

FLIGHT TEST

# Propel *Star Wars* Battle Drones

## The perfect drone for any *Star Wars* fan!

BY JOHN REID PHOTOS BY CHERYL MALTBY & JOHN REID



There are times when two passions just seem to collide to create the ultimate must-have products, and Propel has just made this happen for me. Its *Star Wars* battle drones are just about the best aircraft for anyone who likes science fiction and technology.



### HIGHLIGHTS

The first thing you see when opening the shipping box is a sheet describing the collector's edition box with instructions on how to break the seal and reveal the display platform that the vehicle is mounted on. When you open the box, the display comes alive with lights, music, and sound clips (each time that it is opened, a different clip plays!).

There are three different *Star Wars* drones available, and each is hand painted (so no two are exactly the same) and has a unique serial number. The models are the Tie Advanced X1, 74-Z Speeder Bike, and the T-65 X-Wing, and each comes with the appropriate transmitter and two unique battery packs. Also included are a charger, a protective training cage (for new pilots), extra propellers, a propeller multitool, spare parts, and a nicely written manual.

The first thing I did was to start charging the battery packs, then I installed the props onto the drones. Each drone comes with a faux battery cover that is used when it is in the collector's box; this will

be removed and replaced when the battery is ready. I had time to read the 37-page manual, and I recommend that everyone read it before flying as it's loaded with lots of tips for flying and how to perform evasive maneuvers. With that out of the way, all that was left to do was to get another pilot and start my combat missions.

### AERIAL RECAP

If you've never flown a quad before, you will want to snap on the protective cage for your drone and turn on the T-mode, which is intended to help ease new pilots into flying. When the drone is in this mode, it is governed by an invisible ceiling of approximately 6 feet and a "floor" that prevents the ship from touching the ground. The drone will also take off and land by itself (when instructed to do so). This is a great mode for anyone's first battle flight.

With the T-mode disabled, the drone can perform some radical moves with speed. Your controller has two buttons that allow the drone to perform either a clockwise or counterclockwise roll. In addition, you can speed the drone up three

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Each battle drone has its own unique flying characteristics and look. In addition to these three, the Millennium Falcon will be coming out in the spring of 2017.

### AT A GLANCE

- MODEL**  
Star Wars Battle Drones
- MANUFACTURER**  
Propel (propelsw.com)
- TYPE**  
Mini battle drones
- SIZE**  
80mm
- ASSEMBLY TIME**  
10 minutes
- FLIGHT DURATION**  
5 to 7 minutes
- CAMERA QUALITY**  
Not applicable
- PRICE**  
\$199.00 each

### WE LIKE

- + Display case
- + Hand-painted designs
- + Easy to fly and great flight performance
- + Battle tallies on the transmitter

Star Wars fan or not, you will have a blast flying these quads.



### Let the Battle Commence!

After learning how these birds fly, you will, of course, want to head into battle. After all, isn't that why you signed up for the rebellion flight school? First things first: Protect your belly! The infrared receiver for each drone is located on its underside. Practice maneuvers that allow you to drop behind and slightly lower than the enemy. To help, each manual has a number of different maneuvers for each vehicle. In most cases, you will score a hit if you are two to three meters away in bright sunlight, the signal distance is greatly reduced, so you will have to fly closer to your enemy. When flying inside, however, the signal will bounce off walls, especially white ones. The plan of attack here is to stay close to the center of the room so that there is less chance for your opponent to score a hit. Hopefully, you will be able to push them to the outside of the room so that you can score the ricochet shot from the wall. Now that you're armed with that knowledge, get out there and attack those battle drones!

levels for some quick and fast flying, especially indoors. Throughout, Star Wars music plays from your transmitter for that little bit of extra inspiration.

The object is to get three hits on your opponent before he or she can score three hits on your aircraft. When you score the first hit on an aircraft, it will rock back and forth. The second hit will cause it to rock

back and forth a little longer and with a bit more intensity. The third and final score will cause the aircraft to auto-land in a spiraling downward direction. After 10 seconds of no activity, the ship will reset and be ready to fly again. All three Star Wars battle drones have solid flight performance in the air and respond well to stick inputs. Pilots of all skill levels will enjoy flying these drones.

#### BOTTOM LINE

Having battle drones that resemble Star Wars vehicles is very cool, but add in the sounds, music, lights, and the maneuverability and flying speed and you are going to have a great time with these drones. Whether you are a new or veteran pilot, into Star Wars or not, these drones are a lot of fun to fly. Be sure to get at least two! ✈

Each unit has a matched transmitter that plays the appropriate movie sound clips for the vehicle.



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