

ARTS

4th book in mystery series out on shelves

By **Stephanie Thiessen**
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

David Wickes spends quite a bit of time with his buddy Jack Petersen.

The friends are together upward of eight hours a day, and Wickes speaks highly of Jack. "He's a good family man," the Moffat resident said. "He's a moral, honest guy."

As a former jet fighter pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force — flying one of the top fighter planes in the world — Wickes said he can relate to Petersen's fast-paced, all-encompassing career as a homicide detective.

But sometimes the friendship can get a little one sided, and it has nothing to do with Jack's busy career catching cold-blooded killers.

Rather, it's the simple fact Jack isn't real, but a character Wickes has created. The bond that exists between an author and his characters is a unique one, Wickes said.

"You become the character," he explained, adding, "Jack's a friend of mine now... he's a real person to me."

In 2001, Wickes released *Killing Time*, the first novel in the Jack Petersen mystery series. Much to his readers' delight, Wickes recently

released a fourth book in the series, *Killing Mind*.

In *Killing Mind*, Petersen's hunt is a personal one, as he races to free his kidnapped baby nephew.

Strange and unpredictable events continually baffle the police, and a series of brutal murders complicates the investigation. Twists and turns take the reader along a suspenseful ride to the stunning, surprise ending.

It's a chilling novel fans say can be devoured in one delightful sitting.

Wickes is currently keeping busy with an ambitious bookstore touring schedule. He'll appear tomorrow at the Coles in Milton Mall from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday at Coles in Georgetown Mall from noon to 3 p.m.

In-store appearances and signings are a way for Wickes to promote his books — a part of the business he enjoys, having a background in sales — and also meet readers who are already fans. "I enjoy the public — they're a hoot," he said.

From his observations, it seems most of his readers are over 40 and female. "Eighty per cent of people who buy my books at signings are women," he said.

Does he know why?

"It's a mystery," he said.

Wickes said he knew for a while he'd like to write a book, a desire that grew when he retired and found himself with some extra time on his hands.

"I knew I couldn't retire and do nothing," he said. "That wouldn't fly with me."

With the help of a writing course and lots of research, his first book was completed. After that, Wickes said he was anxious to write another. And another. "Now I'm on number five," he said, adding the constant pressure to make each book better than the last can be daunting. But as soon as he starts writing, it disappears.

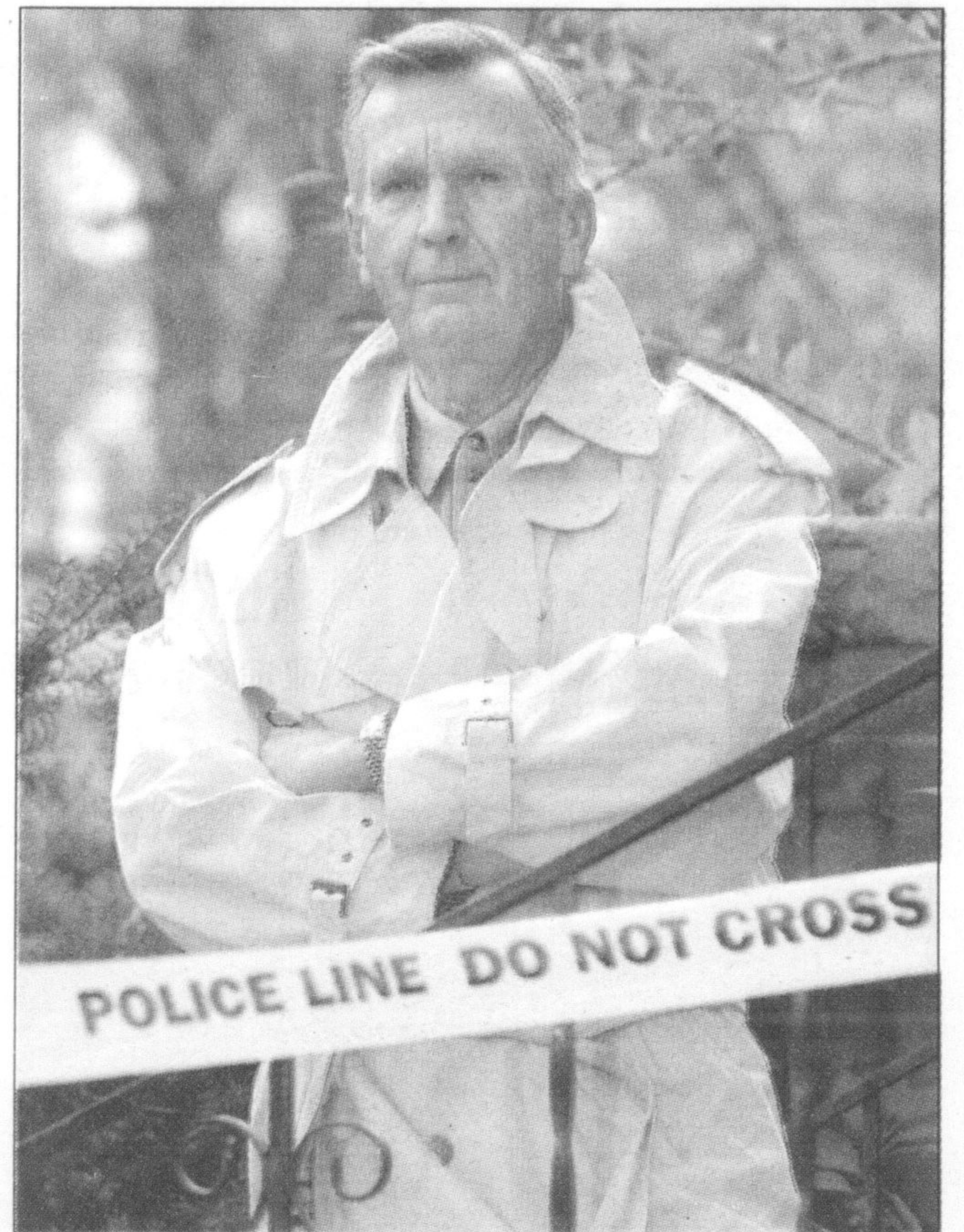
He writes much like he reads, Wickes said; once he gets into it, he can't stop and just wants to get to the end. Of course, some days it comes easier than others.

"Some days I can't type fast enough, while other days it's a struggle," he said.

Wickes has built up a network of sources who help with his research, many of them in Minneapolis, which is where his novels take place. They include an ex FBI agent and a handful of homicide detectives.

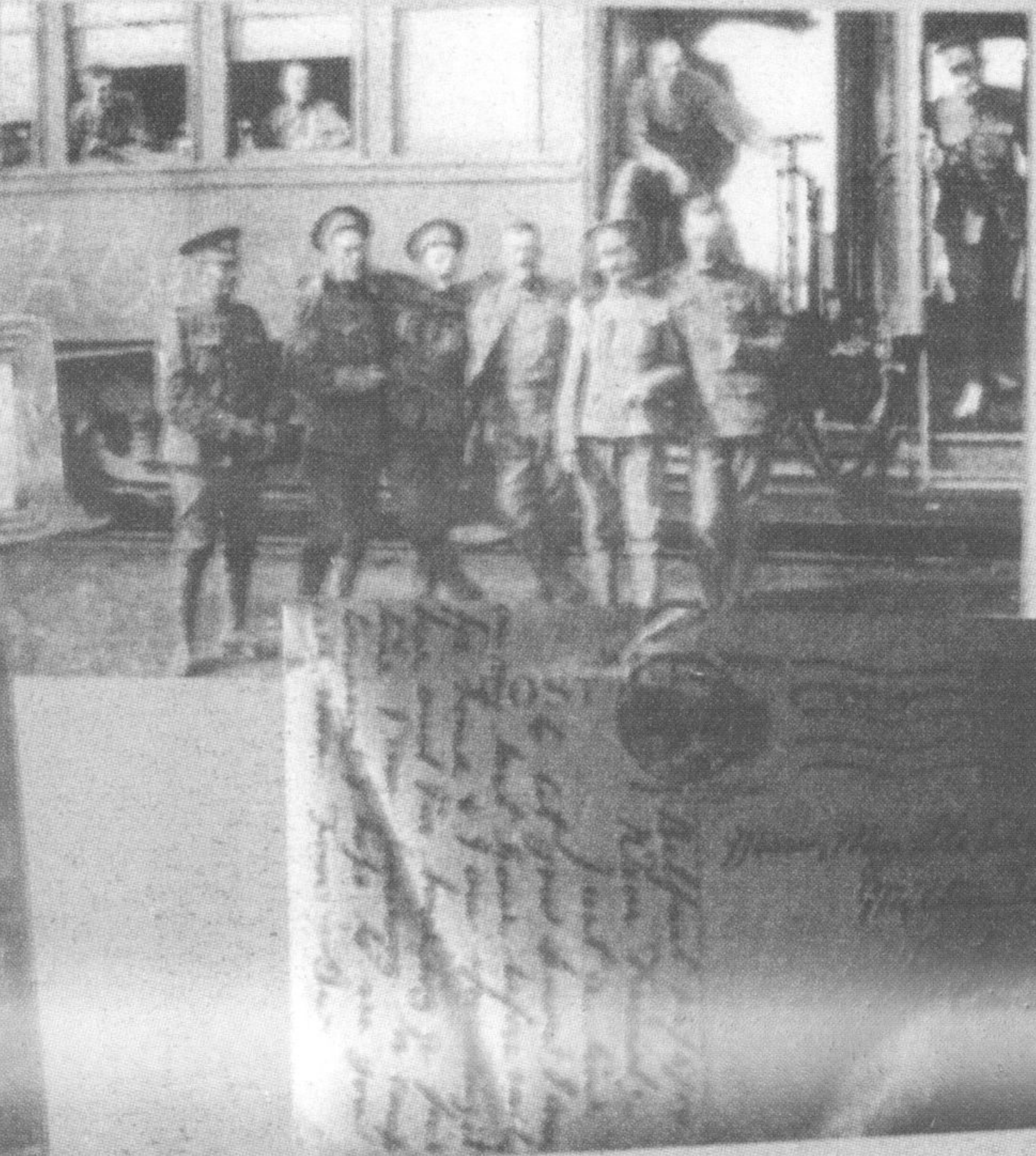
"Anyone likes to talk about what they do," he said.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

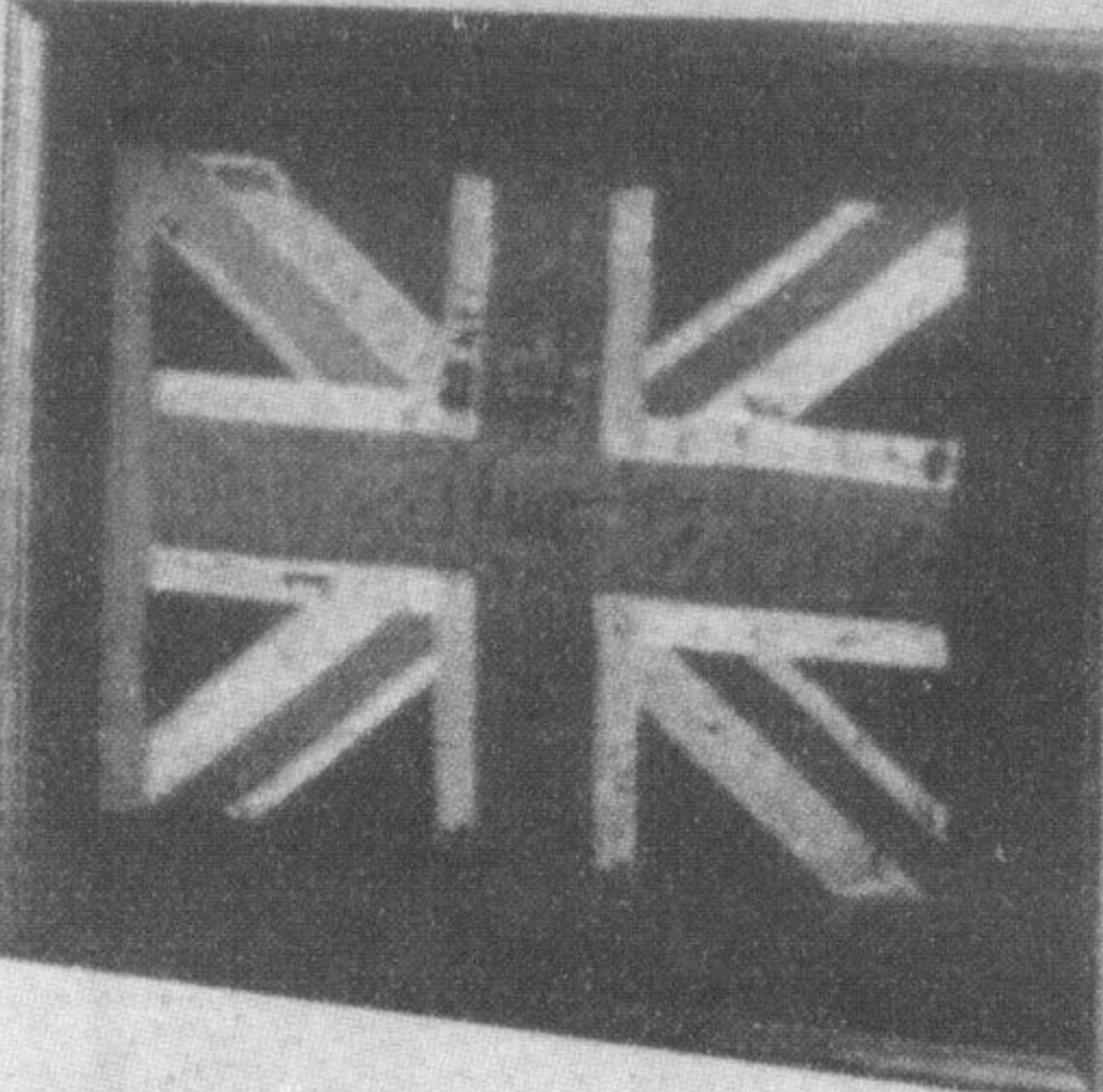


GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

GETTING INTO CHARACTER: Crime novelist David Wickes sports the look of his detective character, Jack Petersen. Wickes will sign copies of his new book *Killing Mind* tomorrow at Milton Mall.



The Colours of the 164th Battalion as they are preserved at St. Jude's Church, Oakville



Good news on a postcard: "I am on my last leave before sailing for home..."

Reunions of 164th members continued long after the war. A badge worn by T. L. Hilson in 1936 is at left.

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