

Tribute To The Troops 2021: The Fast Version

Tribute to the Troops 2021

Date: November 14, 2021

Location: Toyota Arena, Ontario, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee

It's time for the big patriotic show, which is actually taking place closer to Thanksgiving this time around instead of the usual Christmas season. This one is airing on FOX to make it feel even bigger, though it is just a one hour edition which was taped last month at Smackdown. In other words, they don't seem to be putting in as much effort this year. Let's get to it.

Lilian Garcia sings the National Anthem, as only she can.

Video on the troops and what this show means to WWE.

Big E. vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and commentary does give a brief recap of their history. Robert Roode is here with Ziggler and dig those red, white and blue ropes. Big E. powers out of a waistlock to start and sends Ziggler flying, setting up some gyrations. A kick to the ribs slows Big E. down and Ziggler gyrates a bit as well. That just earns him the abdominal stretch with rhythmic shots to the ribs (I guess that's better than the spanking. Maybe?), setting up the apron splash. Ziggler is back up with a superkick off the apron though and we take a break.

Back with Big E. powering out of the sleeper and hitting some suplexes. There's the Warrior Splash but the spear through the ropes is cut off. Ziggler hits the Fameasser for two and the Zig Zag connects for the same. Big E. pulls him out of the air

though and the Big Ending is good for the pin at 7:57.

Rating: C. This is what you should expect from this show: a quick appearance from a top star and the win not exactly being in doubt. Then again it's not like villains ever win here, but they really shouldn't be. Big E. winning over someone like Ziggler isn't going to do any damage and it feels like he did a little something, so it's standard Tribute to the Troops fare.

Post match Roode jumps Big E. and gets taken out as well.

We hear about a Marine who have learned some new skills and trains a lot. She has even been named Marine of the Quarter.

We look at some of the previous Tribute to the Troops specials.

We hear about a Marine from Brazil who moved to America to be in the military like his father.

Bianca Belair vs. Liv Morgan

They fight over arm control to start until Belair headlocks her down. That's broken up with a headscissors as they're certainly staying basic to start. Fast mind you, but basic. Back up and Belair flips over Morgan, setting up that little dance she does. A running hurricanrana sends Belair into the corner and now she knows she might have to work a bit. Morgan smiles at her and we take a break.

Back with Belair hitting a spinebuster for two but getting caught in a sunset flip for the same. A loud enziguri puts Belair down (the slow motion replay made that look NASTY) with Morgan needing a breather before following up. Morgan's middle rope hurricanrana is countered with a drop onto the turnbuckle though, setting up KOD for the pin at 6:45.

Rating: C. I could have gone for more of this as they were just starting to get going before the match wrapped up. Morgan

has come such a long way in the last few months and I'm glad to see her getting in some bigger spots on the card. Now just do something more with it, because this is only going to get her so far.

Respect is shown post match.

We hear from 98 year old Woody Williams, the country's oldest Medal of Honor winner.

Video on a former member of the Navy who recently retired and is now trying to lead a regular life.

Roman Reigns vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Non-title with Paul Heyman and Rick Boogs as the seconds. Reigns' look of disgust at McAfee's dance during Nakamura's entrance is great. Reigns powers Nakamura down to start and they trade some headlocks. Nakamura tapes him down and drops a knee to the throat (or larynx according to McAfee), setting up Good Vibrations. Reigns knocks him into the corner though and starts firing off the clotheslines. We take a break and come back with...another look at the past Tributes to the Troops and a video on a student at West Point.

We're back to the actual match nearly three minutes after the show came back on the air, as this show continues to be weird. Reigns plants Nakamura with a release Rock Bottom for two and putting on the golden gauntlet. Hold on though as Boogs busts out the guitar solo to break up the Superman Punch. The distraction lets Nakamura hit the spinwheel kick to the face but here are the Usos to jump Boogs. The distraction lets Reigns hit a Superman Punch off the steps and the spear is good for the pin at 9:14.

Rating: C+. This is a match I could go with on a bigger stage, and at least the ending wasn't clean so Nakamura saves some face. Nakamura has come a long way back after such a long stretch of just feeling like he was there, so it's nice to

have something closer to the good Nakamura back. Reigns was his usual self here, without going to that next level he can reach when he needs to.

The Bloodline poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. While it's not a terrible show, it feels like one where WWE almost completely forgot that they were supposed to do it until the last minute. You basically saw a collection of dark matches with a bunch of military videos thrown in. It's not the worst, but this certainly didn't feel like some kind of a big, special show that WWE looks forward to every year. I would have expected a bit more from WWE on FOX, but this is what we got instead. That's not exactly a strong tribute, yet it's not the worst this show has ever done.

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