

A Test of Mettle

After the breakout in Normandy, the Americans raced towards the Westwall. The Germans were looking for an opportunity to halt the advance. At times the German generals had a chance to try and execute a really effective counteroffensive, like in September 1944.

A Test of Mettle is the first title in a new 'professional edition' series published by **High Flying Dice Games** (earlier Paul Rohrbaugh published his games in DTP style). The game comes in a counter-tray with a transparent lid and has very good, double-sided, die-cut counters. The game contains three titles that have been published before, and so comes with the 11"x17" maps, and three rulebooks of about 8 pages each. There is only one Terrain Effects Chart which also holds the needed modifiers for game play.

Three modules, one system

The three modules in *A Test of Mettle* are:

- *Tough Hombres*: the battle between the American 90th Infantry Division and the German 106. Panzer Brigade, reinforced by Volksgrenadiers, near the town of Mairy;
- *Revanche!*: the 2nd Free French Armored Division, commanded by General Leclerc, against the 112. Panzer Brigade, near Dompaigne;
- *Patton's Finest*: the 4th US Armored Division meets two German Panzer brigades, the 111. and 113., at Arracourt.

The games make use of the 'Blood and Steel' game system, a chit pull system used earlier by Rohrbaugh in a game covering the battle at Prokhorovka. Both players put a number of activation chits into an opaque cup and draw them blindly. The number of chits to be put in the cup is determined by the time of day (day/night), and the size of the unit. The elements of a player's force are divided into formations, each with its own specific number of activation chits. A chit can activate a formation as a whole, but also just 1 or 2 units in the formation. Sometimes the number of units to be able to activate is determined by a die roll. Only the first drawn activation chit counts. If you draw another chit of this same formation in another turn, it is put aside. The uncertainty this creates makes the system well suited for solo play. Once a formation has been activated, its units can move, fire, or use a combination of both.

Conclusion

A Test of Mettle shows the progress being made by *High Flying Dice Games*. The game is well executed and looks very professional. The game system itself is very interactive.

Text: **Hans Korting**

Rating: 8

Author: Paul Rohrbaugh

Publisher: High Flying Dice Games

Number of players: 2

Play time: 1 hour per game

Pros: well executed, high replay value

Cons: some slight traces of DTP versions in the rulebook