



The Fortress kit includes a conventional Tx - and a set of training gear - highly recommended for those first few flights

Reviewed by Office Staff

Fortress

A bigger EP heli from Silverlit...

It had to come! Silverlit Picoo EP helis are long established as amazing performers - a quart's worth of fun packed into a half pint package and their tiny size meant that they could be flown in the smallest of halls and, when you had the hang of them and had trimmed them out, could be flown in ones own living room. Their popularity (and reasonable price) is verified by the fact that you can go to any indoor RC meeting in any part of the country and you can bet there will be at least one Picoo hovering in one corner of the venue - often many more waiting their turn on one of the three 27mHz frequencies available. Enter the Silverlit Fortress, a larger 3-channel EP heli that is claimed to have incredible stability with complete control in both yaw and in forward and backward movement. The Fortress has a main rotor diameter of 33cm (13") but retains the contra-rotating head design. It's available in two colour schemes, the canopy design being slightly different for both the blue and red machines. The heli comes with a training set of carbon rods and moulded foam balls, which have to be fixed to the undercarriage skids using short lengths of wire. The instructions

make it quite clear that it is highly recommended to fit the training gear before making the first flight - we concur that this is good advice as some trimming will be necessary and the gear certainly removes a lot of the possibility of rotor damage during initial flight testing. The other recommendation that the ADH test team would make is to wait until you have a large open space before attempting to fly!

The Fortress comes with a comprehensive set of accessories - the heli itself, a conventional two-stick 27mHz Tx with two switchable bands (A & B), screw-in extending aerial, a lipo charger with a mains transformer, a 7.4v x 300mAh Lipo flight battery, training gear set, spare blades and connecting rods, two Tx control caps (more on this later) and an instructional DVD. This last item is very useful and even if you are an experienced Picoo pilot, we recommend taking the time to play it through.

Whilst the Tx left hand stick has simple vertical movement to control rotor speed, hence height, you have options regarding the right hand stick, being supplied with three different clip-in

caps, which are configured to give different stick movement options - they are suggested to be changed as your ability and control skills improve, starting with three movements, simple left, right and forward movement, progressing to proportional movement left, right and forward - and then proportional movement in all directions, including

backwards - the idea being that the restricted stick movement reduces the speed at which things can go wrong, giving you a bit of thinking time - and straightforward trimming options. The Fortress can be trimmed in both yaw and forward and backward axes, by adjusting two slide trims adjacent to the right hand stick. ✪

Bigger (and better?) than the Silverlit Picoo series of helis, the Fortress has sleek, modernistic lines.



In-flight handling

We found that once airborne, it was better for a second person to move the direction trim slides as directed by the pilot, rather than the pilot himself. The alternative is to make numerous flights, adjusting the trim a little between each, until you are happy with the overall trim.

The sit of the Fortress on the ground shows a lean to the right (when viewed from behind) - this is intentional and is caused by two raised feet on the port undercarriage skid. This is to aid the take off and prevent the Fortress skidding to the left when the throttle is advanced. As is normal, you need to open the throttle quickly to about 75% movement to get the Fortress to rise above ground effect disturbance and very fine adjustment of stick opposition is necessary to maintain the heli in hover. Most beginners tend to over control using excess stick movement and so it takes a little time to get used to the differing stick techniques - the left stick needs steady control at all times, whilst the right stick inputs need to be short and frequent i.e. don't hold the stick over too long! To move forward and backwards, you must adjust the direction of the nose in yaw first so that the nose and tail are aligned in the direction you want to move.

Our team reported that the Fortress, once trimmed, is a delight to fly and the larger size made it more impressive than its smaller brothers and the forward and backward movement made it a far more satisfying machine, despite being that much more difficult to fly than the smaller

Pilot's verdict

The Fortress is a step closer to the conventional fixed head rotor heli flying experience - for a fraction of the price - if you want to try a heli but don't want to make a major investment, then the Silverlit Fortress may be the way forward for you!

"The Silverlit Fortress is larger than the Picoo, is 3-channel, with incredible stability with complete control in both yaw and forward/backward movement."



Alex (right) shows Joe just how close he can get the Fortress to the camera!



What's in the box?

- Fully assembled heli
- Conventional 27mHz Tx
- Flight lipo pack
- Mains operated charger
- Spare blades and connecting links
- Interchangeable control caps
- Training gear set
- Instructional DVD
- Instruction manual



Spare blades, connecting rods, optional control caps - and an instructional DVD are included.

Who's it for?

Indoor chopper jockies wanting to experience a bigger Picoo machine

Value for money?

Certainly - it got the thumbs up from our test team. Both demanding and satisfying.

Specifications

- Manufacturer: Silverlit
- UK distributor: Flying Toys
- Rotor diameter: 130mm
- Battery: 7.4v x 300mAh Lipo
- Radio: 27mHz 3-channel, 2 band settings
- Price: £69.99