

What Does the W3R on that Sign Mean???



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

The short answer is that **W3R** represents the letters **WRRR** -- the first letters in the phrase **Washington-Rochambeau-Revolutionary Route**. Why are their names on route markers?

These signs mark a 650-mile historical trail (and some extensions) from Newport RI to Virginia VA. Starting in 1776 the U.S. fought to gain independence from Great Britain. France soon became an ally of the United States. General George **Washington** led the U.S. army, and 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, to help the U.S. In the summer of 1781 the allied U.S.-French armies marched to the last major military action of the **Revolutionary War**. They marched down the major highways of that day -- their **Route** to Yorktown, Virginia -- where they besieged and captured a British army led by General Charles Cornwallis.

- **W3R** alone means the *historic 650-mile route and allied aid during 1775-1783*.
- **W3R-US** or **W3R-USA** means the *present-day national organization*, which sponsors research, places signs, and organizes commemorative and educational activities along the trail. The full name of this non-profit corporation is **The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, Inc.**
- **W3R-RI**, **W3R-VA**, etc., refer to the *state organizations* which run local programs.
- **W3R-NHT** refers to the complex of trails and affiliated sites that comprise the *W3R National Historic Trail*, which is administered by the National Park Service.

What events have been and are being held to commemorate that great march and all the aid provided to the United States by its allies in 1775-1783? Go the Website **www.w3r-us.org**, and click on **Events**. How many French soldiers came to the U.S.? How long did they stay? Where did they march? How many died here? How did France help the U.S. during 1775-1783? To find out (and to see many fine illustrations of the W3R) click on **History**. To get suggestions for a modern day tour of the W3R click on **Tours**.