

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

312

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number Plainfield Pike (Route 14A), from intersection with Industrial Drive, Plainfield, east to intersection with Ledge Hill Road, Sterling  not for publication

city or town Plainfield, Sterling  vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Windham code 015 zip code 06374, 06377

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John W. Shanahan March 17, 2003

Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
John W. Shanahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper John W. Shanahan Date of Action 6-6-03

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**foundation** N/A  
**walls** N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**roof** N/A  
**other** N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark an "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, structure
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

Period of Significance

1781 - 1782

Significant Dates

1781, 1782

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Building Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT 06106

March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Name of Property

Windham County, CT  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approx. 22 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 737 010 4620 200  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

2 18 737 540 4620 280

4  
■ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Harper, Archaeologist, and Bruce Clouette, Historian

organization Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc.

date December 5, 2002

street & number P.O. Box 209

telephone 860-429-1723

city or town Storrs

state CT zip code 06268

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Connecticut Department of Transportation

street & number 2800 Berlin Turnpike

telephone 860-594-3000

city or town Newington

state CT zip code 06141-7546

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number   7   Page   1  

**Description:**

The nominated portion of Route 14A, known locally as Plainfield Pike, runs in an east-west direction between Ledge Hill Road in Sterling to Industrial Drive in Plainfield (a private road), a distance of 3.6 miles. The eastern part of the nominated portion, just east of the village of Sterling Hill, is fairly level, but for most of its course the road is characterized by long, steep hills with frequent curves (Photographs 1 and 2). Most of the hills have short sections where they level out briefly before continuing their ascent. The paved surface consists of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes with only narrow, intermittent shoulders. A line of utility poles parallels the road.

Because of the topography and the large amount of open land along the road, there are several places where the traveler going west can see all the way to the distant ridges on the west side of the Quinebaug River valley (Photographs 3 and 4). Closer by, a number of different environments are found immediately to the north and south of the road. These include wooded areas of deciduous trees (Photographs 1 and 2); several small streams and marshy areas, the largest of which is Ekonk Brook (Photograph 5); lightly wooded areas, formerly in agricultural use but now becoming overgrown, some of which have stone-wall field lines (Photograph 6); and open fields, the majority of which are planted in corn (Photographs 3 and 7), with others serving as pasture (Photograph 8) or hayfields (Photographs 9 and 10). For most of its length, the nominated portion is bordered by stone walls on both sides, approximately 50 feet apart (Photographs 2, 6, 8, and 9). In some places, the walls have become overgrown with ferns and ivies and are difficult to see in the summer months, though clearly visible at other times of the year. In the village of Sterling Hill, there is one place where an outcropping of ledge has been cut away to accommodate the roadway (Photograph 11); it is not clear when this was done, but other examples in Connecticut appear to be from both the 18th century and the era of turnpike improvements in the early 19th century.

Houses along the nominated portion are generally spaced far apart, with the only concentration being the 18th and early 19th-century houses that make up the historic district at Sterling Hill (Photograph 12). The older houses (Photographs 12 and 13) are generally situated close to the road, while houses of more modern construction (Photograph 14) are set well back.

Part of the nominated portion, between Route 49 and Portertown Road in Sterling, is a State Scenic Road.

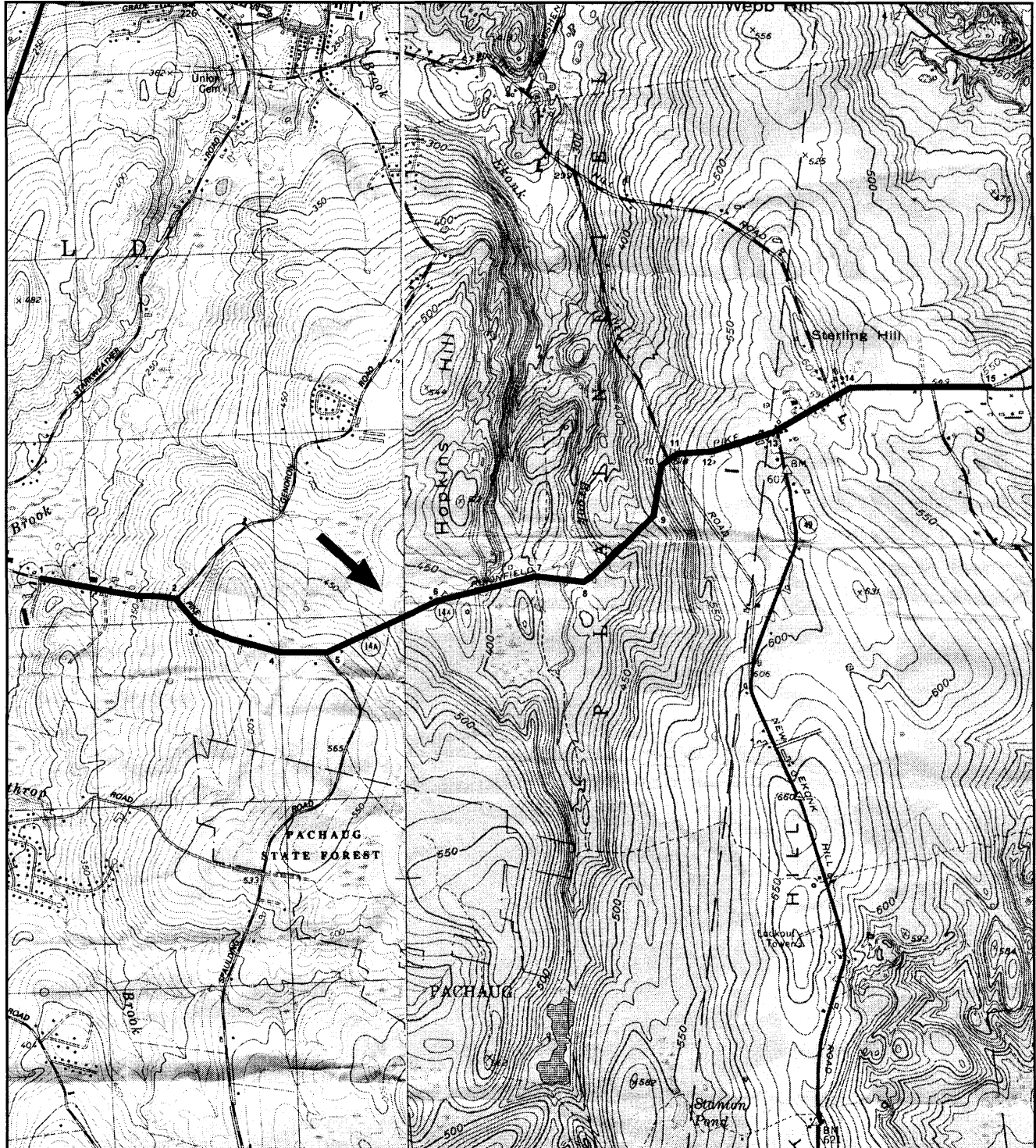
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Figure 1: March route along Plainfield Pike, as shown on U.S.G.S. Oneco and Plainfield  
Quadrangles, 1:24000 (reduced to 75% of original)**



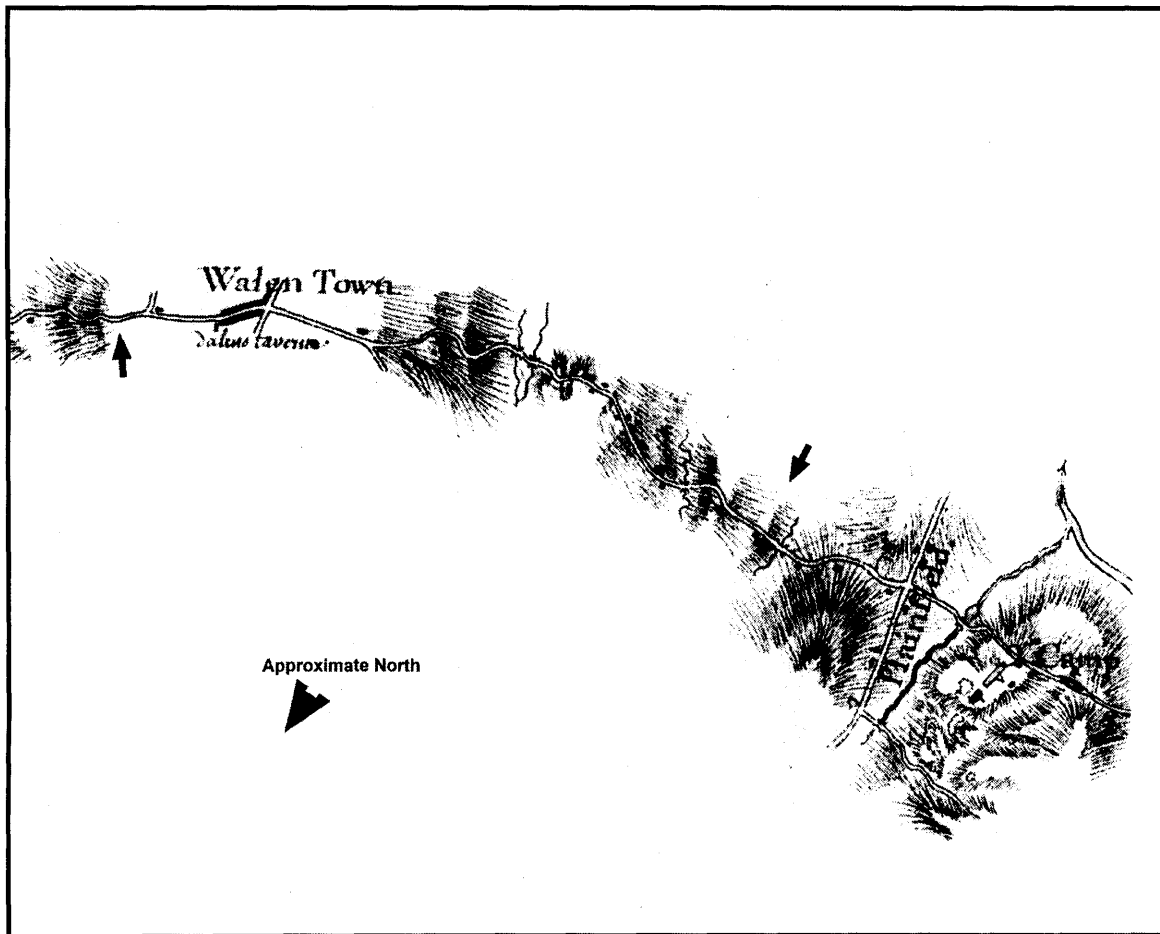
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Figure 2:** Excerpt from the French march route map, as drawn by Louis-Alexandre Berthier, military engineer for the French army, with the nominated portion indicated by arrows (*from Rice and Brown 1972*). The village of Sterling Hill was then part of the town of Voluntown and therefore is indicated as "Walen Town." The Dorrance Tavern is phoneticized as "Dalens taverne."



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number   8   Page   1  

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**Significance:**

The 3.6- mile nominated portion of Plainfield Pike (Route 14A) in Plainfield and Sterling, Connecticut, is significant because its physical and visual characteristics recall the Connecticut roads and countryside as experienced by the French Army as it made its way across the state to join the Continental forces along the Hudson River in New York, an important event in the state's Revolutionary War-period history (Criterion A). Marching in divisions from their second camp near Waterman's Tavern in Rhode Island to the third camp in Plainfield, the troops under Count Rochambeau's command passed over this segment in the middle of June 1781 and again in November 1782, on the return march from Yorktown, when the army camped on Sterling Hill (Photograph 10). The route had also been travelled by Chastellux during his preparatory visit in 1780 and by George Washington, who rode this way with a small contingent of soldiers to confer with the French in Newport, Rhode Island, prior to their march.

Although it is now a paved state highway, the road retains its narrow, hilly, winding character, and for most of its length, the characteristic borders of stone walls remain in place. This is the longest continuous portion of the route to survive with these physical attributes intact. This is also the only portion of the route that still offers repeated vistas of distant ridges (Photographs 3 and 4). Elsewhere, the route has been too affected by re-forestation to allow such views.

The Connecticut landscape experienced by the French consisted of both open fields and stretches of woods, since the full extent of land-clearing for agriculture had not yet been reached. In the words of Claude Blanchard, Rochambeau's chief commissary:

*The country is a little more cleared, especially in the environs of Plainfield, where, nevertheless, there are only five or six houses. I saw some farms sown with rye and wheat, but especially with maize . . . and with potatoes. I also passed through many woods, mostly of oaks and chestnut trees. . . . So we ascend and descend continually on these roads* (Blanchard 1969: 108-109).

A mix of woods and cultivated fields is still the predominant environment through which Plainfield Pike passes. Other aspects noted by the French itinerary that are still evident are the "small group of houses, two of which are taverns" at Sterling Hill and the "deep wooded hollow through which flows a small brook [Ekonk Brook]" (Rice and Brown, 1972 (II): 21-22).

The French found this particular segment of the march extremely arduous because of the poor condition of the road. Crèvecoeur noted in his journal "very bad roads. The artillery and the supply wagons arrived [at the Plainfield camp] very late" (Rice and Brown 1972 (I): 28). Von Closen agreed: "The roads were still very bad" (von Closen 1958: 85), as did du Bourg: "The roads still quite bad, many stragglers" (du Bourg, Vol. 4 (April 1880): 293).



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number   8   Page   2  

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The authenticity of the nominated section of road is substantiated by the general topography as shown on the French route map (Figure 2) and by the presence of numerous old houses along the route, which confirm the antiquity of the general alignment.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number 9 Page 1

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**Bibliography:**

Blanchard, Claude

1969 *The Journal of Claude Blanchard . . . 1780-1783*. William Duane, translator. Thomas Balch, editor. New York: Arno Press. Reprint of 1876 edition.

du Bourg, Baron Cromot

1880-1881 "Journal From My Departure From France 26 March 1781, Until the 18 November of the Same Year When the Army Under the Orders of M. le Comte de Rochambeau Went Into Winter Quarters." Translated and published in five installments as the "Diary of a French Officer," *Magazine of American History*, vol. 4 (March 1880): 205-214; April 1880: 293-308; May 1880: 376-385; June 1880: 441-449; vol. 7 (October 1881): 283-295.

Chastellux, François Jean, Marquis de

1968 *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*. Two volumes. New York: Arno Press. Reprint of 1787 edition.

von Closen, Baron Ludwig

1958 *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen 1780-1783*. Evelyn A. Acomb, editor and translator. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Harper, M., B. Clouette, and R. Harper

1999 *The Rochambeau Project: Historical and Archaeological Documentation of the French Army's Marches through Connecticut in 1781 and 1782*. Storrs, CT: PAST, Inc. and Keegans Associates. Prepared for the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Historic Resource Consultants, Inc.

1987 Comprehensive Townwide Completion Survey of Plainfield. Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission.

Rice, Howard C., Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds.

1972 *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*. Princeton, N.J. and Providence, R.I.: Jointly published by Princeton University Press and Brown University Press. Two volumes. Includes the maps prepared by the French army and the journals of Berthier, Bévillie, Clermont-Crèvecoeur, and Verger.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield  
Pike

Continuation Sheet

Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)

Section number 10 Page 1

UTM References:

1. ~~19.258740.4618280~~ 258795.4618475
2. ~~19.259460.4618130~~ 259495.4618340
3. ~~19.259620.4617990~~ 259660.4618185
4. ~~19.260000.4617820~~ 260025.4618055
5. ~~19.260260.4617800~~ 260270.4618015
6. ~~19.260860.4618060~~ 260915.4618275
7. ~~19.261380.4618180~~ 261460.4618405
8. ~~19.261650.4618160~~ 261725.4618355
9. ~~19.262020.4618500~~ 262110.4618710
10. ~~19.262080.4618750~~ 262160.4618985
11. ~~19.262180.4618800~~ 262265.4619050
12. ~~19.262360.4618800~~ 262455.4619050
13. ~~19.262720.4618950~~ 262840.4619180
14. ~~19.263140.4619170~~ 263235.4619385
15. ~~19.263880.4619160~~ 263935.4619350

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of Plainfield Pike (Route 14A) between the intersection with Ledge Hill Road in Sterling westward approximately 3.6 miles to the intersection with Industrial Drive in Plainfield. The nominated property consists of the full width of the public right-of-way.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the portion of Plainfield Pike (Route 14A) that retains the physical and visual qualities that convey the segment's historical significance as a portion of the route traversed by the French Army in 1781-1782. Farther west on Route 14A, the stone walls are no longer in place and surrounding residential and industrial uses give it a different character. Farther to the east, beyond Ledge Hill Road in Sterling, the number of open fields diminishes and billboard advertising forms a distinct visual break.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike**  
**Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT**  
**(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782**  
**Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number Photographs Page 1

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**All Photographs:**

1. March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Old Canterbury Road
2. Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT
3. PAST, Inc. Photo
4. June, 2001
5. Negative filed with PAST, Inc., Storrs, CT

**Captions:**

Typical portion of road; west end, camera facing east  
Photograph 1 of 14

Typical portion of road; near midpoint, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 2 of 14

View from road, hill at west end, looking over overgrown fields to ridges in distance, camera facing southwest  
Photograph 3 of 14

View from road, hill at west end, looking over cornfield to ridges in distance, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 4 of 14

Ekonk Brook north of road, camera facing north  
Photograph 5 of 14

Stone wall along south side of road, near midpoint, showing field wall running off at right angles through recent-growth trees, camera facing southwest  
Photograph 6 of 14

Typical cornfield visible from road, north side, east end, camera facing north  
Photograph 7 of 14

Typical pasture, south side, midpoint, visible from road beyond stone wall (in shadow), camera facing south  
Photograph 8 of 14

Typical hayfield, near Plainfield town line in Sterling, north side, camera facing north  
Photograph 9 of 14

Hayfield now growing over, where French troops camped in November, 1782, Sterling, camera facing northeast  
Photograph 10 of 14

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike  
Plainfield and Sterling, Windham County, CT  
(Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782  
Multiple Property Listing)**

Section number Photographs Page 2

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Ledge cut away to accommodate roadway, Sterling Hill, south side, camera facing southwest  
Photograph 11 of 14

Houses in Sterling Hill Historic District, north side of road, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 12 of 14

House near west end of nominated portion, 396 Plainfield Pike, camera facing northeast  
Photograph 13 of 14

Typical house of modern construction, 773 Plainfield Pike, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 14 of 14

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: March Route of Rochambeau's Army: Plainfield Pike

MULTIPLE NAME: Rochambeau's Army in Connecticut, 1780-1782 MPS

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Windham

DATE RECEIVED: 3/18/03      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/02/03  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/18/03      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/02/03  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03000312

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: Y    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: Y    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Please resubmit w/ B+W photos  
processed w/ B+W processing and  
printed on B+W paper to meet  
documentation standards.*

RECOM./CRITERIA ~~Accept~~ Return

REVIEWER Savage      DISCIPLINE Arch. History

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 5/2/03

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N