

## Inspired by the CFPU by Josha Sietsma



I was asked to write how Holland's first baseball scorebook happened to have a cover-illustration inspired by Charles H. Richer (CFPU).

In the summer of 2015, before becoming a teacher fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), I hosted a screening on the work and life of Annemie Wolff. She and her husband were photographers during the WWII and moved to Amsterdam prior to its commencement. The amazing stills by this couple and my summer at the USHMM inspired my thoughts on photographers in wartime.

Being raised in Hamilton (ON), a fervent Canadian Historical review reader and with love for baseball I started searching the archives for the combination of all three. In this I was always looking for the connection with WWII. It was then that I found the picture showing Canadian soldiers playing baseball with the, also Canadian, Eager Beavers. A picture made by [Charles H. Richer](#).

In my research on the background of the photo I came across the amazing work of Mark Celinscak. In his book ([Distance from the Belsen Heap](#)) he writes on the participation of the CFPU during the liberation of Europe in 1945. Photographers are heroes with lenses. Mister Celinscak was so kind to introduce me to the son and granddaughter of Charles H. Richer. I was so stunned by Richer's photo. It had everything I was looking for and more: the personal tragedy and history of WWII, Canadians, the Veluwe and baseball. It also left me questioning. Where exactly did he take the picture? Why baseball? What happened to those portrayed? Was there a third-base?

I found the picture so unique that the following came to my mind. Having a local illustrator (Jedi Noordegraaf, Studio Vandaar) make me a set of covers for a baseball scorebook I wanted to produce for our local baseball club sounded as a really good idea. Not only would the cover, inspired on the CFPU and, more specifically Charles H. Richer, be a dedication to the wonderful sport of baseball, the celebration of community life but also to the veterans and our liberators. Look carefully and one will find the references. Some more clear than others.

So it happened that Holland's first baseball scorebook is truly inspired by the CFPU. It tells us the story of our common past. It leaves us with open questions. It honours the veteran, the liberator. A story that deserves to be told. And baseball.

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Further reads:

[www.stichtingwolff.nl/english.html](http://www.stichtingwolff.nl/english.html)

[www.scoreboek.nl](http://www.scoreboek.nl)

[www.studiovandaar.nl](http://www.studiovandaar.nl)

[www.visitveluwe.com](http://www.visitveluwe.com)

The Halifax Concert Party in World War II , Theatre Research in Canada, 1999 (volume 20, number 2)