

Pomp marks opening

By ANGELA BLACKBURN
The Champion

Amid pomp and ceremony, Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn presented Halton Regional Police with a new badge Monday, but there's no indication when it will be worn by force members.

No funding has been allocated for Halton's version of the new national municipal police badge, said Sergeant Carey Smith, the force public relations officer.

Mr. Hnatyshyn presented the newly designed badge during a ceremony marking the official opening of the \$10 million police headquarters building, part of the \$30 million enlargement of Halton Region's administration centre on Bronte Road in north Oakville.

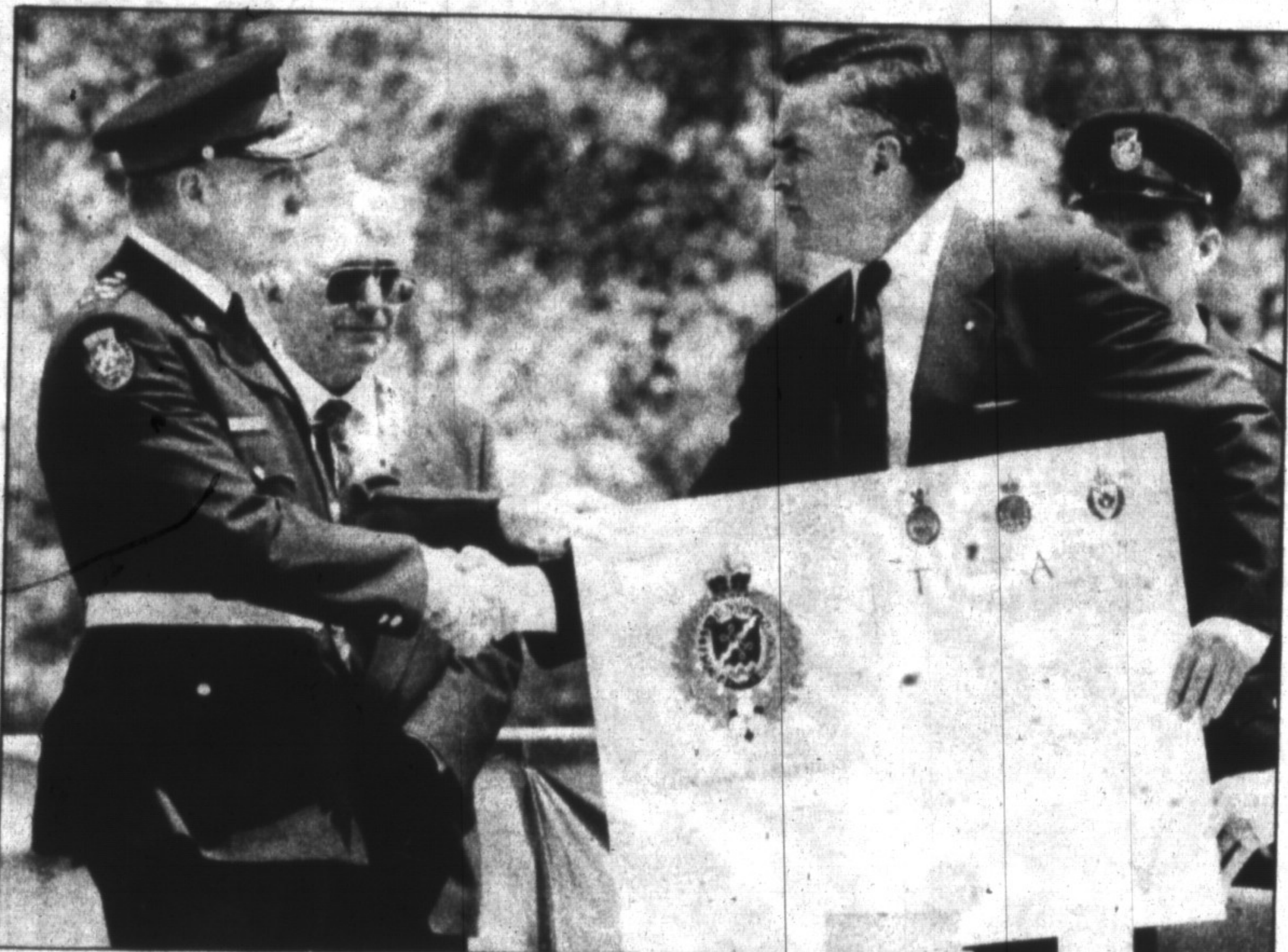
The Governor General also handed out the first pair of new Halton police epaulettes, which bear the Canadian flag. All officers will wear them, and Milton constable Brian Kempster got the first ones. Constable Kempster, 22, is the youngest and most junior member of the force, with six months service.

While there doesn't appear to be any money for new badges, "the epaulettes will be worn right away," Sgt. Smith said, thanks to private-sector financing. The Burlington Chamber of Commerce raised \$3,500 to pay for 350 pairs.

The epaulettes drew words of praise from Halton regional chairman Peter Pomeroy. "What better timing than during this (Canada's) 125th anniversary. This is one way the police service is raising the flag, the Canadian flag."

"This is a memorable day in the history of the Halton Regional Police Service," said chief James Harding, who said that when the new badge is eventually worn it will be "with pride" due a symbol of respect for the Queen — the badge features a crown prominently. "The crown is symbolic of our allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen. We feel this deeply." Chief Harding was instrumental in obtaining the new badge.

The Governor General also took time to speak with some Grade 3 and 4 students from across Halton, on hand with their Canadian flags, and tour the facility.



Halton Regional Police chief James Harding (left) accepts formal recognition of the new police badge and epaulettes from Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn in a ceremony at the police headquarters building in Oakville. In the background next to chief Harding is Halton regional chairman Peter Pomeroy.

Photo by PETER McCUSKER

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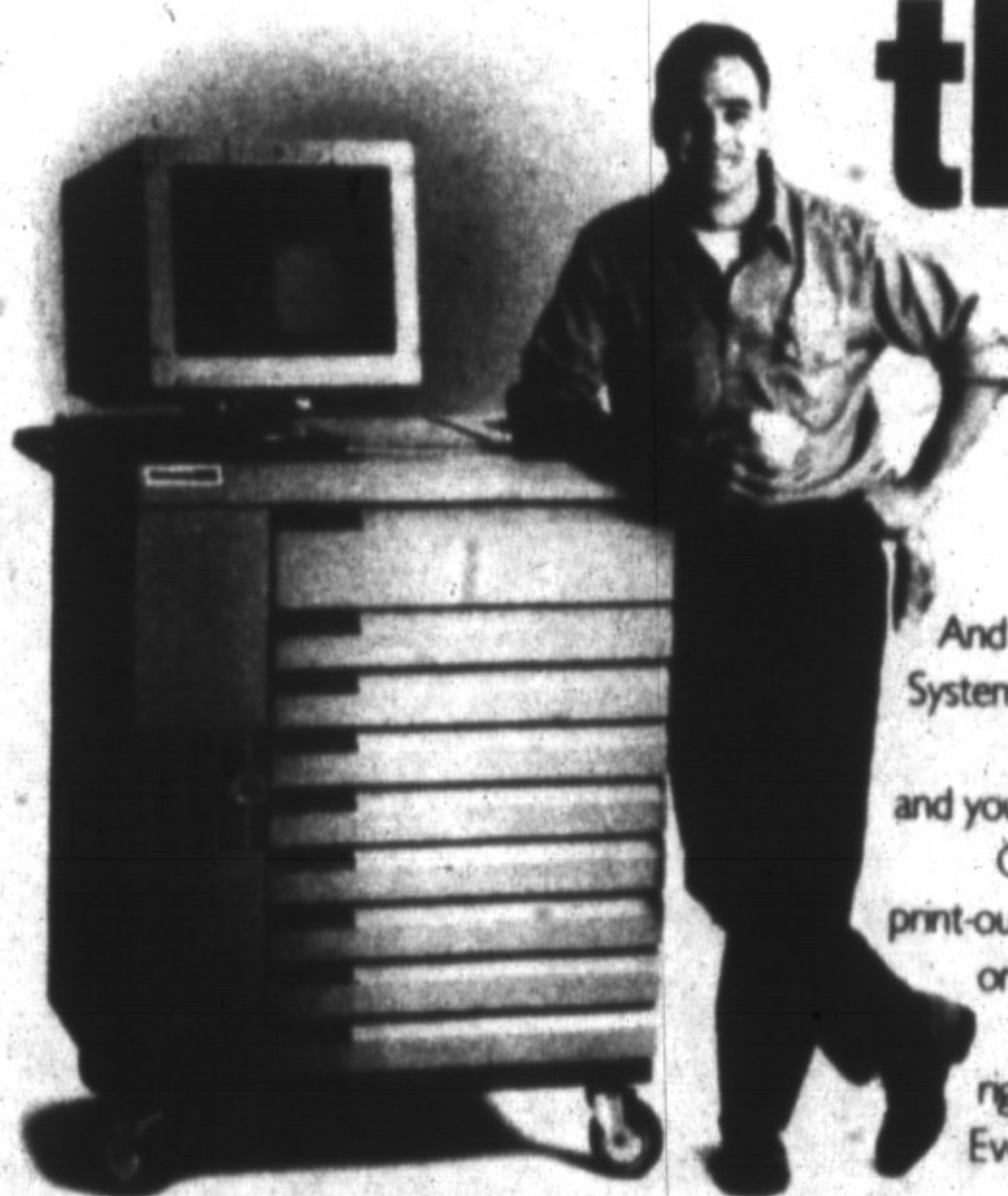
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