

Monday, 4 February, 2002, 17:39 GMT

Hitler's final witness

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Mrs. Mary Mueller

Mrs Junge transcribed the Fuehrer's final document

Adolf Hitler, one of the greatest mass murderers in history, is remembered by his secretary as a kind and paternal man who ate little aside from mashed potato and passionately loved his dog.

Hitler's secretary, the last surviving witness from his inner circle, has finally published her memoirs of the final days of the German Fuehrer.

Traudl Junge, now 81 and suffering from cancer, was just 22-years-old when Hitler selected the slim blonde from a pool of hundreds of young applicants to become one of his secretaries, in December 1942.

“
I admit, I was fascinated by Adolf Hitler - he was a pleasant boss and a fatherly friend
”
Traudl Junge

As Soviet troops began their advance on Berlin in April 1945, Mrs Junge - then Miss Humps - followed her boss into the relative safety of the bunker beneath the chancellery.

It was here on 28 April, as the bunker shook with each explosion outside, she took down what was to be the final document of the Third Reich, Hitler's last will and testament.

Two days later, Hitler and his newly wed, Eva Braun, committed suicide.

The 'modest' dictator

Mrs Junge has frequently been called upon by historians seeking eyewitness accounts over the last fifty years, but her book, entitled *To the final hour*, is the first time memories penned herself have been published.

She says her book is an attempt to "seek reconciliation with myself", but stresses she knew nothing of the planned extermination of millions of people.

"We were in the wings, and yet we knew nothing of what was going on on the stage. It was only the director who was familiar with the play."

And that director, she writes, was a captivating figure.

"I admit, I was fascinated by Adolf Hitler. He was a pleasant boss and a fatherly friend. I deliberately ignored all the warning voices inside me and enjoyed the time by his side almost until the bitter end."



Hitler used to get excited about his dog's ability to jump

"It wasn't what he said, but the way he said things and how he did things."

Such things included his modest appetite, and the way he ate only side dishes - always avoiding meat.

His Austrian cook Kruemel believed that life without meat was not worth living, and would often try to sneak a little animal broth or fat into the meal.

"Mostly the Fuehrer would notice the attempt at deception, would get very annoyed and then get tummy ache. At the end he would only let Kruemel cook him clear soup and mashed potato."

After a light breakfast, one of Hitler's favourite activities was to walk his sheepdog Blondie.

"Hitler's greatest pleasure was when Blondie would jump a few centimetres higher than the last time, and he would say that going out with his dog was the most relaxing thing he could do."

The final call

But by the last few days of April, Hitler had apparently decided that German defeat was inevitable, and that his options were few and far between.

He called Mrs Junge to him. "Are you well rested, my child?" he asked. "I have something to dictate to you."

It was on 28 April that Mrs Junge discovered that Hitler and Eva Braun would commit suicide. "I wrote as fast as I could," says Mrs Junge. "My fingers worked mechanically and I was amazed that I made scarcely any mistakes."

Shortly after the dictation, Hitler and Eva Braun hastily married before an official.

On 30 April, Eva Hitler donned a black dress and took some poison. Hitler shot himself in the mouth as he bit into a capsule of poison.