

The W3R in a Nutshell

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route traces the historic path that French troops, under the command of General Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau, took in 1781 from Newport, Rhode Island, to White Plains, New York -- where the French forces joined with those under General George Washington's command -- and then together marched to besiege and capture the British army at Yorktown, Virginia, thereby discouraging any further major military efforts by the British in the U.S. for the rest of the American Revolutionary War (the peace treaty was signed in 1783).

This National Historic Trail will celebrate the help received from our only ally during the American Revolution and the victory of liberty and independence over seemingly insurmountable odds. Nine states made a unique contribution to the historic march.

- **Massachusetts:** Provided hospitals for sick French soldiers and naval repair facilities for the French fleet that brought Rochambeau to Newport.
- **Rhode Island:** After waiting in encampments in Newport for eleven months the French army's long march began in June 1781.
- **Connecticut:** During the year before the march began the two generals met in Hartford and Wethersfield and jointly evaluated alternative strategies.
- **New York:** The French army joined the American army at the Continental camp near White Plains and tested British defenses around New York City. When French Admiral deGrasse's sent word that he would bring his fleet north as far as the Chesapeake Bay the generals made plans to surprise and trap a British army in Virginia -- four hundred miles to the south.
- **New Jersey:** In an effort to disguise their march and confuse the British, U.S. troops made a show of storing supplies and building ovens for French bread in Chatham while the French marched south by a back-woods route.
- **Pennsylvania:** In Philadelphia, the Continental Congress reviewed the allied troops, and the grandeur of the French army helped restore the spirit of America. The nearly-bankrupt Congress borrowed from the French army's treasury to pay American troops. In Chester, Washington literally danced on the dock when he learned that the French fleet had arrived in the Chesapeake Bay, where it could prevent reinforcements from reaching the British army at Yorktown.
- **Delaware:** In this state both allied armies marched down a single route.
- **Maryland:** The troops got into ships for transport to Virginia at Elkton, Baltimore, and Annapolis. The officers, cavalry, and baggage train took separate land routes.
- **Virginia:** All units gathered at Williamsburg and marched on Yorktown in late September to begin the siege, aided by bombardment from the French fleet. The British surrendered on October 19, 1781.