

ROBERT N. COOMBS
Witness to Nordhausen

- 12:51 Replacement in early 1945 in 104th Timber ^{walks} Division. Because of combat record, slated to spearhead for Japan. Home first, then war over.
- 15:44 Recently had reunion - film.
- 17:40 Eisenhower didn't go into camps. They came into it very quickly - enemy on run. Resistance by fanatics, SS only. The 104th was moving really fast. 3rd Army Division on tanks.
- 18:24 Nordhausen-those alive were walking out the gates. "I was amazed they could walk."
- 19:36 Remembered one "kid" - gave him an orange. Prisoners just wandered out, didn't know where to go.
- 20:38 Some of the guys went into camp, but I didn't. House/cottage near front gate, where a man and woman were hung in bathroom. Didn't appear that they were executed. "A lot of shame."
- 22:19 Didn't just kill Jews. Anyone in his way. Catholic family owned newspaper. "Doesn't make me feel better that it happened to others." SS was crazy.
- 23:24 Only there for 1/2 hour. Panzer unit was headed for Elbe. Our own soldiers fanatic, sometimes wasn't proud to be American.
- 24:39 Took town after Nordhausen. Incident: captured German officer alive.
- 28:26 Didn't see Germans (non-combatants) in Nordhausen, except those hung (they were in their 50's). The guards were long gone. Prisoners were numb and weak.
- 30:10 May, 1945 Saw supertrain travel. Jubilant even though going to other camps in Russia.
- 31:37 Didn't go into Nordhausen. Heard about it. As far as I wanted to go. Knew man was capable of doing it. "I'd do anything, storm the beach... but go into concentration camps."
- 33:15 Important to keep alive history and the idea that it happened.
- 34:15 Doesn't want daughter to be anti-German. That's not being a good Jew or Catholic. But should know it could happen again.
- 39:52 T.V. Films good for children. Religious education doesn't give them the bad stuff i.e. Spanish Inquisition. "I think they should."
- 46:27 Soon will have newspaper, complete with history of division, including pictures of Nordhausen. Will give give copy to Holocaust Center in Peabody.