

Charles was born in Auckland, New Zealand on 7th April 1892, the son of Henry Clayton and Emma Hampton Clayton, nee Fleming.

On 11th August 1914 he joined the AN&MEF stating that he was a Law Clerk and single, giving his father at Copeland St, Eden Terrace, Auckland. On 13th Jan 1915 he was appointed Lance Corporal and promoted Sergeant on 14th Jan. He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 28th Jan 1915.

On 3rd Jan 1916 he joined the AIF as part of the 19th Reinforcements of the 3rd Battalion. He stated that he was a School Master (Private School). On 10th Jan he was made acting Sergeant and between 23rd Feb and 20th March attended the Musketry School.

On 21st July he was appointed acting Company Sergeant Major and departed Sydney aboard the WILTSHIRE on 22nd August arriving in Plymouth on 13th Oct 1916. On 21st Jan 1917 he was promoted Corporal and joined his battalion in France on 13th May 1917.

On 19th May 1917 he was appointed 2nd Lt and then promoted Lt on 1st November. On 22nd November he married Emily Baynes Ingles and he and his wife returned to Australia aboard the MEGOTONIC, departing the UK on 9th Jan 1920 and arriving home on 27th Feb 1920. His appointment with the AIF was terminated on 20th April 1920.