



Charles Francis Conway.

Early Life.

- ▶ Due to discrepancies in the census and other sources, the exact date of Charles' birth isn't known precisely. However we do know it was between 1897-1899.
- ▶ Charles was born to John Conway and Mary Jane Ruttle in Abbey Street, Tralee.
- ▶ Charles' mother Mary Jane was a Protestant and church records show that on the day of her wedding to John, 5th of July 1894, she converted to Catholicism and was baptised.
- ▶ According to records Charles was baptised on the 15th of August 1899 and his Godparents were Patrick Kennedy and Bridget Corridan both of whom lived in Abbey Street as well.
- ▶ The 1901 census shows that Charles had 4 brothers, John, Michael, William and Robert.
- ▶ The census also shows that a cousin, Michael Dineen, lived with the family in 43 Abbey Street.
- ▶ The family lived in a three roomed private dwelling.

▶ An interesting article by The Kerryman in 1912 states that a 13 year old Charles and his three friends John O' Brien, Michael Sullivan and Thomas Meara were accosted by a local Constable as they stood at a corner flicking lighted matches and using bad language.

▶ The newspaper read:

Constable Keogh summoned John O' Brien, J. Michael Sullivan, Thomas Meara and Charles Conway from Abbey Street for using bad language.

Constable Keogh said that they were using very bad language.

Chairman- To each other?

Constable- No, your worship, to respectable people passing.

Chairman- This is disgraceful.

▶ Charles was fined 5s.

- ▶ Charles is missing from the 1911 census however it does show that Charles' mother gave birth to two more boys Daniel Joseph and Richard between 1901 and 1911.
- ▶ Charles' mother Mary Jane Ruttle died in 1911 aged 39.
- ▶ Interestingly the 1911 census shows that a 21 year old servant girl moved into the Conway household that year and that her name was also Mary Jane.
- ▶ Mary Jane Ryan would soon marry John Conway and they would have 7 children together.

Recruitment in Kerry

- ▶ There are many factors which would have encouraged Charles to join the British Army back in 1914.
- ▶ Living in a poverty-stricken area such as Abbey Street, a steady income would have been a very appealing thought.
- ▶ The idea of leaving Tralee and seeking adventure in faraway lands would have excited a young teenage boy like Charles.
- ▶ The political climate of Ireland could also have been a deciding factor. The popularity of John Redmond and his encouragement of young Irish men to join the war may have lead Charles to France.

- ▶ Autumn of 1914 saw a large number of Tralee recruits.
- ▶ We can only assume that Charles was one of these men.
- ▶ He would have enlisted in Ballymullen Barracks which was the hub of military activity in Kerry and home to The Royal Munster Fusiliers.
- ▶ We do wonder however how a boy as young as Charles (either 15 or 17 at this stage) was allowed to join an Army that specifically stated that only men between 19-30 could enlist.

8th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers

- ▶ Charles joined the 8th Battalion of The Royal Munster Fusiliers.
- ▶ The Battalion joined the 47th Brigade, 16th (Irish) Division under the command of Major General William Hickie.
- ▶ Training commenced in October 1914 in Fermoy.
- ▶ They then moved to Mitchelstown in November and to Templemore by February 1915.
- ▶ They returned to Fermoy in May 1915 and had a full battalion of 950 men at this stage.

- ▶ The Battalion were moved to Dettingen Barracks, Aldershot, England in August 1915 for final training.
- ▶ They were ready for battle on the 8th of December 1915 and travelled to Southampton.
- ▶ They set sail from Southampton on board the “Empress Queen” at 6.00 a.m. on the 17th of December and arrived at Le Harve on the 18th.
- ▶ The Battalion headed for the trenches near Loos-en-Gohelle where they remained until August 1916 carrying out many raids along the Loos sector.
- ▶ They were then transferred to the Somme on the 30th of August.
- ▶ Here the 8th Battalion fought alongside the Connaught Rangers as they took Guillemont Village.

Charles' Death: The Battle of Ginchy.

- ▶ After failing during the summer of 1916, the British decided to try to take the village of Ginchy again on the 9th of September 1916.
- ▶ This mission was to be undertaken by the 47th and 48th Brigades (Charles being part of the 47th)
- ▶ The attack was planned for 4.45 p.m. and at this time the 48th Brigade rushed the German lines from the south west.
- ▶ At 4.48 p.m. the 47th attacked from the south. It is said that the 47th came under fierce German fire.
- ▶ Eventually by 5.30 p.m. the 48th Brigade had taken Ginchy.
- ▶ The 47th however lost 450 men, including Charles.
- ▶ It can therefore be concluded that Charles Francis Conway died between 4.48 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on the 9th of September 1916.

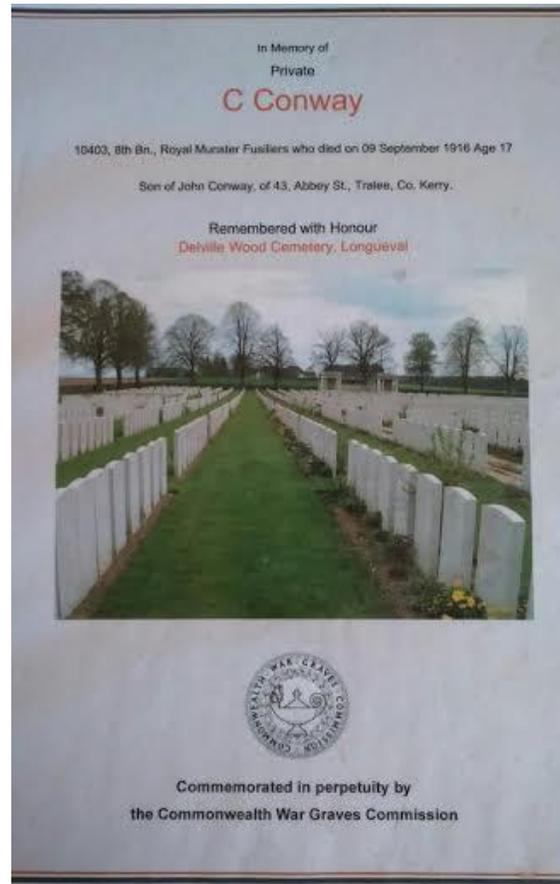
“Death Penny”.

- ▶ The figure of Britannia can be seen holding a wreath of leaves and acorns.
- ▶ The two dolphins represent the British sea power.
- ▶ The lion symbolises the British Empire.
- ▶ The lion can also be seen at the bottom attacking the imperial eagle of Germany.
- ▶ The penny reads, “He died for Freedom and Honour”
- ▶ Charles’ parents would also have received two other medals, The Allied Victory Medal and a medal with the face of King George V on it.



Burial.

- ▶ Charles is buried in Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval.
- ▶ His grave reference number is XVI. O. 3.









- ▶ While carrying out my research I found out that my great-grandfather, Denis Tangney, may have known Charles Conway
- ▶ Denis and Charles both fought in the 8th Battalion of The Royal Munster Fusiliers. This Battalion was known for its high number of Limerick recruits therefore many of the Tralee recruits would have stuck together.
- ▶ My great-grandfather was also quite young when he joined the war (early twenties).
- ▶ Denis would have also fought in the Battle of Ginchy however he survived and went on to sustain a shrapnel injury in his thigh during the Battle of Ypres. He carried this injury for the rest of his life and walked with a limp

Thanks.

- ▶ I would really like to thank everybody that helped me during my research especially;
- ▶ Martin Conway, Maureen Conway O' Sullivan and Stephen Fernane who provided me with so much information about Charles and his family. Thank you for also providing me with the WW1 bayonet and Charles' death medal.
- ▶ My uncle Robert Tangney whose book "The History of Ballymullen Barracks", was an invaluable source in tracking the movements of the 8th Battalion.
- ▶ My History teacher, Mrs. Barry who told our class about this competition and encouraged us to enter.
- ▶ Radio Kerry and Tralee Today who assisted me in finding Charles' Relatives.
- ▶ My Mom, Dad and Grandmother who have been very supportive and extremely interested in the entire project.