

## HALO – ODS Drop Pods (McFarlane Toys) Review by Jonathan Aird

**H**ALO, as far as I know, is a computer game of some sort that is very popular with the main characters of *The Big Bang Theory*. Beyond that, I have to admit that I know absolutely nothing about it but judging by the contents of this package it's a shoot-them-up combat game based in some sort of science fiction setting. What really matters to this review are the spin-off toys, and this set attracted my eye on the shelf of a local discount store. They were very attractively priced at £1.99 and a web search indicates that the full RRP in the UK is £10 and in the USA \$10. The set consists of two drop ships, one in the process of landing and one crashed into a crater. Alongside these are three small figures representing a trio of power armoured troopers. The figures are about 20mm tall, but are closer to 15mm figures in proportion. My idea was that the drop ships, and probably the figures as well, would be useful for a 15mm SF skirmish game such as *Laserburn* or *Imperial Commander* (or any number of more recent games such as *Alien Squad Leader*).

The ships are very nice little models, about 5cm in length, and are designed to be one-man drop ships (the doors open up to show a one man crew interior) but are large enough that they certainly wouldn't look ridiculous with a squad of three or four emerging from them as demonstrated in the following pictures.



When viewed through the packaging, I had originally thought that the two ships would be the only items of real interest, but it turned out that the crater for the crashed drop pod is a very nicely made item as well. Since the set includes a flying stand for the pod without deployed landing feet, it is possible to use the crater as a separate item of scenery and I intend to do just that with it. It's pre-painted, which makes it a wonderful timesaver, and is ready for use as a shell crater or similar on a future battlefield. It would make a useful replacement for destroyed buildings in a 6mm game as well. The drop ships could also be used with 6mm figures as larger space to ground transports or large enough for a squad or two of infantry or even for one or more armoured vehicles (depending on size!). They could, of course, also be used as fully fledged spaceships in a space combat game or they'd be impressive objects with small-scale spaceships, and would fit in alongside the Star Wars X-Wing battle game spaceships as shuttles or small transports.

Another added bonus in the set was the quality of the figures; I had really expected them to be little more than plastic blobs, and so was pleasantly surprised to find them very usable alongside other armoured-up science fiction troopers. Having opened one box up, I was impressed enough to go back and get a couple more, so for a total outlay of just under £6 I have six drop pods, three very usable pieces of terrain and a squad of nine power-armoured troopers. That is quite a bargain and whilst I'd have hesitated at full price, I would fully recommend getting them at discount prices or twice the price (£4/\$6) would still have been remarkably good value and it isn't often you get to say 'cheap at twice the price' and actually mean it! There were other items advertised on the back of the packaging or including one set with a couple of wheeled vehicles which looked to be the best other set to keep an eye out for or apparently there is a range of larger boxed sets as well, which sound as if they could also be worth looking for. Who knows, perhaps 2014 is destined to be a year of 15mm SF?

