

I am Louise's cousin, the curly top next to the last in line in this picture of the little soldiers. My brother Howard is in the lead, and Louise, the author of this piece is last in line, still trying to unfurl her flag. Louise has been the leader in remembrances for our family, a leadership we all value and embrace.

When pondering the days that I lived with my cousins and aunt, along with my mother and brother during part of World War II, I find myself struck by the contrast between all the destruction, death and suffering in the world and the incredibly happy and peaceful time living in Norman, Oklahoma. I was too young to understand all the dangers facing my father and uncles, so the thought of their not returning simply never occurred to me. They were merely away for a while, sending the important letters our mothers were so grateful for. It would take the Korean "police action" some years later to bring that apprehension home to me. But during WWII my brother probably understood some of the cloud under which my mother and aunt lived. He and they did not visit that uncertainty upon me or my cousin Louise, and certainly not my cousin, Phoebe, still a baby. Having not been born until just before our fathers shipped out, she couldn't know her daddy. But when the war was over, she lifted up her arms to every man in uniform who crossed our threshold. However during WWII I lived a carefree existence, with my fine cousin as playmates, a wonderful aunt and mother, and a very responsible, older brother to make certain no harm came to me. I owe all of them a debt of thanks for making life so much darned fun.