

# 4-H project 'Operation Boiled Peanuts' underway, will deliver 'Country Caviar' to Ga.'s 48th Brigade

By BRAD HAIRE  
University of Georgia

They've been called to duty and are being deployed to Iraq next month. Their mission is simple: Provide Georgia soldiers a familiar taste of home. It's "Operation Boiled Peanuts."

Georgia 4-H'ers across the state are mobilizing to raise money for a statewide project to package and send boiled peanuts to Iraq to the 4,300 soldiers of the Georgia National Guard's 48th Brigade.

The seed of the project was planted when Clark Rountree, 21, a specialist with the 48th, called his mother, Patricia Anderson, earlier this month. The Wilcox County, Ga., native told her to tell Rex Bulloch he had a hankering for his favorite homegrown snack and wanted a few to share with his comrades in Iraq.

"Anything Clark and those boys want, and I can get it, I'm going to get it done," said Bulloch, 57, a Wilcox County peanut farmer for 35 years. Rountree worked on Bulloch's farm before being sent to Iraq earlier this year. He knew that from now until November plenty of fresh, Georgia peanuts would be harvested.

Bulloch figured a few bags of peanuts wouldn't do. He wanted to get enough for the entire brigade. Family-owned Hardy Farms in Hawkinsville, Ga., specializes in ready-to-eat boiled peanuts in pouches and cut Bulloch a good deal. But the cost was still around \$6,000.

"Folks told me I should ask around for some help," Bulloch said in a phone interview Monday.

On Aug. 10, he called on his county University of Georgia Coop-



Governor Sonny Perdue (center) helps Georgia 4-H kick off "Operation Boiled Peanuts" to supply the Georgia National Guard 48th Brigade a taste of home in Iraq. Celebrating the statewide project are (front, from left) State 4-H President Cody Thomas, Wilcox County peanut farmer Rex Bulloch, Gov. Perdue, Wilcox County 4-H Program Assistant Suzanne Keene, 4-H Operation Military Kids Ambassador Sandra Spradley and State 4-H Leader Bo Ryles.

(Photo by LAURA PERRY JOHNSON)

erative Extension office.

"I said, 'Why don't you let 4-H help with that,'" said Suzanne Keene, a Wilcox County 4-H program assistant. "I thought this would be a great opportunity for Georgia 4-H and the (UGA) College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences to send a farm product unique to Georgia and let the troops know we support them."

She called the 4-H state office in Athens, and "Operation Boiled Peanuts" was launched. "It has ballooned and blossomed from there,"



she said.

The Georgia 4-H Foundation fronted the \$6,000 to keep the soldiers from waiting any longer.

Now, 2 tons of Georgia boiled peanuts, about 4,800 bags from Hardy Farms with Georgia 4-H stickers

ers proudly stamped on them, are staged and ready to be sent to the men and women of the 48th Brigade around Sept. 10, Bulloch said.

From collecting donations to organizing events, each county 4-H club is doing something different to raise money, said Laura Perry Johnson, the southwest district 4-H

program development coordinator.

To give a donation, make out a check to the Georgia 4-H Foundation and send it to 304 Hoke Smith Annex, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602. Write "Georgia 4-H: Operation Boiled Peanuts" on the envelope. Or go to your county UGA Extension office.

"We'd like to raise enough money to do it more than once," Keene said. "Maybe send them something once a month."

"Clark is like one of mine," Bulloch said. "I'll do anything for him to make it a little easier. He promised he'd be careful, keep his head down and come home. That's what I'm expecting from him and the rest of them."

Bulloch hasn't spoken with Rountree. But he's heard that the soldiers know the Georgia delicacy is on the way. They've seen some TV news stories about it.

But Bulloch already has been personally thanked. Jason Henderson, another Wilcox County native and a 48th Brigade soldier, was injured in Iraq and was back home last week.

"He thanked me and asked if he could give me a hug for the men of the 48th," Bulloch said.

(Brad Haire is a news editor with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.)

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County and the Cities of Rayle, Tignall, and Washington will hol  
on September 8, 2005, at 7:30 p.m., in the Commissioner's Boa