Stafford Claude Moller was born in April 1893. Residing in semaphore, he grew up in Glanville, South Australia. A practicing Christian, Moller belonged to the Church of England. Moller had seven siblings (4 sisters & 3 brothers). His mother was named Alice Leonard (Moller) and his father John Clarence (Moller). He later married Jessie Anne and gave birth to Robert Moller. After finishing primary school, he attained a job as a Stevedore. This involved unloading cargo from ships and other practical jobs at a wharf. Because of this occupation, it is likely that he worked at Port Adelaide, the main port in South Australia at the time.

In January 1916, aged 22 and 9 months, Moller enlisted for the Australian Imperial Force. He did not leave Australia for another six months, when on 9th June 1916, he departed with the 43rd battalion. Firstly, they stopped at Egypt, where the Australian forces based much of their training during the first world war. This is likely where Moller practiced his physical training. They then proceeded to England where they completed more training, theory based. Then, on 25th November 1916, the 43rd battalion, joined the other Australian forces on the Western Front, in France. The battalion spent the first 6 months of their service locked in trench warfare.

After spending their first months in the trenches, the 43rd battalion was involved in the Battle of Messines from 7-14 June. This was the first major victory for the Australian Imperial Force and played a vital role in future endeavours of the British army (during WW1). On 10th June (1917), during this period, Moller was injured. It can be assumed that the injury was relatively minor, as Moller was not administered to hospital. Instead, he was sent to Corps school for training for three days, before re-joining the battalion.

After this strenuous battle, the 43rd battalion spent time resting and reorganising. Whilst members of the battalion served in minor missions, it wasn’t until the battle of Passchendaele that Moller was involved in combat again. Also known as the Third Ypres, this battle was fought between July 31st and November 10th (1917). Located in Ypres Salient, this battle was one of the most significant victories for the British at the time. The 43rd battalion didn’t join this battle until September 20th , however months prior to this had been slow, mainly due to bad weather, and so the British hadn’t made the advancements they wanted to. However shortly after the Australian divisions arrived, weather improvements made for better fighting conditions. The fighting during this time was bloody on all accounts, as many men feel under shell and machine gun fire.

Moller was among those injured. On the 11th of October Moller was hit by a bullet to the shoulder, fracturing his left scapula (shoulder area). This injury was more serious than his prior, and as a result Moller was sent to England to an Australian Auxialry hospital. The injury wasn’t life threatening, however it was a long recovery, and also as this was the second occasion of which he had been wounded, Moller was kept in England.

In October 1918, Moller returned to France to join the 43rd battalion during the end stages of the war. Moller’s return to the Western Front is a testament to the ANZAC spirit which many Australian soldiers demonstrated during the First World War. After spending 14 months in what can only be described as hellish conditions, Moller chose to continue is service in returning to his battalion, rather than retiring as medically unfit. Despite being injured twice, he still felt it his duty to serve his country, something hardly considerable in todays society. This, among other factors, was one of the most renowned views of the Australian Forces and can be attributed to much of the success which the allies had during the war.

During his time away, the British forces had continued fighting on the Western front, mainly attacking the Hindenburg Line. Set up in 1917, this German line of defence, was now the last defence the axis had. By September, after 56 hours straight of bombardment, this line was finally broken by the British, and for many it marked the British victory.

Moller returned to the Western front on the 10th of October 1918, in Metingy. Shortly after (about 6 weeks after the Hindenburg Line was broken and 4 weeks after Moller returned), the axis officially surrendered, meaning the British, amongst others, were victorious. However, although the German’s had surrendered, and an armistice signed, Moller and the rest of his battalion did not return to Australia until almost 5 months later. Furthermore, Moller was not officially discharged from the Australian Imperial Force until September 31st, 1919.

Like all Australian soldiers, Moller was awarded a British Victory Medal for his contribution to the victory of the allies.

There is little information about Moller’s life subsequent to his return to Australia, however it is likely that he returned to his original occupation as a stevedore. Stafford Claude Moller died on the 2nd of October 1956, aged 63. He was buried at Cheltenham Cemetery in Cheltenham South Australia, where his headstone read “Husband of Jessie, loving father of Bob. Late 43rd Batt. 1st A.I.F”.