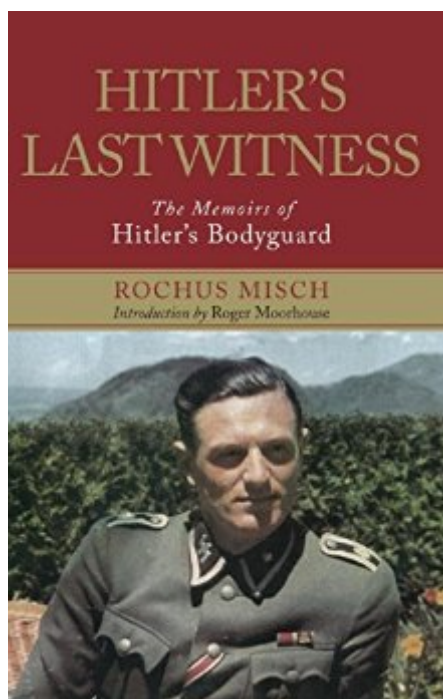


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Hitler's Last Witness: The Memoirs Of Hitler's Bodyguard



Synopsis

After being seriously wounded in the 1939 Polish campaign, Rochus Misch was invited to join Hitler's SS-bodyguard. There he served until the war's end as Hitler's bodyguard, courier, orderly and finally as Chief of Communications. On the Berghof terrace he watched Eva Braun organize parties; observed Heinrich Himmler and Albert Speer; and monitored telephone conversations from Berlin to the East Prussian FHQ on 20 July 1944 after the attempt on Hitler's life. Towards the end Misch was drawn into the Führerbunker with the last of the 'faithful'. As defeat approached, he remained in charge of the bunker switchboard as his duty required, even after Hitler committed suicide. Misch knew Hitler as the private man and his position was one of unconditional loyalty. His memoirs offer an intimate view of life in close attendance to Hitler and of the endless hours deep inside the bunker; and provide new insights into military events such as Hitler's initial feelings that the 6th Army should pull out of Stalingrad. Shortly before he died Misch wrote a new introduction for this first-ever English-language edition. The book also contains new introduction by Roger Moorhouse.

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Customer Reviews

The world changed on the 30th of April 1945, when Hitler chose to take his own life. Most people know this and there have been tons of books written about it. This book, is not another copy of that event. This is not the portrait of a man of power, nor is it the story of someone famous for knowing someone in power. This is a human story of a simple man, told from his viewpoint, in his own words--words that are both haunting and exciting for anyone interested in the history of war, the Nazis or Hitler. Rochus Misch was not a Nazi. He never joined the movement. He lived until 2013 and was the last remaining member of the Fuhrerbunker. He was a man who through fate and as a result of a terrifying injury was sent to work closely with Hitler. This book is his story. Some of the events he recounted were surprising, some of them familiar. By his own admission, Hitler was "the boss." He viewed him as simply an ordinary man that he worked for. Along the way, Rochus mentions several times that he was chosen to occupy the position simply because he did not cause trouble. I found this book incredible. To listen to the actual viewpoint of Mr. Misch, telling his story in his own words rather than those of a third-party biographer was amazing. So many things accepted as fact in history have been recounted differently here. This is a look inside the walls of a popularly misunderstood compound and at the lives of the men closest to Hitler. The human side of a man we tend to believe was nothing but evil is revealed in the course of this book, making it a very thought-provoking account. From dealings with Eva Braun, to his duties for Hitler, Rochus Misch has allowed us entry into a world rarely glimpsed.

If you have an interest in Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich, "Hitler's Last Witness" is a book you must read. Written by Rochus Misch, a member of Hitler's personal staff and one of the few who accompanied him into the Bunker during the waning days of World War II, this is a rare inside account of Hitler the man. As a man who actually knew Hitler during the war years, Misch's book is full of personal touches. For example, Hitler, the terror of millions, was known to his subordinates as "The Boss." Misch saw him as a great person to work for, a man who loved movies, teaching his dog tricks and taking time to chat with the lowliest members of his staff. While acting as Hitler's bodyguard, courier and telephone operator, Misch's recounts having tea with Hitler's sister, serving tea to film maker Leni Riefenstahl and discusses how "The Boss" and Eva Braun presented themselves to the world. His most interesting chapters deal with the period spent in the Bunker. Here he witnessed Hitler's and Braun's marriage and finding their bodies shortly thereafter. He also was present in the Bunker when Magda Goebbels murdered her six children and when the Goebbels' followed their Fuhrer's example and committed suicide. But perhaps more interesting is

Rochus Misch himself. He can be a frustrating writer, telling us mundane tidbits about the man he served, while ignoring the bigger picture. But he does not come across as an introspective man. Indeed, he is an ordinary man living in interesting times. What struck me was that he was such a man of contrasts. He never joined the Hitler Youth or the Nazi Party, but he became a member of the SS (in order to have a better opportunity at getting a civil service job after his military service was over.

Few people had ready access to the Fuhrer, Adolph Hitler. Few who did lived to tell stories of the man and his actions from the inside. Rochus Misch, a member of Hitler's staff and later, in charge of the telephones where Hitler stayed from time to time, was the last surviving member of this small group. Misch tells his story of how he came to his position. He insists throughout that he knew nothing, and heard nothing, of the millions of deaths in the concentration camps while serving Hitler. Indeed, he writes that he only ever saw one report on the camps, and that from an International Red Cross report that "contained nothing disturbing." At the outset, I found this idea . . . highly difficult to believe. Yet, when I read Misch's story, I found he was able to reiterate the smallest of details of Hitler's daily life and moves, yet he seemed rather uninterested in larger affairs. His concerns were simply to "do his job" for the Third Reich, and not to cross any lines that might get him in trouble as he had seen others do, only to find themselves on the front line "or killed. He barely noticed when a colleague "went away" (which meant he went to a concentration camp or was sent to the front). One example was of a guard who, failing to keep a mosquito from Hitler, was sent packing. For his part, Misch stuck to the rules. He wouldn't even dance with Eva Braun when Hitler was away and she threw a spontaneous party, because "she was the Fuhrer's girl." It was the little details of Germany before and during WWII, of the lives of Hitler and his associates that I found most intriguing in this read.

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