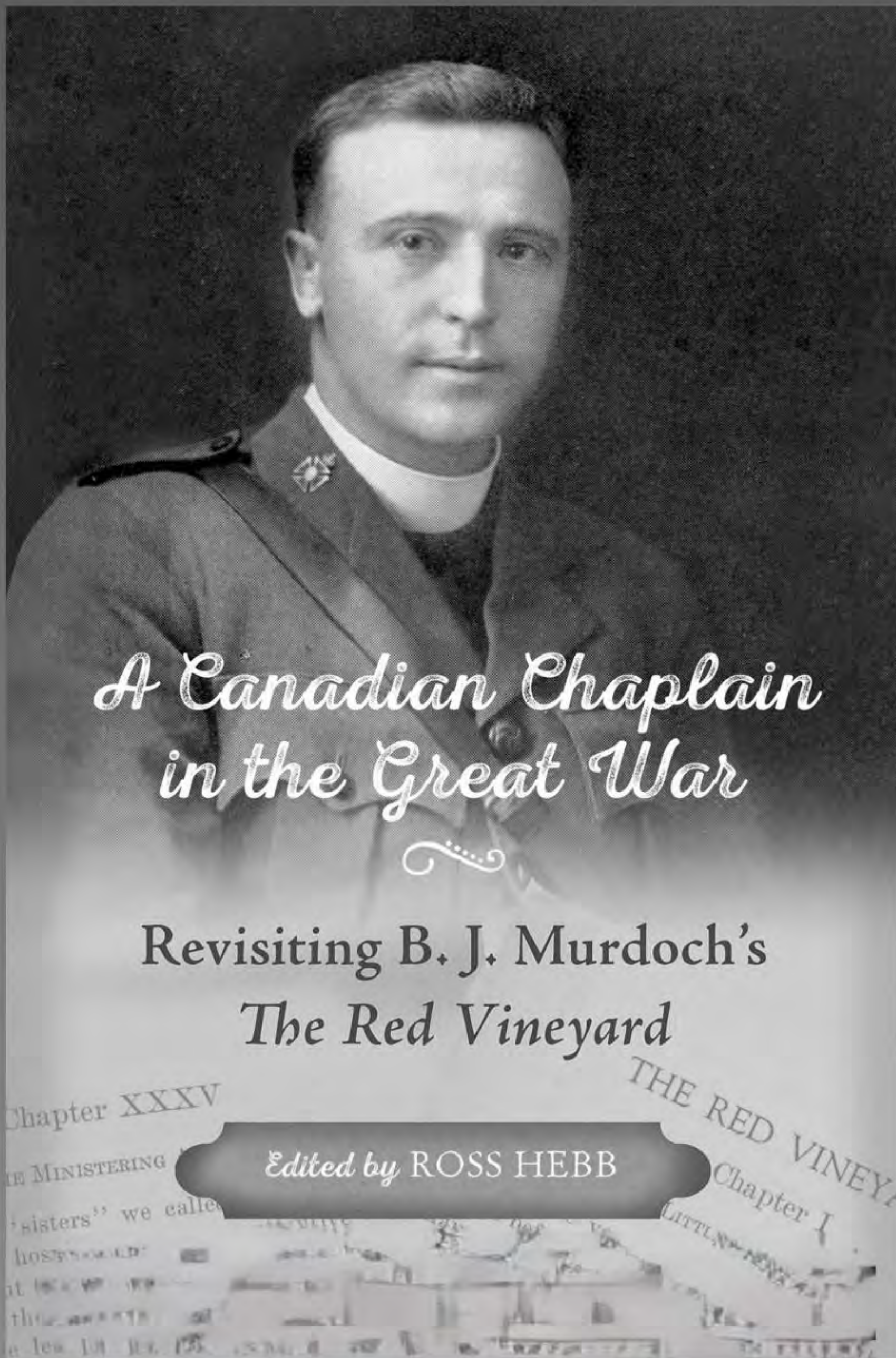


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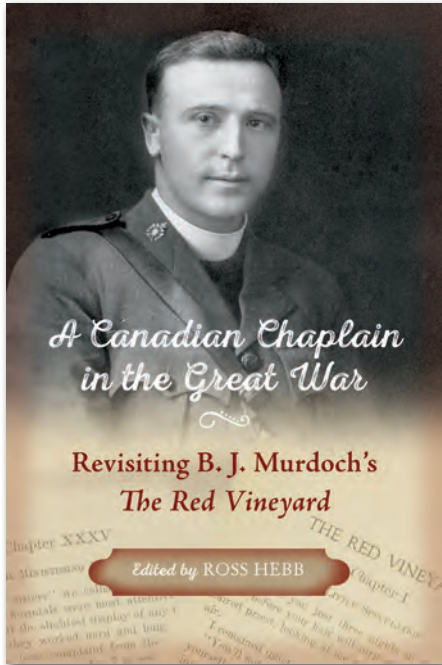
*A Canadian Chaplain
in the Great War*

Revisiting B. J. Murdoch's
The Red Vineyard

Edited by ROSS HEBB



WHEN: 2 p.m. Saturday Oct. 19
Provincial Archives Building
WHERE: 23 Dineen Drive, UNB
Campus, Fredericton



9781774713259 ePub: 9781774713266

5.5 x 8.25 | 280 pages

Nimbus Publishing
NB1684

Subject history, memoir, WW1, chaplaincy

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More from Ross Hebb



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A Canadian Chaplain in the Great War

Revisiting B.J. Murdoch's *The Red Vineyard*

Edited by Ross Hebb

September 24, 2024 • paperback • \$24.95 CA, \$19.95 US

An annotated edition of the 1923 war memoir of a young Catholic priest in France from the author of *A Canadian Nurse in the Great War*.

Benedict Joseph Murdoch's *The Red Vineyard* was a captivating autobiographical tale of a young man's experience as a chaplain during the First World War.

As a young Roman Catholic priest from Chatham, New Brunswick, Murdoch became chaplain to the 132nd Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), serving in Europe from 1916 to 1918. He was a sensitive and perceptive young man with an eye for detail; his war writing tells us not only of nurses and wounded soldiers; he also draws attention to the beauty of the French countryside.

The Red Vineyard was first published in 1923 and is one of only two Canadian first-hand accounts of chaplaincy in the Great War. It is republished here in full, with scholar and author Ross Hebb's valuable running commentary as well as an insightful introduction and epilogue, a helpful timeline, and a guide to persons mentioned in the work.

Murdoch's text reveals things we would not expect. Murdoch is exceptional in relating his combat stresses and his own signs of an ever-deepening condition of PTSD—well before discussions of veterans' mental health were commonplace. Hebb includes never-before-revealed details, including a letter from Murdoch's RC military chaplaincy superior stressing Murdoch's mental state and his need for a significant rest.

More than a war diary, *A Canadian Chaplain in the Great War* offers an exceptional window into the world of the time.

Although originally from Nova Scotia's South Shore, **Ross Hebb** is now a long-term resident of New Brunswick. A graduate of King's College and Dalhousie University, Dr. Hebb received his PhD from the University of Wales, Lampeter, in 2002. Along with volumes on Maritime Church history, he has also written about the golden age of shipbuilding at St. Martins on the Bay of Fundy. In 2014 he edited the collection *Letters Home: Maritimers and the Great War, 1914–1918*; in 2018, *In Their Own Words: Three Maritimers Experience the Great War*, and in 2021, *A Canadian Nurse in the Great War: The Diaries of Ruth Loggie, 1915–1916*. Dr Hebb is an Honorary Research Associate at UNB's Historical Studies Department. He has authored academic articles on B. J. Murdoch and on the literary accounts of Canadian First World War nurses. Dr. Hebb is married and lives in Fredericton, NB.

Born in Chatham in 1886, **Father Benedict Joseph Murdoch** joined the Canadian Army in 1916. His exposure to combat made him subject to what was then called "shell shock." To exorcise his mind of the war's legacy, Murdoch wrote *The Red Vineyard* in 1922. Throughout the 1920s Murdoch continued to struggle. From 1932 onward, he found peace as a recluse deep in the New Brunswick woods. He died in 1973.

ISBN 978-1-77471-325-9



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