

Tribute to the Troops 2012: A Special That Doesn't Feel Special At All. The Muppets Are Awesome Though

Tribute to the Troops 2012

Date: December 19, 2012

Location: Norfolk Scope, Norfolk, Virginia

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

This is the tenth anniversary of the biggest publicity stunt WWE does every year. The wrestling tonight is going to be light and the ratings are going to be a lot more lax with this show. The main idea here is to have the troops feel good and there's really nothing else to it other than that. Let's get to it.

The standard video from the President and opening video of "it means more to us" start things off.

Sheamus/Randy Orton vs. Dolph Ziggler/Big Show

The governor of Virginia is here. They're playing this up as live or at least recent, as they mention Orton's separated shoulder from the Smackdown that aired 12 days ago. Actually the injury seemed to occur in this match so who knows what's going on. Orton and Ziggler start things off with Barrett pounding away. The commentary is talking about the stuff that happened in the last two nights, so either it was recorded later or they had some BIG spoilers given to Cole and JBL. Show and Ziggler are knocked to the floor and walk away for the countout at 2:20. Well that was pointless.

Oh never mind here's Booker to say continue the match after a break. Back with Orton pounding on Dolph. Sheamus comes in and gets dropkicked down, but Show drops to the floor to tie his boot rather than face Sheamus. There are the ten forearms to Dolph's chest and it's back to Randy to

pound away in the corner. He charges into a boot though and Ziggler takes over. A dropkick gets two for Ziggler and it's off to Show for some pounding. Cole talks about cannonballs and muskets for some reason. Show misses a chop in the corner but Orton's arm goes out. There's the injury.

The referee immediately starts checking on him and we cut to the crowd, presumably to not see the X sign. A tag brings in Sheamus as Orton is looked at on the floor. You can see Cole with his head on his hand so I'm guessing he and JBL are just sitting there, meaning the commentary was done later. Sheamus cleans house but goes up top and jumps into a chokeslam. That's reversed into White Noise for two as Ziggler makes the save, so Orton gives him a very weak looking RKO. Show gets one as well and it's a Brogue Kick for the pin at 12:54 all together, counting the time Booker took to restart the match.

Rating: C-. I know these shows are for the live fans, but for the seventeen people that watch Smackdown every week, these pairings are so old it's not even funny anymore. This is where mixing the main event and midcard would work wonders. Do that on Smackdown a bit and then matches like these aren't as bad. The match wasn't bad but the injury slowed things down a lot and you can't hold that against them.

Fergie says hi.

The US Gymnastics Team (there are four here and the team is the Fierce Five) read off a teleprompter about how much they love the troops. Maybe the fifth was fixing the screen.

Gonzo talks to Pepe and Rizzo but the latter two are busy staring at Layla. Eh the Muppets can make anything better.

Flo Rida performs. I see what else is on.

Cena says everything you would expect him to say.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Ryback

Del Rio says we're here for the troops, but today is also Ricardo's birthday. He asks for a chorus of Happy Birthday, but Del Rio sings in Spanish because he's a heel here...I think? Del Rio is slammed down to

start but a Ricardo distraction lets Alberto get in some kicks to the leg. A powerslam puts Del Rio down but Ricardo jumps on Ryback's back for the DQ at 1:30.

Ricardo takes a Shell Shock, as does Del Rio a few seconds later.

Kid Rock performs.

Josh tries to interview Kermit before he's on MizTV. Statler and Waldorf have some insults of course.

Some soldiers TOUT IT OUT!

Time for MizTV with the Muppets. Miz doesn't want to talk about Kermit's new single, but rather he wants to expose him. Miz wants to know the REAL story about what's going on with Kermit and Piggy. To be fair, that's a REALLY good question. Kermit: "For me, it's still don't ask don't tell." Ok point for a funny line. Kermit says he thought Miz was a good guy, but Miz insists he's just awesome instead of a good guy.

The second guess is Miss Piggy. Miz wants to know what the deal is with these two, so Kermit says they're just a frog and a pig who care about each other. This turns into a REALLY battle, so Miz says let's have them get married RIGHT HERE. Damien Sandow interrupts. Kermit: "HALLELUJAH!" Piggy: "WHAT?" Kermit: "Uh I mean....How dare he???"

Sandow makes fun of Miz and says that 78% of the fans have taken the pictures of the Muppets out of their wallets and replaced them with pictures of Sandow. He says that Miz and Piggy are both overrated hams, causing Piggy to go into karate mode. Miz decks Sandow for her.

Damien Sandow vs. The Miz

This is joined in progress after the break with the Muppets watching from the stage. Miz pounds away in the corner and we head to the outside. All Miz so far as he high fives some fans. Back in and Damien pounds away before we hit the chinlock. Kermit of course is having his nightly crisis on the stage until Miz comes back with a flapjack. The Reality Check is broken up and Sandow hits a kind of running Blockbuster for two, but Miz counters the pin into a rollup for the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here but Kermit freaking out is always funny. I'm a die hard Muppets fan and they've been by far and away the highlight of the show so far. Just fun all around here, albeit with a boring match for the most part. At the end of the day though, if you want Miz to get over, having him defend the Muppets isn't the worst idea in the world.

Piggy kisses Miz post match and he likes it.

The Miami Heat love the troops.

Katie Couric loves the troops.

Flo-Rida performs Wild Ones.

We look back at Tribute to the Troops over the years.

HELL NO is in the back and they need a third man to face 3MB. Bryan has picked Little Jimmy, and Kane likes the idea. Truth comes up and says that Little Jimmy's cousin Ugly Frida is getting married and Little Jimmy has to be there, so it's Truth teaming up with them tonight. After the match is over, they can go to the club or karaoke or kill some spiders.

Kane blames Bryan for this. Bryan: "IT'S NOT MY FAULT! NO! NO! NO!" A voice from off screen says yes, and it's Animal from the Muppets. They shout at each other until Animal calls him Goatface. Bryan turns around and runs into...a talking goat. "Cousin Daniel?" Too funny.

HELL NO/R-Truth vs. 3MB

We cut to a shot of the crowd during HELL NO's entrance, apparently because Kane tripped and nearly fell off the stage during his entrance. McIntyre and Truth start things off with nothing going on. Bryan comes in and fires off some kicks in the corner, but HE HAS TIL FIVE. Mahal puts on a chinlock for no significant length of time before it's off to Kane. He cleans house and pounds on Slater, hitting the side slam and top rope clothesline. Everything breaks down and Jinder and Heath break up a double chokeslam. Truth makes a blind tag and there's the chokeslam to Mahal. Little Jimmy pins Slater at 3:27.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here but it wasn't supposed to be anything

major. HELL NO needs some opponents in a hurry, as the division is already falling back into obscurity like it always has been. 3MB needs more character development as they can only be clueless schmucks for so long.

Kid Rock performs Born Free.

Cesaro makes fun of the USA and says Switzerland is better. He gets Cena tonight.

Sam the Eagle salutes Cena.

Some guy from Twilight and Sharon Stone love the troops.

John Cena vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro doesn't even get an entrance. That should tell you where we're going here. The Muppets introduce Cena, which is completely awesome. Cena pounds him down to start but Cesaro throws him into the corner to take over. They head to the floor with Cena being rammed into the steps. Back in and the gutwrench suplex gets two and here's the comeback. Cena shrugs off everything Cesaro did, hits the Five Moves of Doom and wins with the AA at 5:23.

Rating: C. If you don't get why this match happened the way it does, go watch a test pattern. That's more on your intelligence level.

The locker room empties out and Cena gives a speech about how awesome AMERICA is to end the show. Oh wait there's one more thing: some more wrestlers come out dressed as reindeer pulling Santa in a sleigh. I don't recognize Santa this year but the idea is there. Cena throws gifts to the fans and the wrestler walks around high fiving people to really end the show. A closeup of Santa shows that it might (emphasis on that word) have been Johnny Ace.

Overall Rating: C-. This didn't work for me. I get that it's supposed to be a special, but that's where it falls short: nothing about this felt special. It felt like a dull Smackdown with a few musical performances thrown in to fill in some time. The being in America part is understandable, but it really takes away a lot of the fun from these

shows. It's not bad, but after this many hours of WWE in the previous three days, it was REALLY hard to get into this show. Not terrible, but this should have been the Christmas Eve Raw. No one is going to watch that anyway, so why waste major stories on it? The Muppets were awesome though.

Results

Randy Orton/Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler/Big Show – Brogue Kick to Big Show

Ryback b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Ricardo Rodriguez interfered

The Miz b. Damien Sandow – Rollup

HELL NO/R-Truth b. 3MB – Little Jimmy to Slater

John Cena b. Antonio Cesaro – Attitude Adjustment

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