Military History has had a significant impact on art.

As a storytelling and therapeutic medium, art has the ability to allow the viewer to share in the feelings of those who have served.
1. History and Art

I'm about to show you a famous painting inspired by a moment in American military history.

➔ Who does it depict?
What famous American General is shown in the painting?

➔ How does this painting make you feel?
Are you feeling worried, scared, or inspired? No wrong answers here.

➔ Do you know what war it depicts?
“Washington Crossing the Delaware”  
(1851) Artist Emanuel Leutze  
This painting shows General George Washington crossing the Delaware River during the famous sneak attack on December 26th at the Battle of Trenton in 1776.

Though it shows a battle from the American Revolution it was painted by a German-American artist who was born 40 years after the Battle of Trenton happened.

The artist used a story from military history in hopes to inspire Europeans to do as the American Colonies had done and abolish European monarchies.

**Fun Fact**
There were two copies of this painting made. The one that hung in Germany was destroyed by British allied bombs during WWII. The other you can visit today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.
2. Seeing a Memory

Sights, sounds, and smells can trigger a deeply buried memory to surface. Try using your senses to explore this next painting.

➔ What does this painting sound/smell/feel like?
Which of your senses does this painting invoke?

➔ What do you see?
Would you want to step into this painting?

➔ Do you know what war it depicts?
"Flower of Death—The Bursting of a Heavy Shell—Not as It Looks, but as It Feels and Sounds and Smells"

(1919) by Claggett Wilson

This watercolor by Claggett Wilson was inspired by his experiences fighting in World War I. During his service, Wilson was wounded twice and endured chemical attacks from mustard gas and was stranded with shell shock for three days on the battlefield.

Veteran artist Claggett Wilson used his service to inspire many of his future watercolors. Wilson allows viewers to share in the often painful memories of combat that service members carry with them.
3. Sharing a Story

Memorials are a different way art is used to remember moments in military history.

➔ Have you ever visited a memorial to a specific war? Which memorial and why did you visit?

➔ Say their name. An important part of the memorial we will see are the names carved into it. Say the names of those on the wall - they each represent a life lost. Does it change the way you feel about the memorial?

➔ Do you know what war it depicts?
Concept Art

Final Memorial
"Vietnam Veterans Memorial"
(1982) by Maya Lin

Today, “the wall” is one of the most visited memorials in the United States. However, when it was first built it was very unpopular. Carved into the wall are over 50,000 names of service members who are missing in action or killed in Vietnam. Many felt that the memorial should inspire feelings of patriotism and glory rather than inspire sadness.

Maya Lin’s goal was to separate grief from glory. The memorial provides a location for veterans to heal from war. It shows the power held in sharing someone’s name. Taking a rubbing of a name on the wall is a way guests can interact, through art, with someone who served in the past.

Fun Fact
Artist Maya Lin was only 21 years old when she designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
Get Creative.

Art with military themes can come in many mediums. Paint, clay, watercolors, or even yarn!

Consider which will best share the story and feeling you want to convey.