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**BODY:**

The execution of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on Friday evening signifies hope for a new beginning in Iraq, area residents said.

"Hopefully, what it will show is that there is a judicial system in place, and you will be held accountable regardless of who you are," said 1st Lt. Andy Gienapp, who returned from Iraq in 2005 where he served as a medical platoon leader for the Army National Guard's 278th Regimental Combat Team.

Michael Newton, acting associate professor of law at Vanderbilt University Law School, said the trial and death by hanging sentence of the former dictator demonstrates the power of ordinary people over tyranny.

"The real theme of this tribunal has been the triumph of law over raw power," said Mr. Newton, who helped establish the Iraq Special Tribunal. "And that's really important because you had ordinary Iraqis, who had suffered through the regime, who sat there and faced not just Saddam but all the other defendants."

He said the Iraqi Tribunal in Saddam's trial was able to adopt as a domestic code the international law that punishes crimes against humanity.

"One judge told me one time that this is opening up a doorway to the greater Arab world for (prosecution of) crimes against humanity," he said.

Mr. Newton said the documents from this trial will serve to build a historical record for future cases.

Spc. John Guthrie, a 278th member who lives in Dayton, Tenn., said the execution signifies a success.

"I feel like part of my mission is complete," Mr. Guthrie, who spent a year in Iraq, said. "People (in Iraq), you just mention the name to them, and they get scared."

But Sgt. 1st Class Ken Manis, of the 278th, said the execution of the former dictator will not make a big difference in the violence in the country. The Iraqi government has to take bigger steps to stabilize the nation, he said.

"Until (Iraqis) decide that enough is enough," said Mr. Manis, who lives in Knoxville. "The Iraqi people are going to have to step up. One person being executed is not going to change things."

U.S. Sen.-elect Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said the hanging is a symbol of justice prevailing.

"I'm glad that justice has been served and upheld," he said.

Mr. Newton said the violence in Iraq is not likely to be affected by the death of the former dictator. Rather, it likely will serve as a stepping stone to a long-term societal healing, he said.

"What they need now is healing ... and just a peaceful society," he said. "But they know that's not what they enjoyed under Saddam. Nobody wants to go back to the Saddam times."

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