

What Does the W3R on that Sign Mean???



Curious fifth-graders from Rhode Island to Virginia are asking this question as they notice the new wayfinding signs that are popping up along roads from Rhode Island to Virginia in 2006.

The short answer is that **W3R** represents the letters **WRRR** -- the first letters in the phrase **Washington-Rochambeau-Revolutionary Route**. A longer answer is given below:

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 battle of the **Revolutionary** War following the major highways of that day as their **Route** to Yorktown, Virrginia. There they besieged and captured the British army led by General Cornwallis.

We are now placing "wayfinding" signs to help tourists follow an auto route that closely follows the original W3R. We are also placing "interpretive" signs at significant sites in each state to explain what happened there and how that was related to the struggle for liberty and independence.

What events will be held to celebrate the 225th anniversary of that great march? Go the Website **www.w3r-us.org**, and click on the **Schedule of Events** link (in the left column). 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 a number of very nice illustrations of the W3R) click on the **History of 1780-83** link.