



Tyneside Irish and Tyneside Scottish bear the burden of the highest brigade casualties in the British Army during the Great War. Every year on St Andrew's Day and St Patrick's Day they are remembered at the cenotaph in Old Eldon Square in the centre of Newcastle.

Officially numbered the 103rd (Tyneside Irish) Brigade, it contained four Pals Battalions from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, largely made up of men of Irish extraction. The 102nd (Tyneside Scottish) contained Tynesiders with Scottish connections. The men were all volunteers drawn from communities all over the North East.

The first notice giving indication of the raising of a Battalion from the Tyneside Irish Community came in a letter to the Editor of the Newcastle Evening Chronicle on Saturday 12th September 1914 informing of a meeting on Sunday 13th September in the Collingwood Hall, Irish National Club, Clayton St, Newcastle upon Tyne, and every representative Irishman on Tyneside regardless of politics or religion was asked to consider it his duty to attend.    • Early recruits were given a piece of green cloth to wear as an armband, to denote that they had volunteered for the Irish Battalion. In the same way, the Newcastle Commercial wore a red lanyard and the Tyneside Scottish a Royal Stewart armband.

The Brigade's four Battalions were known as the 1st to 4th Tyneside Irish. When taken over by the British Army, these became Battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers:

24th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (1st Tyneside Irish)  
25th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (2nd Tyneside Irish)  
26th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (3rd Tyneside Irish)  
27th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (4th Tyneside Irish)  
The reserve battalions were the 30th and 34th (Reserve) Battalions, Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Irish).

102nd (Tyneside Scottish) comprised

1st Tyneside Scottish (20th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers)  
2nd Tyneside Scottish (21st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers)  
3rd Tyneside Scottish (22nd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers)  
4th Tyneside Scottish (23rd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers)

Along with the 101st and 102nd Brigades, the Tyneside Irish made up the 34th Division which arrived in France in January 1916 and first saw action in the Battle of the Somme on 1st July that year.

The 1st Tyneside Irish suffered 620 casualties on that day (18 officers and 602 other ranks), its commander, Lieutenant Colonel L.M. Howard, was among the dead. The 4th Battalion suffered 539 casualties (20 officers and 519 other ranks). While the commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were both wounded, as was the Brigade commander, Brigadier General N.J.G. Cameron.

The 4th Tyneside Scottish battalion lost 629 men (19 officers and 610 other ranks), the third worst battalion loss of the day. The 1st Tyneside Scottish lost 584 men and the 3rd Tyneside Scottish lost 537 men. All four battalion commanders were killed (the 2nd Tyneside Scottish's commander had been killed shortly before the battle).

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Prayers for the Tyneside Irish Brigade 17th March 2022 - delivered by Rev Kate Watson 17th March 2022

If you hold faith be held to it now, if you do not I simply ask that you share in this moment of reverence and solidarity...

In the heat of memory we recall  
that for every victory  
there is a loss;  
that for every ceasefire  
there is a sniper;  
that for every liberation  
there is a prison;  
that for every peace agreement  
there is a continued conflict;  
if not above our skies,  
if not in our waters,  
if not in these islands,  
if not on our doorstep,  
then in some forgotten field.  
We will remember them.

Goodness is stronger than evil.

Love bears, believes and hopes all things.

Light sees through the deepest darkness.  
Truth lives where the freedom sings.  
Power is made perfect in the weakness.  
Justice will open the doors of fear.  
Courage roots in true compassion,  
Gives to hope the power to spear.

Amen.

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