



Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

Our Cultural Moment for October recognizes “The Howitzer”

In the late morning shadows of mature oak and maple trees, in front of the cenotaph in Mount Forest's Veterans' Memorial Park, sits the turret of an M109 Medium Self-Propelled 155 mm Howitzer. It's aimed at the sky to the south and provides an unusual greeting for visitors travelling north into town.

On the attached plaque we learn that this impressive piece of military equipment was manufactured in 1968 by Bowen McLaughlin-York in the United States. The armament is a 155 mm Howitzer and 50 calibre machine-gun. In its day, fully loaded for combat, it would have weighed 25 tonnes and held a crew of seven personnel. In terms of operations, it could travel up to 220 km on roads at a maximum speed of 53 kilometres per hour. The weapon could have fired a projectile weighing 44 kg onto a target 18,000 metres (18 km) away.

Presented to Mount Forest's Royal Canadian Legion Branch 134 from the soldiers and technicians of base maintenance of Canadian Forces Base Borden in 2008, this historical display has been identified as part of the Military Ground Equipment Displays on Wayward.com geocaching and has attracted several visitors to date. In 2013, the Township of Wellington North completed a Municipal Cultural Plan. One of the guiding assumptions of the process was the belief that *our history and culture are sources of identity for individual communities and the Township of Wellington North as a whole.*

At the time, the installation of this Howitzer at the town's entrance sparked conversation and controversy. Both menacing and magnificent, it has been a part of our cultural identity for over a decade and is only one of several impressive symbols of the proud military history worthy of exploration throughout the township.

Submitted By Linda Hruska Wellington North Cultural Roundtable

