Cookie Mission



When I was just a tween there was another war going on. That one was the Vietnam War.

My brother-in-law was in the navy. He was stationed on the aircraft carrier named after John F. Kennedy; our slain President. The “JFK” (as they called it) was sent to the Mediterranean Sea so it would be closer to Vietnam if it was needed for any action.

Paul was expected to be floating around the Mediterranean Sea with thousands of other sailors for over a year.

At that time, I was really big into making cookies. My specialty was chocolate chip, and I followed the recipe on the bag of chips precisely each time. I usually spent my afternoon on Saturday or Sunday making chocolate chip cookies; especially in the winter.

I got what I thought was a magical idea. I decided all 4000 of those guys stationed on the JFK deserved a cookie. I wanted to make enough cookies so they could all get one.

When I took my idea to my mother I was not surprised when she said, “Sure. Bake away.”

I now know I should have been VERY surprised my mother said yes. She actually funded the Cookie Mission. I can't imagine at this point what that cost her. The chips, all the other cookie ingredients, the boxes and the postage! Maybe she thought I'd never go through with it. She was wrong.

I got my first batch of supplies and went into my baking project. I baked all weekend. As each batch cooled, I would box them up. Several batches fit into each box.

The second weekend I invited one of my friends to help. The third week I asked a second friend to help. After about 4 weeks of this, my friends started finding excuses not to come help.

My family was probably sick of our whole house smelling like chocolate all the time, but they didn't say anything. The entire dining room was taken over by my boxes, my shipping supplies and piles of boxes of cookies.

My favorites of the cookies were the "medium rare" ones. When one batch came out of the oven a little too dark, I was about to put it in the trash when my mother stepped in. She barked at me. "Put those cookies in the box. You are not throwing any of them out!"

My mother had driven me to the post office several times to ship off my cookies. She never complained.

At some point I quit counting the cookies.

And then it just stopped. Cookie production ceased.

The novelty had worn off and I convinced myself I had baked and shipped enough cookies to cover all the guys on the ship.

Months later I received the single thank you note I got for sending all those cookies to the JFK. The thank you note came

from the guys who worked in the engine room on the massive ship. It was really funny because those are the guys who got the cookies I thought were burnt. They worked in a dirty engine room and they loved the cookies that were (in my opinion) overcooked. They even said in their note that they especially liked the “dark ones.” Dark cookies for dirty guys. Hmmm. Is there some kind of connection?

Decades later I think back on all the crazy projects, big and small that my mother supported. And when I think of them, and her, I smile.

Cheers,