The realities of slavery were during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, led to the creation of the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation legalized the service of Black men in the U.S. armed forces. The proclamation led to the creation of the U.S. armed forces. Legalized the service of Black men in the U.S. armed forces.
In the spring of 1862, the Union was desperate to capture the Confederate capital in Richmond. Maj. Gen. George McClellan developed a plan to utilize a vast armada to bring 120,000 men to Fort Monroe and Newport News Point, and then move west up the peninsula, formed by the York and James Rivers, to Richmond. The campaign began with amphibious landings in large scale that it would not be outmatched until the 1944 Allied landings during World War II. The Union troops then advanced to Yorktown and encountered a stiff Confederate defensive line constructed under the direction of Maj. Gen. John Magruder. Many of these earthworks can still be explored at foot throughout Newport News. The Yorktown siege lasted for almost one month, and several sharp battles took place from April to May. The Confederates eventually abandoned Yorktown, the Union troops pursued, and the First Battle of Williamsburg was launched on May 2, 1862. Two days later portions of both armies fought again at Eltham’s Landing near West Point. By the end of May, McClellan’s army was at Richmond’s doorstep, and Confederate Gen. Joseph Johnston counterattacked at the Battle of Seven Pines. Johnston was wounded there and replaced by his fellow Virginian, Maj. Gen. Robert E. Lee.

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In the spring of 1862, the Virginia Peninsula campaign was among the first widely published battlefield images in the world. Photos taken at Coastal Virginia locations brought the reality of war into the homes of American families, in both the North and the South. Imagine standing on the beach at Yorktown, listening to shotted rounds and the sounds of ocean life, or the photographer taking this image would have done. These adventurous photographers often followed the armies in regions equipped as studios. In their mobile darkrooms, they poured a light-sensitive liquid called collodion over a glass or tin plate that was then carefully rushed to the camera. The cap on the camera lens was removed, exposing the sensitized plate to light and creating an image. Exposure times lasted just a few seconds. The plate was then foraged into the darkroom to be developed. It is hard to imagine, but these early pioneers of photography helped advance this art as we know it today that you can effortlessly snap photos and post them in seconds! Can you stand in the footsteps of this famous photo? Give it a try! Share your photo and use Pictorialtrails.

**A HISTORIC HIKE**

The Civil War left its mark on the landscape of Coastal Virginia. From Redoubt Buck to Fort Monroe, Fort Piegue to Yorktown, and seemingly every spot between, many of the earthworks built during the war still stand. Earthworks are exactly as the term magnifies: fortifications built of earth that were often reinforced or supported with woven baskets, branches, or earthen walls. As you explore the region, you will see that these earthworks come in all shapes and sizes. Square redoubts, triangular redoubts, and trenches were constructed to guard roads or prevent enemy ships from sailing by. They are also reminders of the incredible sciences, technology, engineering skills, and labor that helped create them. Today, you can walk alongside these fortifications that have survived the test of time—Miles of hiking trails await, so be sure to plan your extra time during your trip to explore one foot.