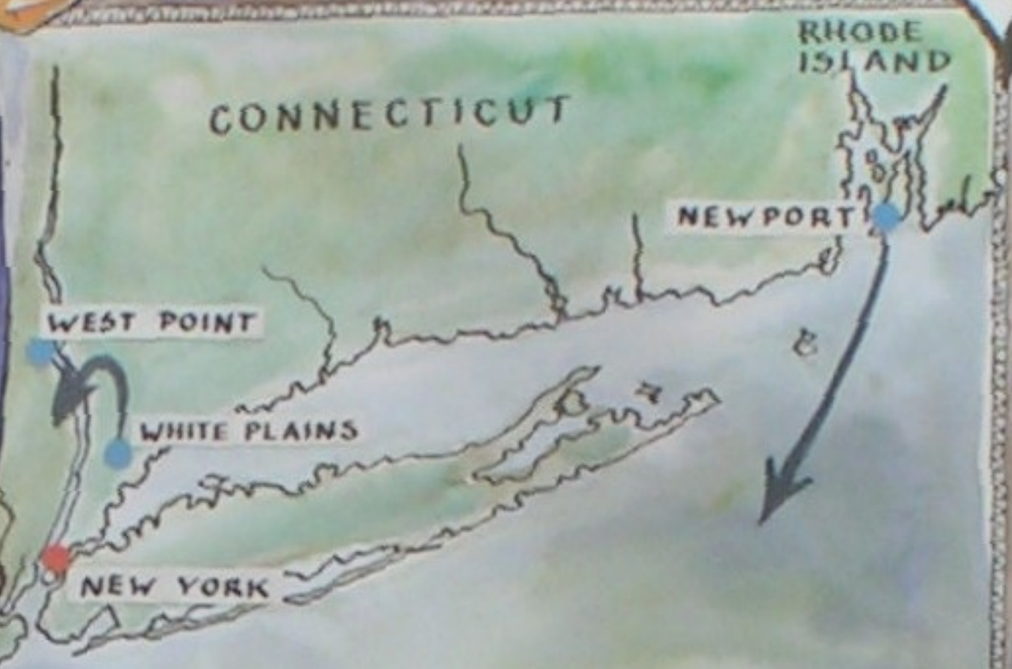
FRENCH EXPEDITION IN THE AMERICAN WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE









JULY 11, 1780, COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU ARRIVED AT NEWPORT AND PLACED HIS FRENCH FORCES UNDER THE ALLIED COMMAND OF THE AMERICAN GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON.

ALTHOUGH WASHINGTON WANTED TO CAPTURE NEW YORK, INADEQUATE ALLIED NAVAL SUPPORT AND STRONG BRITISH DEFENSIVE POSITIONS PREVENTED ANY SERIOUS CAMPAIGN DURING THE WINTER OF 1780-81 AND EARLY SUMMER OF 1781.

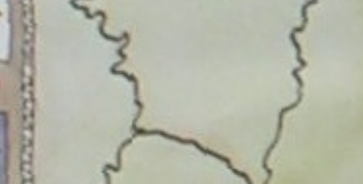
IN AUGUST 1781, WASHINGTON AND ROCHAMBEAU LEARNED THAT CONTE DE GRASSE WOULD BRING A FRENCH NAVAL SQUADRON TO THE CHESAPEAKE BAY. THIS PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ALLIES TO CONCENTRATE FORCES AGAINST THE BRITISH IN VIRGINIA UNDER LORD CORNWALLIS.

THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, IN COMMAND OF AMERICAN FORCES IN VIRGINIA, SKILLFULLY HARASSED THE LARGER BRITISH FORCES UNTIL CORNWALLIS RETIRED HIS ARMY TO YORKTOWN.

FRENCH AND AMERICAN FORCES DEPARTED POSITIONS NEAR NEW YORK AND NEWPORT IN MID AUGUST. DE GRASSE ARRIVED IN THE CHESAPEAKE ON AUG 28 AND ENGAGED A BRITISH NAVAL FORCE ON SEPT 5 IN THE "BATTLE OF THE CAPES". THE BRITISH NAVAL FORCE RETREATED LEAVING CORNWALLIS' ARMY ISOLATED.

ENROUTE TO VIRGINIA, AMERICAN AND FRENCH ARMIES PARADED THROUGH PHILADELPHIA. SOME UNITS EMBARKED ON BOATS AT ELKTON AND ANNAPOLIS.

WASHINGTON HOSTED ROCHAMBEAU AT MOUNT VERNON ON SEPT 10 AND 11 BEFORE BOTH WENT ON TO JOIN FORCES WITH LAFAYETTE AT WILLIAMSBURG ON SEPT 14.









THE ALLIES INVESTED YORKTOWN ON SEPT 28. DIGGING OF SEIGE TRENCHES BEGAN OCT 7 AND CANNON BOMBARDMENT ON THE 9TH. AMERICAN AND FRENCH FORCES SEIZED KEY BRITISH REDOUBTS EAST OF YORKTOWN ON THE NIGHT OF OCT 14. CORNWALLIS SURRENDERED OCT 19, 1781.



PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
ELKTON
BALTIMORE
ANNAPOLIS
MARYLAND
MOUNT VERNON
FREDERICKSBURG
POTOMAC RIVER
VIRGINIA
CHESAPEAKE BAY
WILLIAMSBURG
YORKTOWN
Atlantic Ocean

© Dorsey 1980