

Air Drop In Burma

THEODORE R. COX

Up and down over the mountain trails came the soldiers, shuffling along as though they were ready to drop. Yes, they were almost at the collapsing point, and their tired and dirty appearance showed that their march with full field pack and battle equipment had been anything but pleasant. On and on, day after day, this must go, for ahead of them lay the enemy. The only way to get them out was to go over the mountains, and to do this made one's body cry out with agony.

Having pulled into a bivouac area and setting out the proper security, the packs were dropped; everyone started watching the sky. The shout went up that the air-planes were sighted, and in a few minutes the giant Army transports were circling over this group of weary men. At once these men were transformed into an enthusiastic group of workers, for these planes carried the much needed food and equipment and also the mail from home.

After flying low over the field several times, the "biscuit bombers" were ready for action. Coming in like a bomber, large bundles would be kicked out of the door

of the transports. Upon hitting the air, large parachutes would appear and drift the bundles slowly to the ground. Swaying slowly back and forth, these large parachutes of red, green, gold, blue, and white made one think of gumdrops which were impossible to get in this forsaken country. Plane after plane came over discharging its cargo. As the last plane was disappearing over the horizon, the men rushing on to the fields to carry in the "drop."

At last the task was over and the food and mail had been distributed, and the men were settling down to read their mail, for this was the most important item in the "drop." Food could be eaten after dark, but mail could not be read then, for no lights were allowed.

As the evening wore on, the shadows began to deepen; and one could see some men fixing themselves a sleeping place, while others went slipping off through the darkness to guard. Yes, it would not be long until morning would arrive, and the trudging over the mountain trails would continue once again.

Experiment K-353

JACK GREEN

I jauntily sauntered into the kitchen one Saturday afternoon to investigate the source of the occasional noises being emitted.

Upon entering the room my nostrils were met with the delightfully pungent

aroma of freshly-baked pastries. Mother smiled knowingly as she saw that hungry look in my eyes and shook her head. No, I couldn't have any cookies or doughnuts. They were to be given to Mr. Fischer, who had been ill for some time.

I watched wistfully as the last brownie was tucked carefully into the overladen basket. I gave a longing look as I saw the basket disappear through the gate under Mother's arm. There I was, stomach feeling as if my throat had been cut.

Under the impulse of the moment, I decided to see just what could be done to alleviate the situation.

Opening the cook book, I discovered that it was filled with appetite sharpening illustrations of cakes, cookies, and pies. On page one it said very plainly that if instructions were followed carefully that success was assured. Well, this was certainly going to be different from what I had previously expected. There I had pictured a definite need for what was vaguely termed in my mind 'culinary arts' when all I had to do was follow simple directions.

After musing thoughtfully through the book, I selected Russian tea cakes as the basis for my initial attempt at baking.

Thoroughness being one of my special traits, I donned a white apron, Mother's dust-cap; and I washed my hands. I went to the cabinet and sorted the ingredients there into two groups, those essential for the completion of my experiment, and those non-essential.

"Mix eggs, sugar and cream with enough flour to roll," quoth the book. This I did in short order. The next sentence began with "Toss on board" . . . Splat. So I scraped the goo together and went on

with the next part of the operation. I rolled it out to precisely one quarter inch of thickness, applied the required amount of butter, rolled the stuff up and started to place the mixture into the refrigerator to harden. Just then I remembered that yeast was essential to baking, so I put three little cakes of it into my future Russian tea cakes. I placed the batter into the refrigerator and withdrew it after the hardening had taken place. Next, I unrolled it, cut it into long narrow strips, layed them on a well greased pan in the oven, and sat back to let nature take its course.

This course, according to my calculations, should have been that I would withdraw in fifteen minutes six beautifully browned, dainty Russian tea cakes. More incorrect calculations were never conceived.

At the end of eight minutes instead of the delightfully pungent aroma I had so eagerly anticipated, I caught a scent more resembling beer. White stuff began oozing through the cracks around the oven door at the end of twelve minutes. I was so puzzled over the odor and the oozing that my ears failed to perceive Mother opening the door. My eyes, however, revealed the complete state of shock distorting her face as she uttered a soft moan and rushed over to turn off the oven.

Mother and I didn't speak for four days. My first impression of baking is a lasting one.