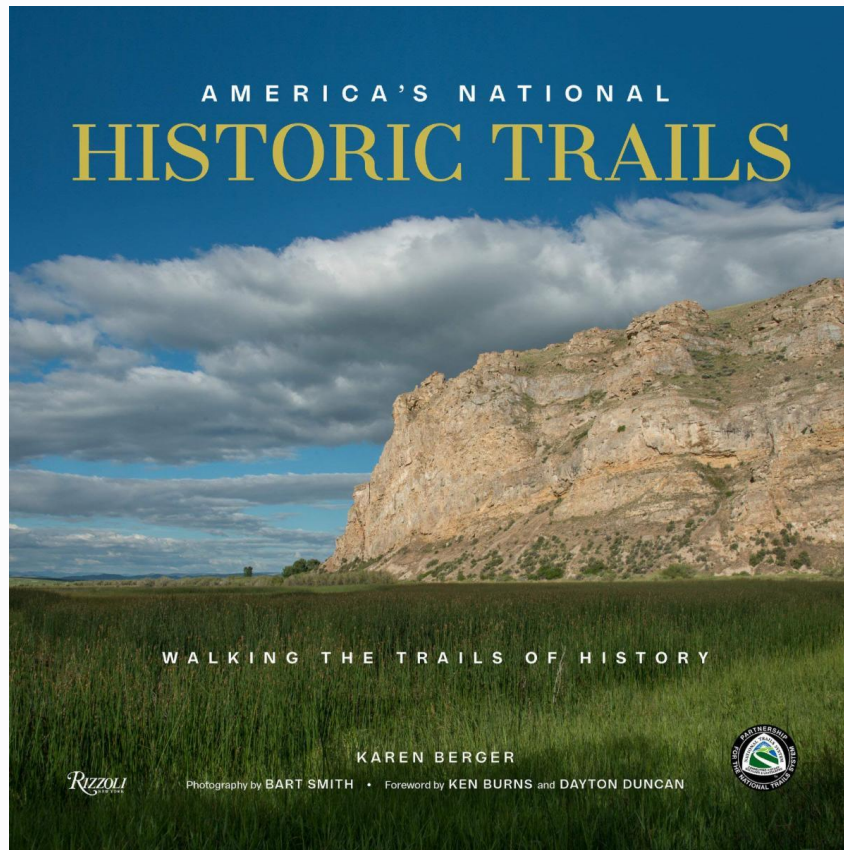
To make an online payment for your membership dues, please go to: [Join/Renew W3R-US](#) or print out the form and mail it in with a check. Here are the different membership category forms: [W3R-US Individual Membership Form](#), [W3R-US Group/Organization Membership Dues Form](#), [W3R-US Corporate Membership Dues Form](#).

To members who have renewed already, sending you a big THANK YOU! It's great to have such talented and terrific supporters amongst our growing membership ranks.

To our Lifetime members, your investment of the Lifetime dues you made continues to sustain the work of W3R. Thank you for your generosity and belief in W3R.

Happy Holidays!

– Julie Diddell, Membership Committee Chair



## **Book about historic trails wins top award**

*America's National Historic Trails* (Rizzoli International Publications Inc.) has won the National Outdoor Book Award, the highest award in the outdoor literary community.

Author Karen Berger handily describes the trails' history and what to expect when on your own exploring expedition. Adding to the book's appeal is the photographic artistry of Bart Smith and an abundance of his sumptuous images that capture the old byways and the surrounding scenery.

There are more than 37,000 miles of historic trails in the United States and, while this book can't guide you on all those miles, it will help you get started – and, yes, it includes 680-plus miles of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

Part of the proceeds from sales of the book supports the work of the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), of which W3R-US is an active member. PNTS, in turn, has provided matching funds for the W3R-US social media intern, and provides training, technical assistance and opportunities to engage with federal agency leaders and funding sources and to advocate for funding for the entire trail system, including the Washington-Rochambeau Trail.

This “coffee table”-style book would make an excellent gift for any trail enthusiast.

## **Round Table**

National Chair Larry Abell, National Corresponding Secretary Elaine Lawton and Executive Director Ellen von Karajan attended a recent American Revolution Round Table meeting, which Elaine described as a “good networking vehicle.” She reported that the Round Table members were quite interested in W3R-US. Ellen described the members as “scholars at the high end of the history spectrum” and, since outsiders had not been previously invited, the session was quite an honor for W3R-US. Janice Selinger of Crossroads of the American Revolution, also attended. Larry added that the “intellectual think tank” is focused primarily on history, not activity, and its range of interest extends far beyond the Trail boundaries into all areas of the American Revolution.

## **Tracking Volunteer Service**

Director Sam Meredith, who compiles the volunteer hours worked by W3R-US members, encourages state and committee chairs, as well as individuals, to report at least an estimate of their hours for 2021 as soon as possible, even if they have not been reporting regularly. Hours include meetings, phone calls, advocacy, research, planning, events, travel and the Bike and Kayak Tour, among other items, both national and state/local, and the totals affect efforts to obtain grants and other external support for W3R-US. Sam’s template includes space for donations in kind (office space and computer use, for example, even if not reported on your tax returns). A suggested new year’s resolution: Please email your monthly reports to Sam at [memogroup1127@gmail.com](mailto:memogroup1127@gmail.com) by the fifth of the following month.

## **From the Editor**

I hope you continue to enjoy *The Bulletin* as it completes its first year of publication and find it helpful in keeping abreast of the activities of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association on numerous fronts. Thank you for your suggestions, comments and other kind words. To keep up with all news of our Association, please check our Web site regularly: [www.w3r-us.org](http://www.w3r-us.org)

State leaders are invited to provide information (by the end of each month for the following month’s edition) about their activities, which will be presented in a separate section of *The Bulletin*. (Please see the reports beginning on Page 8.)

At this holiday-filled time of year, best wishes for whatever you are celebrating or observing in the religious and secular realms.

Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome. Please email me at [historicaljeff@aol.com](mailto:historicaljeff@aol.com)

– Jeff Canning, National Recording Secretary



# State Report



*Participants gather before the start of the ceremony in Wilmington. Photos by Judy Campbell*

## **Wreaths Across America in Delaware**

W3R-DE helped host the first Wreaths Across America ceremony in Wilmington on Dec. 18, joining more than 2,500 other participants across the country. The mission of National Wreaths

Across America Day, observed annually in December, is to remember fallen U.S. veterans, honor those who serve and teach children the value of freedom.

The very successful Wilmington ceremony, held along the Trail in the Senior Center in Colonial Brandywine Village, honored Delaware's heroes from the Revolutionary War to the present. A special tribute was offered to inner-city Wilmington veterans, many of whom attended. The Senior Center and Brandywine Village Partners co-sponsored the program along with W3R-DE.



*This wreath featured U.S. and POW-MIA flags.*





*The wreaths are lined up before the presentation ceremony.*

The nine wreaths presented during the ceremony came from Maine and later were placed on the graves of veterans.

Peg Tigue, vice chair of W3R-DE, president of Brandywine Village Partners and a member of the W3R-US Board, introduced the program. State Chair Bill Conley explained the history and symbolism of the ceremony. Father Michael Murray, of the Salesianum School in Wilmington and chaplain of the Wilmington Fire Department, offered opening and closing prayers. A choir from the Diocese of Wilmington performed musical selections.

U.S. Air Force veteran and former Wilmington Mayor James Baker shared stories of his service during the early 1960s. He also shared the history of the creation of the statue in Wilmington honoring African-American recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Wreath presenters included Mayor Baker; Colonel Edward Crispin and Lieutenant Colonel Joe Effinger, both of the U.S. Army; Thomas Welsh, a Delaware author; Leone Cahill of the Old Swedes Church; and Judy Campbell of Gold Star Families of Delaware.

Bill extended special thanks to Jeanie Hayes, co-chair of Wreaths Across America, and Kathleen Purcell of the Senior Center and her staff.

“We are sharing American history with the urban community along the Trail, deep in the inner city,” Bill said, noting that the setting included the flag of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment (composed of African Americans, Caucasian Americans and Native Americans) for city kids to see. “Our event successfully reached out and embraced the diverse community in the area.”

– Bill Conley, State Chair



*Flags and banners on display included the flag of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rhode Island Regiment (at left of Christmas tree).*

## **Also in Delaware**

W3R-DE is planning a May 11, 2022, ceremony honoring Lauzun's Legion, the French cavalry that quartered in Wilmington for four months in the final year of the Revolutionary War to protect Philadelphia. The event will be hosted by Brandywine Village Partners, W3R-DE and Howard High School, where the ceremony will be held. The date marks the anniversary of the French departure by ship from Wilmington for France in 1783.

Chair Bill Conley is compiling a list of French volunteer organizations in his state. Please forward contacts for any such groups to Bill at [firststateantiquearms@gmail.com](mailto:firststateantiquearms@gmail.com)

## **Maryland**

W3R-MD working with Trail Administrator Johnny Carawan and the Maryland Department of Transportation to replace Lake Shore cast aluminum historical markers at Bush Town Encampment sites on Bynum Run in Abingdon.

– *Robert E. Reyes, W3R-Maryland* ■