

Bud Hance – My Hero

By Cindy Peters

My good friend Pat lived just a hop, skip and a jump away from my childhood home in Brandon, South Dakota. Bud was Pat's dad. He was an amazing, intelligent, eccentric and very entertaining man. Bud served both in World War II and in the Korean War in which he received a Purple Heart. In the 1960's due to fear of nuclear bombing he built this outstanding fallout shelter next to his basement. It was fully equipped with transmitter radios, cots, blankets, canned goods and water.

There was no roller rink in my small town. However, due to that wonderful fallout shelter Pat, her siblings and her friends could skate on top of the cement roof. So, we would bring our turn-key metal skates and spend hours of enjoyment skating on top of that fallout shelter.

We had no swimming pool in my small town and very little money for admission if we would have had a pool. So, I remember one humid, hot South Dakota summer day. We were so hot and none of us had central air conditioning in our homes. Then Bud had a great idea. He loaded up his four children and me on an adventure. We snuck into an American Legion pool just outside of town. The gate of the pool was open as we ran and dove in that wonderfully chilly water.

Bud was also very artistic and creative. He was a glass blower by trade. His children and I would set in awe as we watched him create beautiful glass blown creations and neon signs. Bud was very hard working as he also worked as a part-time constable for our small town.

I had a brother two years older than me. As he became a teenager, he developed Schizophrenia. My parents were elderly and at times they needed assistance in dealing with my brother. I remember coming home from school one bright, sunny spring day only to discover my mother quite distraught. My mother was in the front yard crying and wringing her hands. My dad was at work and could not be reached. My brother was in a psychotic state and he believed our home was bugged by bad people. Therefore, he was in the process of removing furniture from the home and putting it in the front yard in hopes of finding this electronic equipment.

I ran as fast as I could to Bud's home. I was so grateful to find Bud at home. I quickly told Bud what was happening with my brother. Bud was able to reassure and calm down my brother. Bud was able to distract my brother by showing him brochures of Australia which was on his wish list to travel. This distraction gave enough time for my dad to be reached and for a medical staff to arrive to assist with my brother.

What would we have done without out Bud that day? I just discovered a couple of days ago from Pat that Bud is still alive at age 97. He retired from his part-time job at Lowes at age 95. Bud is an active reader currently living in a Veteran's Home in Alabama. I wonder if he ever shares his glass blown figurines with the residence at the Veteran's Home. Bud was a brave Veteran who will forever live in my heart as one of the great Giants of the Earth and my greatest hero.