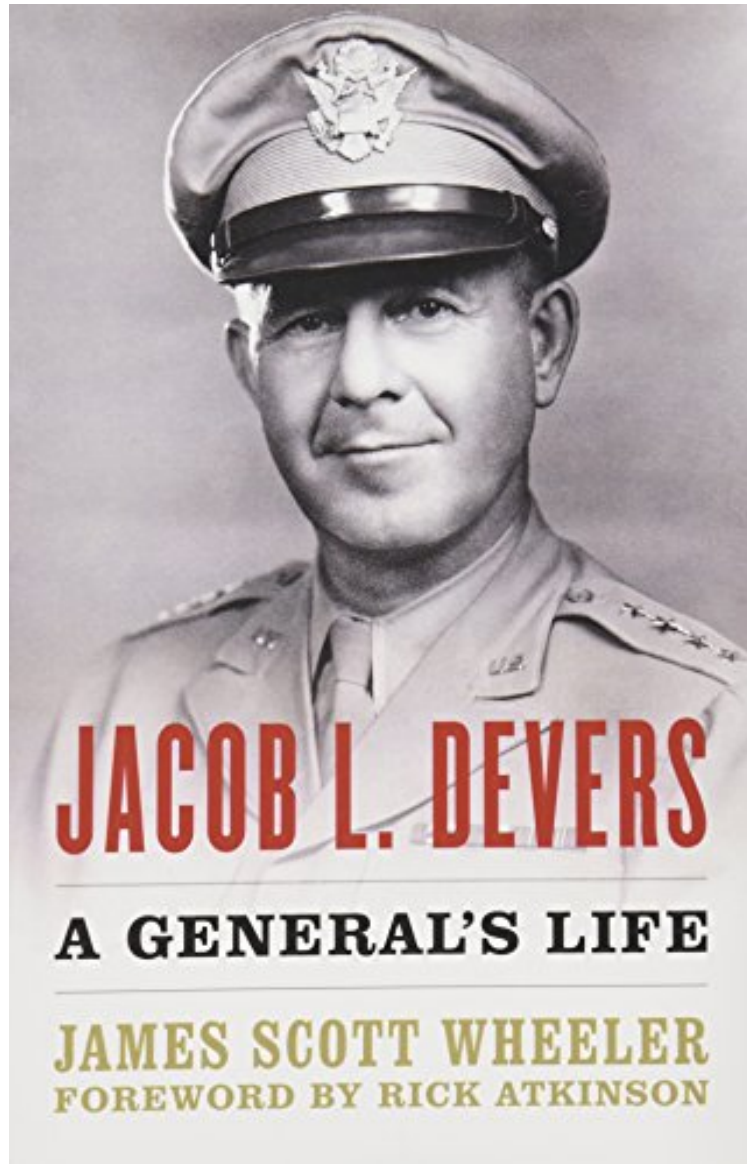


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Jacob L. Devers: A General's Life (American Warrior Series)

James Scott Wheeler

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#1029175 in Books James Scott Wheeler 2015-09-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 1.80 x 6.30l, 2.20 #File Name: 0813166020616 pages Jacob L Devers A General s Life American Warrior Series | File size: 33.Mb

James Scott Wheeler : Jacob L. Devers: A General's Life (American Warrior Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jacob L. Devers: A General's Life (American Warrior Series):

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. The forgotten general that Ike didn't like By Paul Carmody "Jacob L. Devers, a General's Life" is the biography about the general that Ike didn't like. I came to buy this book after

reading Rick Atkinson's excellent "The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 (Liberation Trilogy) (Hardback) - Common" which chronicles the war in the west against Nazi Germany from D-Day to V - E Day. Atkinson said about Eisenhower's negative view of Devers: "Eisenhower sold Devers short." I wanted to know more about this man whom history barely remembers. Even in Atkins's book, Devers gets relatively small mention. The index reveals that Devers receives only a small fraction of the space that either Field Marshall Montgomery or General Bradley get. This is all the more amazing since Eisenhower had exactly three army groups under his command, the 21st Army Group under Montgomery, the 12th Army Group under Bradley, and the 6th Army Group under Devers. What gives? Was Devers good, bad, or indifferent as a general? I searched for a suitable biography but I found none. That void has been filled with this book. It is a complete rendition of Jacob Devers life from birth to death. It has more than a thousand notes and an eight page bibliography so I will have plenty of future reading to do as I explore this niche of history. And to think, it took only 70 years from the end of World War II for this to be published. Certainly, the high point of Devers military life was his service in WWII. The book provides an excellent presentation of his efforts leading up to and during the war. Although he had been an "artillery man" until 1940 Devers was called upon to build Ford Bragg followed by forging the armored forces starting in mid-1941. In May 1943 Marshall then called on Devers to take over the 8th Air Force and then he transferred to become deputy commander in the Mediterranean. He led Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France. He drove what would become the 6th Army Group in fast pursuit of the retreating Germans more than 480 miles in less than a month and linked up with up the other army groups. This pursuit along with many other examples in the book shows that Devers was a master of logistics. The French army was under his command which was a challenge. The book thoroughly explores his relationship with the French and especially General de Lattre. As was Devers way, he kept in close communication with de Lattre and made the inspired choice of selecting Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. as his liaison with the French. Devers did his part to assure that the French stayed true allies. After the armies linked up on September 12, that autumn proved difficult for the allies; Montgomery endured the pyrrhic result of Operation Market Garden and Bradley suffered defeat in the Huertgen Forest. Devers, on the other hand, had success driving through the Vosges Mountains and liberating Strasbourg although the Colmar pocket was a bulge that formed and would be a thorn in the side of the Allies for months to come. Author James Scott Wheeler provides in-depth reporting of the dysfunctional relationship between Eisenhower and Devers. This dysfunction clearly hurt the Allied war effort. The insights from the text allowed me to make some sense of what led to Eisenhower's off-hand rejection of Devers detailed plans to cross the Rhine River in November 1944. The Eisenhower-Devers dysfunction became even worse when Eisenhower commanded Devers to retreat from Strasbourg to shorten the allied lines during the Battle of the Bulge. I look on Devers ultimately successful effort to hang on to Strasbourg as his "finest hour." The reprisals that would have occurred with the gifting of Strasbourg back to the Germans is a chapter of history that will thankfully never be written, in part due to Devers efforts. General Marshall held Devers in high regard but other generals such as Bedell Smith and Omar Bradley held Devers in low esteem. And yet objectively he performed well during the war. It can be fairly argued that he was the best of the three army group commanders. I was surprised to discover that Devers excelled at selecting equipment. He argued for big guns on tanks and opposed the flawed tank destroyer doctrine. He was a driving force behind the development of the amphibious trucks called DUKW's which proved vital for supplying the army until ports could be opened up after each amphibious invasion including Operation Overlord. After retirement he recognized the potential of the AR15 rifle which ultimately developed into the M-16. The book also pleasantly surprised me by describing in-depth Devers relationship with African Americans. Devers is shown to be a fair man who made sure that African Americans were treated like human beings in a time when such treatment was not assured. No mention is made of Devers views of civil rights but he clearly enjoyed their company and employed an African American couple for about 30 years until his death in 1979 at age 92. A large portion of the book deals with the period of time between WWI and WWII. By following Devers life of many different assignments with few and far between promotions, I got a sense of how challenging that period of time was to be a member of the army. I found it especially interesting how he and others improved the techniques of artillery utilization during that lean time. On the negative side, there is no listing of maps in the table of contents and the maps themselves are often difficult to read partly because they are black and white. I frequently used a magnifying glass to examine the maps. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Read this to REALLY understand WW II in Europe By dave palmer Scott Wheeler has filled a major gap in the historiography of the Second World War with this biography. Jacob Devers stands among the giants that war, but until now the depth and breadth of his contributions have lain largely overlooked by historians and the general public alike. Perhaps because of Devers's own quiet modesty--he never wrote his own memoirs as did virtually all others of his stature. His significance is told in the simple fact that he was General George Marshall's "go-to" man, the person the Army Chief of Staff turned to time and again when extraordinary leadership was needed, both before and during the war. He ended the war one of the three army group commanders on the Western Front in Europe--the other two being American Omar Bradley and Englishman Bernard Montgomery. In this exhaustively researched and excellently written volume not only does the unique personality of Devers leap from the pages, but the reader is treated to probably the best concise narrative ever written about the journey of the American Army from the pre-war WW II

era through that conflict to the post-war roots of the Cold War. The word "definitive" is too often thrown around loosely, but in this case it fits--Wheeler has provided the definitive work on Jacob Devers. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Account of the "Other" American Army Group Commander in Europe during WW2 By James A. Rosebrock A must read account of the "other" American Army Group commander in the European Theater in World War 2. This is a complete biography of the life and service of Jacob Devers. I already knew that Eisenhower seemed to dislike and distance himself from Devers and now I understand why. This book really balances out and elevates Dever's role and reveals that Eisenhower, though indispensable to Allied victory, had a leadership style that was frustrating to all of his subordinates. Devers along with Leslie McNair played a tremendous part in the development of the American Army and this book clearly reveals this understudied aspect of the war. If for nothing more than a better understanding of the American team during World War 2, get this book; but it is a great, well researched stand alone account of the life of this important figure. More than many biographies, Mr. Wheeler also follows the life of Dever's wife and daughter and the role they played in his life. My one frustration was the maps that appeared to be copies of topographical maps that were very difficult to read. They were fuzzy and the names were hard to make out. Any student of World War 2 needs to add this important book to his library.

General Jacob L. "Jake" Devers (1897–1979) was one of only two officers—the other was Omar C. Bradley—to command an army group during the decisive campaigns of 1944–1945 that liberated Europe and ended the war with Nazi Germany. After the war, Devers led the Army Ground Forces in the United States and eventually retired in 1949 after forty years of service. Despite incredible successes on the battlefield, General George C. Marshall's "dependable man" remains one of the most underrated and overlooked figures of his generation. In this definitive biography, James Scott Wheeler delivers a groundbreaking reassessment of the American commander whose contributions to victory in Europe are topped only by General Dwight D. Eisenhower's. Wheeler's exhaustively researched chronicle of Devers's life and career reveals a leader who demonstrated an extraordinary ability to cut through red tape and solve complex problems. Nevertheless, Eisenhower disliked Devers—a fact laid bare when he ordered Devers's Sixth Army Group to halt at the Rhine. After the war, Eisenhower's and Bradley's accounts of the generals' disagreements over strategy and tactics became received wisdom, to the detriment of Devers's reputation. An essential contribution to twentieth-century history, Jacob L. Devers provides a fresh and nuanced interpretation of the senior command during World War II and offers a new perspective on a highly accomplished soldier.

"Jacob L. Devers: A General's Life successfully combines the story of Devers's private life with that of his military life and career to provide a first-rate profile of both the man and the general. The scholarship is impeccable. Wheeler's discussion of the Devers-Eisenhower controversy is the best and most thorough account I have read."—Carlo D'Este, author of *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* "This book will become the standard work on Devers. Although offering a sympathetic portrayal of Devers, Wheeler does not sacrifice his basic objectivity. There is also a spark of controversy because the book calls into question the traditional view of Eisenhower's management of his American subordinates."—Stephen R. Taaffe, author of *Marshall and His Generals: U.S. Army Commanders in World War II* "Jacob L. Devers: A General's Life is a major contribution to revising the traditional account of World War II in Europe. Wheeler gives us a very different view of Eisenhower in particular and the senior command relationships in general during 1944–1945."—Jonathan M. House, author of *A Military History of the Cold War, 1944–1962* "[. . .] [R]etired Col. James Scott Wheeler has closed a serious gap in the historiography of the U.S. Army during World War II [. . .] and has redressed an imbalance in historical assessment of Devers' career and leadership in combat.[. . .] It is decidedly a work of professional scholarship weaving the Army story throughout."—AUSA "James Scott Wheeler has crafted a biography which exposes the career of Jacob Devers to an audience largely unaware of the incredible service he provided to his country. [. . .] This [is an] extremely valuable contribution and an important asset in our understanding of World War II."—*On Point* "Wheeler has crafted an excellent biography of a general whose accomplishments were pivotal in defeating the Wehrmacht. After years of relative obscurity in the historiography of World War II, Devers's time has arrived."—H-Net "Wheeler's book is highly recommended for all history audiences — an extraordinary story about an extraordinary man who simply did not see himself that way."—*Military* "[. . .] [A] thorough, readable, solid analysis that does credit to its subject."—*Journal of Military History* About the Author Col. James Scott Wheeler, USA (Ret.), is a retired professor of history at the United States Military Academy. He is the author of several books, including *The Big Red One: America's Legendary 1st Infantry Division from World War I to Desert Storm* and *The Irish and British War, 1637–1654: Triumph, Tragedy, and Failure*.