



PHOTO BY RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

SHAPE's Tony Doyle, left, muscles 1st PERSCOM's Michael Diggs as he drives to the basket for a layup during the final of the U.S. Army Europe Unit Level basketball tournament in Heidelberg, Germany.

SHAPE's signalmen take Unit Level title

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The Regional Signal Group-SHAPE completed an unbeaten run through the four-day, double-elimination U.S. Army Europe Unit Level basketball tournament with a 75-68 victory over Heidelberg's 1st Personnel Command in Sunday's championship game.

It was strictly an inside job.

SHAPE's decided height advantage was a big factor as the signalmen expanded a 38-28 halftime time lead with a 20-8 run in the first five minutes after intermission. Twelve of those points came on John Butler layups set up by long outlet passes from SHAPE's inside forces, tournament MVP Tony Doyle and Jermaine Malone. Butler finished with 31 points.

"A little, I guess," Doyle said with a smile when asked whether his team had too much inside presence for the Heidelberg five. He finished with 18 rebounds and 13 points.

Even so, 1st PERSCOM guard Craig Marcelin, an Armed Forces team star who finished with 33 points and five three-point baskets, nearly negated the height differential with a late streak in which he scored 17 of his team's

24 points as the Heidelbergers cut the deficit to 69-62 with 55 seconds left in the game.

They got no closer.

The loss was 1st PERSCOM's second of the tournament to the SHAPE team. The first was a 63-58 verdict in a winners-bracket game on Friday.

"We were down by 21 points to them in the first half" of Friday's game, said SHAPE's Mike Roth, whose four straight free throws on one-and-one opportunities in the final minute finally put 1st PERSCOM away the first time. "But we came back by making adjustments on the fly."

Doyle was more specific.

"It was our defense that made the difference in that game and today," he said. "That's our trademark."

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Army-Europe Unit Level Championship

RSGS SHAPE 75, 1st PERSCOM 68 (Sunday at Heidelberg)

Halftime — Regional Signal Group SHAPE 38, Headquarters, 1st Personnel Command 28

Scoring — SHP: John Butler 21, Tony Doyle 11, Tommie Huxton 11, Mike Roth 7, Jermaine Malone 5, K.C. Braddock 4, Cory Barrett 2; 1st PER: Craig Marcelin 33, Antonio Youngblood 11, Phillip Gordon 9, Duwari Sanders 4, Hollie Still 4, Jimmy McCoy 5, Michael Diggs 2.

Noteworthy — SHAPE's win completed unbeaten run through the four-day, double-elimination event. 1st PERSCOM reached the title game with a 61-62 victory Sunday morning over Headquarters, Heidelberg Medical and Dental Command.