

**I was Born Lucky**  
**The Autobiography of John Philip Potter**  
**of the Baltimore Sun**



I was born lucky. I had the best parents. I moved around America with them in childhood and learned to be flexible, taking things as they come. When I was 12 we lived in Bisbee, Arizona and I helped my brother, who was 5 years older, carry ice in the summer, me to the cribs. I worked at all kinds of things, for 2 years at a chicken ranch in Phoenix which I left at the age of 17 to go to California, where I stayed for 5 years working for the LA Times as a copy boy, in a furniture factory, in an ice plant, as a roustabout in the oil fields building a huge reservoir in Long Beach, laying linoleum in a new school in Taft and a ice plant there. Then in the oil fields as a derrick man on an oil drilling crew.



I was occasionally called back to Bisbee to be with family when Dad came down with pneumonia. I worked in the Queen copper mine there, and met a girl there who later went to the University of Arizona.

I quit an oil field job in Coalinga to enter the same University in January 1930, but had to drop out in late spring as Dad had pneumonia again and I went home to be with him. He died that spring and Mother decided to go back to Minnesota where all 6 of us Potter kids were born. My 2 Brothers, 1 5 years older and 1 2 years younger were there, the elder teaching welding at an Industrial Institute and the other going to school there.

I went back to the oil fields in California, but the depression had hit and I could not get a job. I hitchhiked back to Minneapolis, a tuff thing to do in 1930, a tuff thing to do in 1930 with not much traffic on the road. A crazy guy was my best ride.

I got a job driving an ice wagon and made enough to enter the University of Minnesota in the fall. I washed dishes in a girls sorority, judged limerick contests, got a job at the Y.M.C.A., worked on the Minnesota Daily and took journalism classes.. I became copy editor as a sophomore and when the managing editor quit to study law I, as a junior, I got his job. That earned enough that I was able to marry Ruth Benjamin.



We had our first baby, a boy, in my senior year. That marriage has lasted 54 years and was another stroke of luck as she stayed home and raised 3 kids while I roamed the world as a reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

When I graduated I worked for the A.P. in Minneapolis, managed the Rapid City Journal in South Dakota. In 1939 I was hired by H. L. Mencken of the Baltimore Sun and we moved to Maryland. Within a year the I was City Editor,

because of the constant loss of men to go to WW2 that began a week after I arrived there.

I kept pleading to go overseas as a war correspondent but couldn't persuade management to do so until 1945 when I was sent to the China Theatre. I covered the end of the war there; along with Robert Cochrane and Thomas J. O'Donnell .



I witnessed the surrender aboard the Missouri, the Korean war, then a 19 hour flight on a C54 back to China. Then to Manchuria with Charlotte Ebner of the I.N.S. to report to Wedemeyr and Marshall, covered the Marshall-Chou Chiang negotiations.



I called the mission a failure in in may 1946 and went home in June 1946 because the Managing Editor failed to keep his promise to send my wife over.

Then came the Greek Civil War where I met Richard Nixon.

Major Muharram KANAD  
& Phil STOP to Refresh at  
Spring NEAR SARIKAMA 95



Then to Palestine with the Wallace delegation in 1947. After they returned home I staled on and got a driver and interpreter and drove around talking to the villagers about the proposed partition to create the State of Israel. Charlotte Ebner and I were waiting to talk with the King of Jordan when the U.S. announced that they were supporting the creation of the State of Israel. We were told to get out and managed to hook up with a British patrol who put us in British uniforms to get us out of the area. Shortly thereafter I was shot in the leg and sent home to cover the Red Beat and McCarthy.



Then to Korea where I was again shot in the leg during the Marine retreat from Chosin Reservoir. My son was a Marine but he was not shot. At that time correspondents were considered as 2nd Lieutenants so that they could get into the Officers clubs to interview them. General Ridgeway put me in for a Purple Heart for that wound.



Then back to cover the Army-McCarthy hearings in D.C. I asked Cohn and Shine why they didn't go kill commies. They were so evasive that I decided to probe their draft status.

William Manchester, a colleague on the Sun, in the book "The Glory and the Dream", wrote of Schine's inaction that he and Roy had been busy running the subcommittee because "Joe was a lazy demagogue and left the job to them". They felt, and had seemed to be, invulnerable. If no one in the Capitol dared to strike back at them, who would? The answer was Shine's Gloversville, N.Y. Draft Board. There was an irony here. The good citizens of Gloversville were too far from the power structure to know of Shine's mighty friends. They were also safe from a political fix: one thing Washington feared more than McCarthy was a Selective Service scandal.

That was beautifully put except for one thing: his draft board was not in Gloversville, as I found out after much investigation, but in Los Angeles, California. I had asked the 2 gumshoes why, in view of their anti-Communist fervor they had not gone to Korea to fight them since they seemed of the right age. Roy said he was in the National Guard and his unit had not been called up. Schine wanted to know if I was trying to crucify him. I smelled something funny and with some help from Scoop Jackson and Bobby Kennedy who through connections found out that his draft board was in LA and got a hold of the retired Army man who ran it and found out that Schine was 4F, but it seemed that his medical exam was not made in that city. But he could be subjected to another.

It was some months later when I was in New York City covering a McCarthy hearing at the Federal Courthouse there in conjunction with his probe of the Army Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth, N.J. that Schine informed me he had been inducted into the Army a day earlier. I wrote the following story that appeared on the inside page of the Sun.

### **Schine, Top Aide To McCarthy, Is Inducted by Army**

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[By a Sun Staff Correspondent]

New York, Nov. 4--G. David Schine, unpaid chief consultant on Senator McCarthy's Investigations subcommittee, who has sat



in judgement on generals, announced today that he was inducted into the Army yesterday as a Private.

The 26-year-old investigator, son of a wealthy hotel chain owner, said the Defence Department was allowing him time to "clean up" work for the committee, but that he hoped to begin his service soon.

Schine said that at the age of 18 he went into the Army Transport Service as a civilian with simulated Army rank as a lieutenant and performed "overseas" duty."

His Los Angeles draft board disclosed several months ago that he was then classified as 4F.

When the classification was changed is not known. P.P.

The Army's General Counsel, John G. Adams, assigned by Robert Stephens, Secretary of the Army, to monitor the McCarthy investigation of the Army Signal Corps, saw the piece and called me up to say Schine lied to me about being in the Army Transportation Corps.

We got together, aided by former Senator Chandler Gurney of South Dakota, and at his time on the civil aeronautics board to which he had been appointed by Harry Truman after he was defeated for re-election. Gurney, an old friend from my days as Editor of the Rapid City Journal released me to the Sun, told Adams that I could be trusted to keep a confidence and Adams began leaking to me almost daily about his trials and tribulations with McCarthy and his staff. Invaluable info that I could not use without costing him his job but with other info that I got from (unreadable) and Kennedy I had already dented McCarthy's popularity in the country by causing the 3 Democrats to walk out of his subcommittee because of his hiring of J. B. Mathews as staff director. With his publication in the magazine American Mercury, a little read monthly, that stated American protestant ministers were the largest single group in the U. S. supporting the commie apparatus in the U. S.

Joe refused to fire him at the request of 3 Democrats and they quit refusing to come back even though Joe did get rid of the man when President Ike joined his critics over the issue.

I stumbled across the mag in the office of Representative Harold Velde, III., head of the House Un-American Committee and broke my and other articles in the press which caused a hullabaloo.

But it was Joe's nursing of Schine after he was sent to Fort Dix for training that led to his final downfall.

With info from Adams and Robert Kennedy, who had left Joe's staff along with the 3 Democrats, and eventually came back with them when (unreadable) and an assist from Drew Pearson. I broke the story that McCarthy and Cohn were harassing the Commandant at Fort Dix, General Cornelius Ryan, to give Schine privileges, favours that no others ever got while under training.. That led to his final downfall.

I also broke the story that inviting the Peress, a New York dentist drafted into service, and had been given an Honourable Discharge after Joe had him in for a hearing. Peress took the 5th amendment to avoid saying that he had ever been a Commie. Peress had already left the Army and decided to terminate his service when Joe heard of the case, and had set a time limit. Peress left Joe's hearing and asked for immediate release from the Army. Since he had committed nothing actionable, he got it.

Joe made a big thing of it and called in Brigadier General Ralph Zwicker, hero of the Battle of the Bulge in WW2 and who was Peress' commander at Camp Kilmer, N.J. and condemned him as unfit to wear his uniform when he failed to respond to Joe's questioning on the Peress matter to his satisfaction.

This finally led to President Eisenhower's break with Joe, which had been my aim all along.

Adams informed me that Sherman Adams, Ike's top White House aid had ordered him to prepare a report of McCarthy's and Chon's efforts to get Army favours for Schine, and when he told me that it had been turned in to the White House, I got in touch with Lyndon Banes Johnson, minority leader, who until that time had declined to tangle with Joe on the grounds he wasn't going to get in a debate over Cohn with the Wisconsin Republican. Johnson steered me to Senator Dich Russell, ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Forces Committee, who demanded a copy of the report, as did Senator McClellan, ranking Democrat on Joe's subcommittee. Charles Wilson, Secretary of Defence, told Russell that there was no such report. When Russell informed me of that I told him that Adams had

shown me a copy and in fact I had helped him with it with copies I had of his confidential reports to me of the goings on.

Russell who had strong influence as the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee called Wilson and said that he would call every General in the Pentagon before that body if it was not given to him.

He called me on March 11th to say the report had been sent to him and a few other Senators that day, but when I said that I would be right over to get it for publication, Russell remarked "it is marked "Confidential" and I've never given a newsman classified documents.

I got hold of Robert Kennedy, who got his brother Jack, also a member of Joe's Government Operations Committee, but not the investigations subcommittee to pick up a copy from Senator Symington. He passed it to Robert who gave it to me and I took it to my office and had it sent immediately by teletype to my office in Baltimore, which gave copies to the AP, which put it on the National wire that night.

Bobby called me as my teletypist was just finishing the job to say that he wanted me to bring it back because Jack was demanding it. I was too busy writing my story and Robert came raging into my office and grabbed it. I learned later from William Lawrence the New York Times man covering Joe, that he and James (Scotty) Reston had gone to Symington when they heard that he had a copy and demanded it. He had called Jack to bring it back so Symington could deliver it.

That report brought about the Army-McCarthy hearings in the spring of 1954 that led to McCarthy's censure by the Senate and his subsequent ostracism by the nation's press which led to him drinking himself to death on May 2, 1957 of cirrhosis of the liver or hepatitis, both attributed to alcohol.

Bobby Kennedy was one of those who went to his burial at Appleton, Wisconsin, Joe's home town. He had never disliked Joe who gave him a job in his subcommittee at the request of Bobby's father, old Joe Kennedy who liked and helped finance McCarthy. It was Roy Cohn that Bobby hated, because he got the job of chief counsel that Bobby wanted. He got it too when the Democrats took command of the subcommittee in 1955, after the November 1954 election that the Republicans lost, largely because of McCarthy's activities.

McCarthy thrived in a large part because of the political climate in which he lived. The peace that came with the end of World War 2 had been quickly

shattered by Soviet intransigence in Eastern Europe, the revelation of its espionage in the Western countries including the Rosenberg case, on which, incidentally, Roy Cohn worked as a young lawyer on the prosecution; the Alger conviction for perjury involving an espionage case, and the Communist victory over the Christian Chang in China and the North Korean Communists invasion of the Christian Syngman Rhee's South Korea. Ho Chi Minh, another Red, was giving the France a hard time in Vietnam.

President Truman himself helped to increase the obsession with the Commies by installing a loyalty program in the Federal bureaucracy. Even such stalwart builders of bipartisan foreign policy during the war against the Axis as Senator Arthur Vandenberg, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Affairs committee could not resist joining the Republicans in Congress who were begging President Truman to save Chang Kai-Shek on Taiwan and speaking out against recognition of Red China.

One of McCarthy's worst outrages came in June 1951 when he came up with a 60,000 word diatribe accusing General George C. Marshall, who had been Truman's personal representative in China and later Secretary of State, of selling out American interests in "a conspiracy so black as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man."

McCarthy waded through only a third of his lies and innuendos in his speech to the Senate, obviously the product of his many pals in the so-called "China lobby" that had spent millions to promote Chiang's cause in the U.S., but the Senator put it all in the Congressional Record, which gave him immunity from libel.

In my fifty years as a newspaperman I got to know, at least in a cursory way, all the American Presidents from Harry Truman to Gerald Ford, China's Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist leader and Chou Enlai, who served as Premier under Mao Tse-tung in the Chinese Communist regime that ousted Chiang from mainland China; Korea's President Syngman Rhee, Burma's General Ne Win, the long time ruler there who once told me to put \$50 on a horse he had running in a Rangoon racetrack and it would get me enough to pay a two-weeks hotel bill in that capital city. The horse won in an obviously fixed race. I spent two years in India with my wife Ruth and youngest daughter Susan and knew well Prime Minister Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who also served in that position. I was well acquainted with top U.S. Admirals in the Pacific, and knew

Army Generals like George C. Marshall and Douglas MacArthur. I was on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay when MacArthur took the surrender of the Japanese, and when I got shot in Korea five years later General Matthew Ridgeway named me on a list with other newsmen to get Purple Hearts. I had two slugs in the left leg from a Russian burp gun carried by a North Korean during the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir. My son, John, a Marine in Korea, got home without a scratch.

But the highlights of my career were the times I spent in China during World War II and the ensuing civil war there between Chaing Kai-Shek's and Mao's forces, during President Nixon's 1972 trip to open U.S. relations with Communist China, and during a three-week trip with my wife this spring that covered much of China and my coverage in Washington, D.C. of a group of men who served in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, four of whom became Presidents, while another stained our history with his infamy and left us with a new word in the dictionary, "McCarthyism", a noun meaning "the political practice of publicizing accusations of disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence", as one dictionary puts it.

Two years after our tangle with the Russians in Manchuria, Charlotte Ebner and I had another adventure on Amman, Jordan, where we had gone by taxi from Jerusalem, in an effort to learn the Arab view of the plan being pushed by the U.S. government under President Truman to partition British-mandated Palestine into Israeli and Arab states. Our guess was that the Arab peoples, who in Palestine outnumbered Jews two to one in 1947, would not like to see an Israeli state created in lands heavily populated by Arabs since the seventh century when Mohammed became the prophet of Allah.

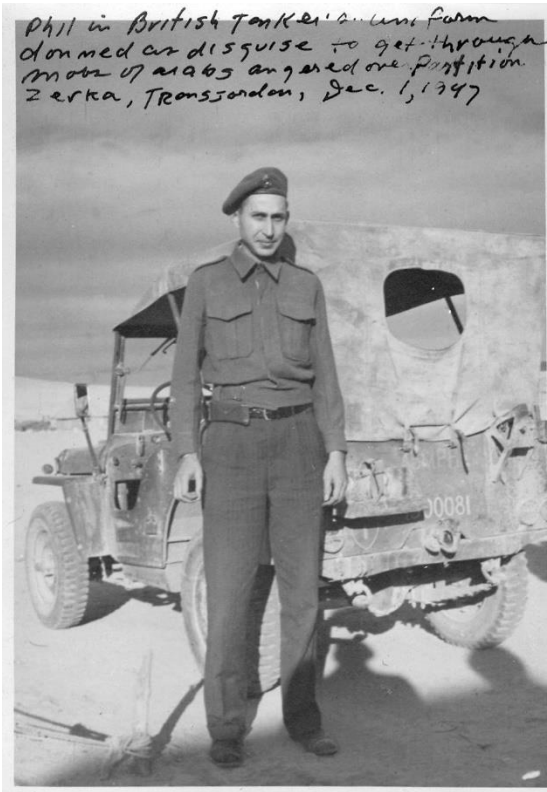
Charlotte was still seeking marriage to George Weller of the Chicago Daily News, whom she had failed to corner during the months they spent in China, and appeared with him in Greece where in 1947 I was covering a civil war between Communists and what the Reds called the Monarch-Fascist government. George got word that he had been selected for a scholarship at Harvard, and told me laconically: "look after Charlotte, I'm off to Cambridge."

A few weeks later the Sun ordered me to Palestine, and Miss Ebner decided to go there too. She had a job with a woman's news syndicate.

We picked Nov. 29, 1947, a bad day to be in Amman. I arranged an interview with King Abdullah and Charlotte with his three wives. Unfortunately,

the United Nations in Lake Success picked that day to vote for the partition of Palestine, with the U.S. government using money and any other means to collect the necessary votes from our client countries like the Philippines and those in Central America. Our interviews were cancelled.

About the time we saw two tank trucks of an American oil company on fire in an Amman street, the clerk of our hotel shouted at us that a mob would soon be at our heels. While we were looking for a place to hide, a British Major yelled for us to get into a parked armoured car. He went into the hotel and came back with odds and ends of Arab Legion uniforms and told us to put them on. I was soon dressed as a Sergeant-Major in the Arab Legion and Charlotte hid her hair under a British Signal Corps beret and Artillery Lieutenant's jacket. The Major took a handkerchief and wiped off her lipstick.



His Arab Legion started the car and we took off for the Allenby Bridge on the road to Jerusalem, but soon encountered rocks across the road piled up by a gaggle of unshaven Arabs in dirty headdresses and ragged brown robes. Coming down the road toward us, however, was a truckload of Arab Legion troops. Our Major leaned out of our armoured car and shouted a few words in Arabic. The Arab Troops saluted and forced the ragged dozen to remove the roadblock. We drove on for a mile when the Major called a halt. He told us that the Arabs at the

roadblock had said that they were looking for Americans and had other roadblocks posted all the way from Amman to the Allenby Bridge over the river Jordan to make sure no Americans could get out of the country.

"I'll take you to Zerqa. Hold on to your hats. We'll skip the roads and ride across the desert for a while "he said.

"Where the hell is Zerqa?" I asked.

He waved his hand toward the empty horizon and replied "Over there. It's Arab Legion headquarters. But it is north on Amman and we are south of it, so I'll have to make a wide detour."

According to Charlotte, in her book "No Facilities for Women", I said: "I hope he knows what he is doing," and added "Well, anyway spending the night with the Arab Legion will be one hell of a story. Seems like old times, doesn't it?"

She recalled that after our Manchurian adventure my paper had given me bonus.

After we drove through the mud-walled shops of Zerqa, the Major stopped the car and told us to remove the uniforms or the commanding officer at the headquarters of the Arab Legion "would have nightmares for a week."

That worthy, a Lieutenant Colonel, was in white flannels carrying a tennis racket when we pulled up to a white stucco bungalow. The Colonel decided that Charlotte would stay with the wife of one of his officers. I demanded that I be given a telephone line to the nearest American Consulate, which happened to be in Jerusalem.

"My dear man," the Colonel said acidly, "do you realize that Jerusalem is in quite a different country?"

"I know that, and I also know you have telephone connections with Jerusalem." I said, taking a chance. I soon had a phone in my hand and got the consulate, told the officer who we were and why and asked him to take down a cable for my office, that would give the consulate the full story of what was happening in Amman.

The Colonel paid no more attention to me, instead telling Charlotte, "the lady whose bungalow you'll share is a very cultivated person."

We were flown out of Zerqa the next day in a light plane to Jerusalem, where a whole block in the Jewish section was on fire..

I sent a cable to George Weller to tell him that I could no longer be responsible for the good health of his girl and he sent her a cable: "if unabduted by Abdullah prepare to make Boston your Eretz sweet Eretz."

Charlotte asked me what Eretz meant and I told her that it was the Jewish word for "home". The marriage that occurred when she reached the U.S. has been an exceedingly happy one--at least as of the last time I visited them in Italy some years ago. My marriage to Ruth has survived for 53 years as of yesterday though friends at home were sure that I had died during my long absences.

I cannot resist telling one more story, this one of the Inchon landing of Marines during the Korean war.

I got to Inchon by way of the Navy on the cruiser Rochester, command ship of a squadron led by Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble. I had left an Army hospital in Tokyo, where I was awaiting extraction of a bullet lodged against the bone in my left leg, to make the sea journey to Inchon. There our two cruisers, one British, and four destroyers arrived 2 days before D-Day. The destroyers were sent in close to draw fire from the North Korean guns, whereupon the cruisers replied with their 5-inch and 8-inch guns as U.S. Air Force and Navy and Marine planes strafed and bombed the port military installations.

Admiral Struble and I hit it off, and when, on D-Day, a Marine contingent assaulted Wolmi-do island, he took me on his barge when he went over to the Mount McKinley, the control ship bearing General MacArthur and his staff, to pick them up for a tour off Red and Blue beaches, where the Marines were to make their assaults in the evening.

MacArthur, wearing a leather jacket with the word "MacArthur" on the left breast and his sweat-stained braided cap, was followed into the barge by Generals Alonzo Fox, Courtney Whitney and Edwin K. Wright and Colonel Charles C. Canada, a medic, all similarly attired with their names, like his, in gold letters on their jackets.

MacArthur wore leather gloves, one of which he took off after seating himself. I was startled by the big blue varicose veins exposed on his hand indicating advanced age and he must have observed my gaze as he put the glove back on.



Admiral Struble had the barge go in close to Red Beach, drawing from General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commander of the Pacific Marine Force, a reprimand for endangering the United Nations commander-in-chief.

"I don't think it's safe to take the commander-in-chief of the theatre in here and expose him to this occasional rifle and mortar fire.", he said, as at some distance bullet splashes could be seen on the waters of the bay.

Struble's reply, forever alienating General Shepherd, was "Lem, there are Indians around, but there ain't one behind every bush."

But he ordered the coxswain to move further from the shore.

That night, as shells arched through the sky, and buildings burned throughout Inchon, Admiral Struble again took me on his barge as he picked up General Edward M. Almond, commanding the Inchon landing and attack on Seoul, the capitol of the Republic of Korea, to show him the amphibious operation was not as Almond had described it a few weeks earlier just a "mechanical thing". Because of very high tides at Inchon the Navy had wanted to invade elsewhere, but MacArthur prevailed.

We threaded our way through cumbersome landing craft as we approached the seawall on Blue Beach, as Marine engineers prepared to blow a hole in it so that tracked vehicles could come ashore.

"Lay off you stupid bastards." a Marine shouted at the Barge. "We're going to blow a hole in the wall."

The barge's coxswain called back "This is Admiral Struble's barge."

"I don't give a shit whose barge it is," he was told, "get it clear."

Struble advised his coxswain to do as told and as we swung out an explosion ripped the wall apart.

Two days later MacArthur brought his staff ashore to check on the Marines progress towards Seoul, among other things visiting the Marine regiment led by Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller. I was with the party of newsmen and photographers following the generals, as Marines on the ridge beyond which the enemy lay began shouting at photographers "never mind 'Dugout Doug'. Take my picture for my hometown paper."

On the basis of that tour MacArthur later gave four of his staff silver stars for gallantry.