

Discovering a Revolutionary War Trail

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route comprises a network of roads and waterways used by allied forces in the Yorktown campaign. Although population growth and urban development have erased almost all traces of the rural campsites and small taverns that once sheltered Revolutionary War soldiers, the public can still visit historic sites that tell the Washington-Rochambeau story. Strolling the green in Lebanon, Connecticut, taking a sail on the Chesapeake Bay, seeing a Revolutionary War reenactment at Colonial Williamsburg, or exploring the battlefield at Yorktown, are just a few of many opportunities to interact with history.

Travelers driving I-95 from Massachusetts to Virginia now make the trip in less than a day, and GPS systems guide them to lodging, fuel, and restaurants. It is worth remembering, however, that in colonial times, most of this land was wilderness. If not for the detailed surveys by engineers and cartographers during the allied campaign, French and American troops might not have reached Yorktown. That they did so, defeated the British, and returned north—the French to go home, the Americans to win the war—remains an impressive feat.



Time of day and geographic location were of basic concern to soldiers on the march. To determine both, they may have relied on an instrument like this pocket compass and sundial.

COURTESY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

This map of Connecticut from Rochambeau's personal collection is titled "Connecticut, from the best authorities." In 1780-81 his special cavalry—Lauzun's Legion—spent eight months camped just west of Lebanon Green.

ROCHAMBEAU MAP COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

PENNSYLVANIA



White Clay Creek near Hale-Byrnes House, Stanton, Delaware. LOWELL SEVERMAN



Independence Hall, Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. ©HORSEY / SHUTTERSTOCK

Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site

Schuylkill River Heritage Area

Valley Forge National Historical Park

Philadelphia Independence National Historical Park

Princeton Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area

New York Governors Island National Monument

New Jersey Morristown National Historical Park

Philadelphia Independence National Historical Park

New Jersey Trenton

New Jersey Princeton

New Jersey Morristown

New Jersey Morristown

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Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Virginia. ©CAROLYN M. CARPENTER / SHUTTERSTOCK

MARYLAND Baltimore

The Baltimore Heritage Area

Maryland Annapolis

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine

Maryland Washington, D.C.

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

Delaware Wilmington

Delaware Stanton

Delaware Elkton

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Washington, D.C. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

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This atlas page records a camp occupied by Rochambeau's troops in Philadelphia, 1782. ROCHAMBEAU MAP COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Having marched all the way from Williamsburg to Boston, Rochambeau's infantry sailed out of Boston Harbor for the Caribbean on Christmas Day 1782.

Minute Man National Historical Park
Longfellow National Historic Site
Boston National Historical Park
Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area

MASSACHUSETTS

French forces under the comte de Rochambeau quartered in Newport from their arrival on July 18, 1780, until their departure for New York on June 11, 1781.

Quinebaug & Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor
Roger Williams National Memorial

CONNECTICUT



Lebanon Green, Lebanon, Connecticut. PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUGHE



View of Hudson Highlands near Newburgh, New York. ©VESPASIAN / ALAMY



Soldiers' cabins, Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, New Jersey. ©BALEFIRE / SHUTTERSTOCK



Thomas Clark House Museum, Princeton Battlefield, Princeton, New Jersey. ROBERT ROSETTA, ABOUTNEWJERSEY.COM



Boats on the Chesapeake Bay. ©BRENDA REALS / SHUTTERSTOCK



Reenactment in historic Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia. ©MARVIN NEWMAN / STOCKPHOTO



Yorktown, Virginia. ©CURTIS KUTZER / SHUTTERSTOCK

Cape Charles
The Battle off the Capes occurred near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on September 5, 1781.

Cape Henry
After the siege of Yorktown, Rochambeau's forces wintered in Virginia. The troops headed north in summer 1782, continuing all the way to Boston, and departed the United States on Christmas Day 1782.



0 20 Kilometers
0 20 Miles

NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL ROUTE

- French Army
- - - - - French Army—water route
- Continental Army
- - - - - Continental Army—water route
- Related NPS units
- Interstate 95

More Information

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route
Visit other historic sites and scenic byways along the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route. The places designated on this map are all open to the public. For locations, hours, directions, and other places of interest, visit <http://www.nps.gov>.

The National Park Service maintains a partnership with the National W3R Association (www.w3r-us.org). W3R is a nine-state partnership that supports the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route as a National Historic Trail and educates the public about the three-year presence of the French Expeditionary Force in the United States.

The National Park Service works with federal, state, and local agencies and private organizations along the nine-state corridor that constitutes the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

