

U.S. clashes with al-Sadr loyalists in Baghdad, southern cities Page 3

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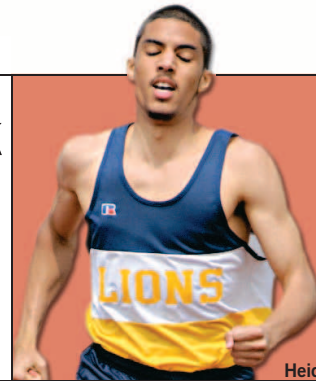
Sunday magazine

Heidi Norton, right, and partner Gina Smith



Justices refuse to block state from marrying gay couples

Page 17



Coverage of Saturday's prep sports

Pages 44-46

Heidelberg's Brandon Grant

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Learning the enemy from outside in

U.S. troops work insurgency's minor players to gain intel

BY TERRY BOYD
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD

To pressure terror cell organizers and insurgent financiers, it falls to soldiers to go after vulnerable second-tier figures.

Grabbing peripheral players is "like cutting the strands on a spider web until it collapses in on itself," said Capt. Steve Marr, Company D, Troop D commander, 2nd Platoon of the 1st Cavalry Division's 9th Cavalry Regiment.

But Marr and others say working intelligence from informants is a broad, imprecise, often inefficient — but vital — effort that requires perseverance, and more than a little bit of luck.

The "schoolhouse definition" of human intelligence is anything derived by analyzing information from human sources overtly or covertly, said Capt. Brian Cunningham, who works in 2nd Brigade intelligence, or S-2. Every U.S. soldier is an intelligence collector, Cunningham said.

SEE SPIES ON PAGE 4

A Special Forces soldier holds up the head of a man referred to as "Target 12" so an informant concealed in the rear of a Humvee can identify him as part of a raid near Baghdad. Iraqi informers can be an important tool in gathering intelligence that may lead to arrests or provide force protection. Four men were arrested during this raid Tuesday.

TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes

Composite