

## Memorial Far East Prisoners of War

Darkness had fallen when a group of Prisoners of War, among them Fergus Anckorn, walked down the gangplank of the SS *Orbita* at Liverpool docks on November 9, 1945. During October and November repatriation ships carrying 37,000 men who had been captured by the Japanese in the Far East during the Second World War returned to Liverpool and Southampton.

At Liverpool there was no welcome party. The passengers were ushered straight into covered lorries and driven to a church hall where they were given a meal and spent the night. The next day Anckorn was put on a train to London. He was met by his brother and fiancée on the concourse at Charing Cross. Anckorn, now 92, recalls: "I felt

numb. I shook my brother's hand and then I said hello to my fiancée. That was it. It seemed unreal."

The Researching Far East Prisoner of War Association History Group has now launched an appeal to raise money for a memorial to remember the Far East Prisoners of War and civilian internees, like Anckorn, who returned to Liverpool during that autumn. Last month was the 65th anniversary of the docking of the SS *Orbita* at the Princes Landing Stage in Liverpool. However, until now there has been no mention of the journey these ships made on the memorials at Pier Head.

Anckorn, a gunner with the Field Artillery, had fought for only five days in Singapore before he was wounded.

He was eventually taken to work in camps along the Burma-Siam railway, where he spent three desperate years. After the war Anckorn became a lecturer in shorthand and French at a college in Kent. He continued to suffer nightmares almost every night until six years ago when he visited Singapore with his son. "To see Singapore now you would never think that there had been a war," he says. "And on that trip I had my last nightmare."

*Donations, by cheque or postal order, should be made payable to "Researching FEPOW History" (write "Memorial" on the back) and sent to: Mike Parkes, 34 Queens Road, Hoyle, Wirral CH47 2AJ. [researchingfepowhistory.org.uk](http://researchingfepowhistory.org.uk)*