

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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### SOLDIERS WITH U.S. ARMY EUROPE-LED TASK FORCE SING NATIONAL ANTHEM AT MINNESOTA VIKINGS GAME FROM IRAQ

By **Sgt. Brandon Little**

12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office

**LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq --** Some Task Force XII Soldiers were honorary guests at the Metrodome in Minneapolis for a Minnesota Vikings game Sunday, and they didn't even have to be there.



SGT BRANDON LITTLE

(Left to right) Sgt. Willard Barnett, Spc. Jennifer Stiglet and Sgt. Frank Degele sing the national anthem, via satellite, from Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq to nearly 63,000 fans in the Metrodome in Minneapolis during a Minnesota Vikings game Nov. 18. Soldiers and Families of the 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation, part of Task Force XII led by U.S. Army Europe's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, were honorary guests at the football game.

Sgt. Willard Barnett, Sgt. Frank Degele and Spc. Jennifer Stiglet of the 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation joined the ranks of music icons such as Celine Dion and Stevie Wonder when they sang the national anthem, via satellite, from Iraq to a stadium packed with nearly 63,000 fans a world away. The 2-147th is a Minnesota Army National Guard unit that is part of the aviation task force here led by U.S. Army Europe's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade.

"I was very honored to be able to sing (the national anthem) for our home team and our home fans in our home dome," said Barnett, a 2-147th supply sergeant. "It's even more (special) to be over in Iraq singing it."

The Vikings organization also donated 100 tickets to the 2-147th's Soldiers and Families.

At halftime, with the Vikings and the Oakland Raiders tied at 19 each, Brig. Gen. Joseph P. Kelly, the assistant adjutant general-joint staff of the Minnesota National Guard presented a flag flown by the unit to Vikings Hall of Famer Carl Eller.

“I feel proud that something our crew has done over here was presented to the

Vikings organization during such a huge event,” said Capt. Andrea Ourada, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot who flew the flag around Iraq. “I also think it’s awesome that the Families got to see a live connection of us to know we’re okay.”

The flag was presented as a speech from Lt. Col. Greg Thingvold, the 2-147<sup>th</sup> commander, was played. Events like this are mainly directed towards Family members back home, but the Soldiers here know everything they do is important and they enjoy it, too, said Thingvold.

In addition to being part of the game, these long-distance fans and their Families were given something else to cheer about; their home team defeated the Raiders, 29-22.

“It’s been probably two years since I’ve been to a Vikings game, but my Family and a lot of the Families of many of our Soldiers were there,” he said. “I was born and raised in Minnesota ... so it’s a privilege for us to be involved in these types of activities.”



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