

Tribute to the Troops 2017: It Is What It Is

Tribute to the Troops 2017

Date: December 14, 2017

Location: Naval Station San Diego, San Diego, California

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the fifteenth annual special and that's rather impressive. You never can know what to expect from these but it's always cool to see WWE do something like this. The wrestling means very little at this show and there's going to be a lot of filler but to complain about that would be missing the point. Let's get to it.

The show is outside again for the first time in a good many years for a very cool setting.

Lillian Garcia performs the National Anthem at her usual amazing standard.

We look at a history of the show.

Shield vs. Samoa Joe/The Bar

Rollins and Reigns start things off with the troops in the audience telling Sheamus he'll get sunburned. Some rapid fire elbows have Cesaro in trouble and it's off to Dean for more of the same. Ambrose gets caught in the wrong corner though and it's Joe hammering away. Everything breaks down and it's the Shield cleaning house in short order. Back from a break with Rollins hitting a suicide dive and making the hot tag to Reigns. Everything breaks down again with Reigns Superman Punching Cesaro for two. The Wind-Up knee into Dirty Deeds drops Sheamus and it's a spear to end Cesaro at 9:49.

Rating: C. I'm going to be a lot more lenient on the wrestling tonight because like I said, it's just not the point. I'd be stunned if a heel wins tonight because this is the definition of a send them home happy

show. You're going to see these teams fight again on a big stage at some point and this was a nice preview.

Post match Reigns says the Shield brings the fight but the people in the audience here bring the big fight. Rollins and Ambrose say similar things and everyone smiles.

The cast of Star Wars loves the troops.

Clips of John Cena's involvement with the troops over the years.

Carmella vs. Charlotte vs. Ruby Riott

Non-title with most of the division on the floor. Ruby bails to the floor to start before sneaking back in to jump Charlotte from behind. Charlotte gets in a few shots of her own but here's Natalya to offer a distraction as we take a break. Back with Charlotte making a comeback but getting caught on top. Carmella pulls Ruby down and hits a Stratusphere for two on Charlotte and things slow down. Charlotte is back up with a double suplex and the rapid fire chops. A big boot sets up the Figure Eight to make Carmella tap at 10:04.

Rating: C. More of the same here with the face dominating and pulling off a win without much effort. Above all else though, how nice is it that the women aren't in the Santa's Little Helpers matches or whatever they want to call it this time? It's really cool to see them have an actual match, even if it's something this simple.

Charlotte thanks the troops, particularly the women.

Package of the wrestlers with the troops.

The cast of Pitch Perfect 3 love the troops.

Luke Bryan loves the troops.

Stephen Colbert loves the troops.

Machine Gun Kelly performs.

The cast of Daddy's Home 2 loves the troops.

Sgt. Slaughter doesn't want a fake Marine like Miz pretending to be the real thing. Dolph Ziggler is here too but doesn't have much to say. Mark Henry comes in to tell Sarge to keep at it.

New Day/Usos vs. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable/Rusev/Aiden English

Before the match, New Day changes up their signature chant to a USA version. Big E. hits the abdominal stretch with some spanking on Gable to start and it's off to Jey for a running Umaga Attack. Jey gets sent outside and into the barricade though as we take a break. Back with Rusev keeping Jey in trouble and Shelton coming in for a hard spinebuster. The Samoan drop allows the hot tag to Jimmy so house can be cleaned. Everything breaks down and the Midnight Hour puts Shelton away at 8:03.

Rating: C-. New Day was a requirement on a show like this as the fans are going to eat them up and the chants are always fun. It was perfectly fine with the right guy taking the fall and the right team winning. If nothing else it's cool to see English getting a chance to do something with that sweet voice of his.

The cast of Ferdinand loves the troops.

The cast of This Is Us loves the troops.

The cast of the Today Show loves the troops.

Sasha Banks/Bayley/Mickie James vs. Absolution

Mandy shoves Bayley into the corner to start but gets forearmed away for her efforts. Mickie comes in to kick away at Sonya and a running forearm gets two. Everything breaks down and they fight on the floor as we take a break. Back with Mandy kneeling Bayley in the face for two but getting caught in a Stunner. Sasha comes in for the running knees in the corner but Sonya makes a save. Mickie's top rope Thesz press gets two on Paige and she dives onto the other two for good measure. Not that it matters as a quick Rampaige ends Mickie at 10:06.

Rating: C+. If any heels were going to win tonight, this makes the most

sense. Absolution needs to stay strong, which includes a match like this. The match was rather energetic and it's fine to have Mickie take a fall as that's pretty much all her job entails at the moment. Of course none of this matters for the most part as Asuka is the big target but we'll get to her soon enough.

Stormtroopers were at the base today as Star Wars: The Last Jedi debuts this weekend.

Machine Gun Kelly performs again.

Clint Eastwood loves the troops.

The cast of Father Figures loves the troops.

Randy Orton/Shinsuke Nakamura/AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal/Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Orton wastes no time with the threat of an RK0 to send Owens bailing to the floor. Back from a break with Owens stomping at Orton long enough that he can bring Mahal in. Nakamura comes in for the knees to the ribs, including the big knee drop for no cover. Mahal takes him into the corner for a bit but Nakamura fights away and gets it back to Styles.

The belly to back faceplant gets two on Owens and Mahal has to break up the Calf Crusher. Orton DDTs both Singh Brothers but walks into a superkick from Owens. Nakamura and Zayn come in as everything breaks down. We hit the parade of finishers, capped off by Kinshasa for the pin on Sami at 10:18.

Rating: C+. Like there was any doubt in this one. Nakamura might not have gotten the best reaction in the world but he has a good looking finisher and this isn't exactly a normal show. Styles and Orton were crazy over of course and there's nothing like beating up three foreigners to end the show.

One last music tribute wraps things up.

Overall Rating: C+. As you might expect, the ratings here mean nothing. This is like wondering what the audience is for a Best Of show or

something like that. Tribute to the Troops is for the live crowd and there's nothing wrong with that idea. The wrestling doesn't matter and as long as there's a good atmosphere, which there was, everything is fine.

Results

Shield b. Samoa Joe/The Bar – Spear to Cesaro

Charlotte b. Carmella and Ruby Riott – Figure Eight to Carmella

New Day/Usos b. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable/Rusev/Aiden English – Midnight Hour to Benjamin

Absolution b. Mickie James/Bayley/Sasha Banks – Rampaige to James

Randy Orton/AJ Styles/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens/Jinder Mahal – Kinshasa to Zayn

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