



What does the W3R[®] on that sign mean???

Curious fifth-graders from Rhode Island to Virginia are asking this question as they notice new route markers along their roads.

W3R[®] represents the letters **WRRR** -- the first letters in the phrase **Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.**

These signs mark a 680-mile historical trail (with many side-trails) that runs from **Newport RI** to **Yorktown VA**.

Who are Washington and Rochambeau, and why did they travel along this revolutionary route? Starting in 1776 the U.S. fought to gain independence from Great Britain. Soon France became an ally of the United States. General George Washington led the U.S. army. General Rochambeau (whose full name was Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau) led the French Expeditionary Force that came to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1780 to help the U.S. In the summer of 1781 the allied U.S.-French armies marched down the major highways of that day to get to Yorktown, Virginia. There they besieged and captured a British army led by General Charles Cornwallis.

Here are notes to help you understand the various acronyms associated with the trail.

- WRRR means the historic 680-mile route and the events and people involved in French aid provided during 1775-1783.
- W3R[®]-US means the present-day national volunteer organization (incorporated in 2004), which sponsors research, places signs, and organizes commemorative and educational activities along the trail. The full name of this non-profit organization is The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, Inc.
- W3R[®]-RI, W3R[®]-VA, etc., refer to the state chapters of the W3R[®]-US.
- WARO means the corridor of routes taken by the French Expeditionary Force in 1781 that the U.S. Congress designated as a National Historic Trail (in 2009) and the NPS unit assigned to develop and to manage it.

To find out more go the Website w3r-us.org. Click on "W3R-US", then "Archive" then "Past Events" to see photo-reports on commemorative events. Click on "Tours" for suggestions for auto tours along the WRRR. Click on "History" and answer: How many French soldiers came to the U.S.? How long did they stay? Where did they march? How many died here?

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