Wars & Yorktown

This lower Chesapeake Bay location has been strategic since early colonial days when a fort was built to protect the colony from warring European powers. In the 17th and 18th centuries, ships loaded with tobacco would form convoys at Yorktown to await royal gunships to guard them against privateers and pirates on Atlantic crossings. Most famously, it was the site of the Siege of Yorktown, the last significant battle of the American Revolution. The battle is remembered at Yorktown museums operated by the National Park Service and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

York County's Monument on Main Street honors citizens who sacrificed their lives in military service dating back to Bacon's Rebellion. Photo courtesy of York County.

In the American Civil War, Confederate troops encamped behind the reinforced Revolutionary War era earthworks. In 1862, the Union army began the Peninsula Campaign to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital. Union troops seized Yorktown after the Confederates abandoned it and prevented the Confederacy from using the York River for the rest of the war.

Yorktown also supported military efforts during World Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam, and more recent and ongoing conflicts. Active Navy, Coast Guard and Armed Forces training bases are located in York County along the York River.