

## What Happened to Pvt. Buford Paskel Layne?

By Jackie Layne Partin (2020)

Monteagle gave a lot, as did all of Grundy County, during WWI. Monroe and Rebecca Jane (Cox) Layne had four daughters; then five sons joined the family, my grandfather Alex Layne being the eldest and Buford Paskel Layne, the youngest. They had a difficult life under Forrest Point on the north side of the plateau. It was nothing but a rockpile, but with all hands onboard they managed to survive and face whatever was thrown their way. Some still tell me they remember the old Monroe Layne place, but it is unlikely that anyone in Monteagle remembers the baby of the family, Buford.

Dear Reader, do you have a Bucket Wish list? Maybe you want to jump from an airplane in a skydiving venture or bungy jump from a tall bridge. Go for it! There is an old, old tree on this old farm where I have lived the last thirty-two years. When my grandson, Stokes, was a small child, he named that tree "I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT MY GRANNY TREE!" Somewhere down in my mental Bucket Wish list, I have an embedded desire to climb to the top of that tree. Now that I am so old, my family won't hear of me doing such a thing. But more important than climbing that old tree, I have a deep need to help others climb their trees, ancestral that is. I have more climbing to do on my own two trees—the farm tree and the ancestral—I want to find the life and death of my paternal great uncle, Buford Paskel Layne before my little branch decays.



**The real "I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT MY GRANNY TREE!"**

Somewhere in life, or death, I lost my great uncle, Buford. If one did not look at the *Census* record of **1910**, then he might not have ever been known as part of our family. Then the discovery of his WWI Draft registration on **Sept. 12, 1918** brought support that he did exist having been born **Sept. 24, 1900** in Monteagle, TN. Now folks I am a tough old bird, but when I first saw this document and noticed that this young man worked hard as a section-hand laborer on the railroad, and that he told Mr. W. D. Bennett that his nearest relative was his mother, **Rebecky** Jane Layne, my eyes filled with tears. Her name was Rebecca; “Rebecky” was an endearing reference to a beloved mother from her young, loving, southern, mountain boy whose father had passed away a few years earlier; whose four sisters were all dead, and whose four brothers were off to other places building their own lives. There were just the two of them, “Rebecky” and Buford, left under that cold bluff above Layne’s Cove. Little did either know that the word “cold” would, less than a year later, become 45° below 0° for young Buford.

**PANDEMIC, Covid 19**, and variants thereof, are words familiar to young and old today (**2019/2020 /2021**). Young Buford registered for the WWI Draft in the middle of the **Spanish Flu Pandemic** of **1918**. Ironically, his registration document is the last known presence of my great-grandmother Rebecca Jane (Cox) Layne. She is not in the **1920 Census** record; there is no death certificate. She may have succumbed to the Spanish flu as her baby son left for his call to duty. Until **Dec. 30, 2020**, I did not know what the assignment was for young Buford or if he even lived to accept a military assignment. Michael Fromholt, a wonderful researcher, helped me find Buford after he left home, and as happy as I was to find out that he did not just fall off the face of the earth, I was equally saddened by his still undecided story which I am endeavoring to piece together.

On **Apr. 6, 1917**, the U. S. A. declared war on Germany after news that Germany tried to incite Mexico to turn on the U. S., plus more egregious interferences against United States ships. Please let it suffice for me to say that WWI had been going on since **July 28, 1914**, originating in Europe, and the U. S. tried to stay neutral, but that approach did not work. On **Nov. 11, 1918**, Germany signed the Armistice at Compiegne ending WWI. Now, let’s tie Buford Paskel Layne into our history lesson. Just two months before WWI ended, Buford had registered in Monteagle for the draft. One would think that Buford could have stayed home with his elderly mother and continued piling stones along the Nick-a-Jack trail in order to clear a spot for more raspberry plants. But not unlike today’s politics, the U. S. just seemed to feel a need to get involved in Russia’s Civil War and of all places on earth to get involved, in Siberia, Russia was the worst.

However, on **Aug. 15, 1919**, nine months after the supposed end of WWI, Pvt. Buford P. Lane, (*Layne ancestors and descendants recognize three spellings of our surname – Lain, Lane, and Layne*), boarded a transport ship called the **USAT Logan** and departed at Ft. Mason, California. “Fort Mason, once known as San Francisco Port of Embarkation, US Army, in San Francisco, California, is a former United States Army post located in the northern Marina District, alongside San Francisco Bay. Fort Mason served as an Army post for more than

100 years, initially as a coastal defense site and subsequently as a military port facility. *Wikipedia.*" I have yet to find any enlistment or basic training documents for him, but he ended up in the QMC (*Quarter Master Corps*) military unit. He stated that his next of kin was his brother Paris Lane, who was Paris Francis Layne, Sr., also a military man. This maybe gives me a clue that their mother "Rebecky" had passed between 1918 and 1919 Sadly, in the official VA papers the date **Nov. 21, 1919**, is given as the death of our soldier Buford P. Lane. I could then take a deep breath and put my years of searching for him into following him as he left port until his death, a very short period, but time about which a family genealogist wants to know. I had three months and six days to place him in history before his death. What happened to Pvt. Buford P. Lane/Layne during that time?



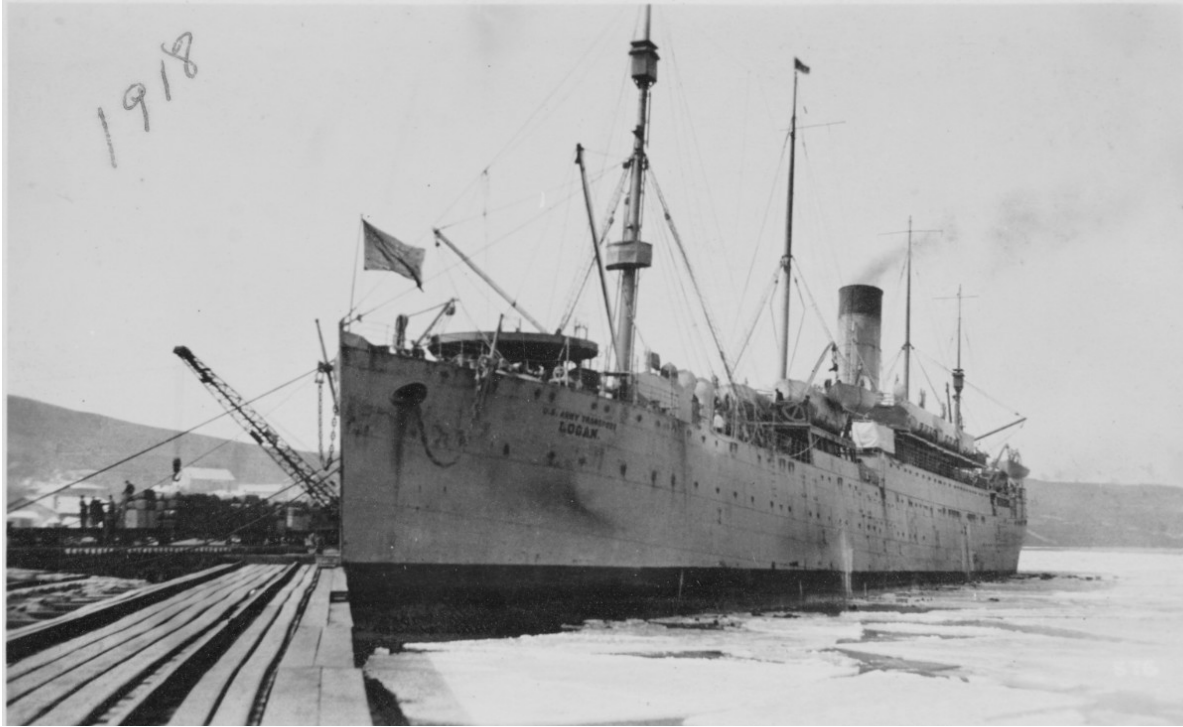
Laynes Cove's handsome, young Pvt. Buford Paskel Lane/Layne (1900-1919)

A copy of the photo came into my possession merely because I can talk and beg. In my younger years I visited my paternal aunt, Artie Mai (Layne) Lappin in Columbia, TN. Buford would have been her uncle, but because of his early death, she would have

never known him. Even though she was aging and sickly, she allowed me to pull some photo albums from under a small bed and just sit and go through them. She sat near me and told me the names of the ones I did not recognize. The moment I saw the photo of the young soldier I asked her, "Who is this handsome young man?" She responded immediately, "I don't really know, but I have always thought he was one of Daddy's brothers." I knew; I knew without doubt that the photo was Buford – the strong, square, Cox family chin he inherited from his mother gave him away. If ever a family member spoke of this young soldier, the words never got to me. Why did his niece appear to cherish his photo by at least placing it in an album and not an overflow box?

Now there seems to be some confusion about "Find A Grave" having Buford listed as being buried in the Summerfield Cemetery. I'm guilty, totally guilty of having my name stuck everywhere when it comes to the history of Grundy County, Tennessee. Years ago, when I realized that my grandfather had a younger brother that no one living knew anything about, and when I became interested in genealogy, I dove into the dark ages and assumed when someone disappeared from radar during a worldwide Spanish flu pandemic, then he or she had died and was quietly, carefully buried. So, I alone with my faithful Word processor buried Buford with his mother, father, sisters and another brother. That is the way that I remembered my grandfather explaining the cemetery plot and fieldstones to me. Ironically, there are no death certificates for my g-grandparents, their daughters or Buford even though most died after the year **1908** when death records were required to be kept. (Let me make a note here to mention that I am one who writes stories spending as much time as possible getting them historically right – but I am not a historian by any means.) Could I be wrong as to where Buford was buried?

A portion of the official list of the "Logan's" passengers is inserted below. #91 passenger is Buford, never to be heard of again, and #93 is Pvt. Jasper E. McWilliams of Collinwood, Tennessee. My inquisitive mind wanted to know if Jasper got home and lived a productive life, and he did, so the ship didn't sink and kill all its passengers. I have my father's discharge papers, two of Buford's brothers' discharge papers, but have yet to find any discharge papers for g-uncle Buford. If he died on his mission, then he would have had no discharge papers, so my thoughts went to pondering his death. How? Where? Buried where? His story never ends. I wonder if he could vote when he registered for the WWI Draft? Could he legally drink the moonshine liquor Perry Egbert "Pewter" Garner and others made all around the plateau of our mountain? Those questions are not important because he could shoot a gun; he could kill a human enemy; he could unload ammunition or help load a troop transport; he could fight; abilities that counted in time of war. He was just eighteen-years-old.



The transport ship "Logan" carried Buford away, across the Pacific turning northwest toward Siberia.

Did Buford know where he was going? Did he know why he was going? Did he tell any of his family what lay ahead for him? If so, it was never passed down to any of his family, or they did not talk about it. Buford's brother, my grandfather Alex Layne, lived in the house with us all my unmarried life. Was this expedition another Rohna affair, as in a WWII happening? Was it a secret military venture? Was it too frightening to let the world know what was happening in the terminus country? Or finally, was Buford just doing his duties as part of the Quarter Master Corps: seeing to supplies, food, ammunitions, payrolls, transport of troops, burials of soldiers, removal of wounded back to help stations, etc.?

Some believe that the words on the ship manifest stating: "SIBERIAN PRESIDIO REPLACEMENT DETACHMENT NO 4" meant that the ship was carrying infantry replacements the particular time that Buford was on the ship's manifest. The group on the ship was the 17<sup>th</sup> Siberian Co. The ship took port at Vladivostok, Russia before **Dec. 7, 1919**. On that ship with Pvt. Buford P. Lane was Pvt. Troy Attaway of Reagan, TN. Two months, two weeks and one day later Pvt. Attaway was on a ship named "Sheridan" that departed Vladivostok, Russia on **31 Oct. 1919** and arrived in San Francisco on **Dec. 7, 1919**, sixteen days after Pvt. Buford P. Lane died. Attaway had enlisted on **July 11, 1919** and released on **Feb. 25, 1920**. Also, on the "Logan" was Jasper E. McWilliams of

Collinwood, TN. He came back to his home and reared a family. At this point my research is between a rock and a hard place. What happened to Buford?

We understand that Buford P. Layne was involved somehow with the allied forces in the Russian Civil War. It certainly was not a popular thing for President Wilson to send young Americans to aid one faction of the warring Russians. The following is an excerpt from the *Lansing State Journal*, 15 Nov. 1919. "... and after a hard winter's fighting we are still at a loss to know why we played the part we did in the Russian civil war, yet today the bodies of our men (the writer lost six of the finest American boys that were ever moulded) our friends, and fellow soldiers are arriving from that frozen north country and has the Entente told those weeping mothers and the friends who saw them fall, what these brave lads gave their lives for.") This article was published in Lansing, Michigan one week before the death of Pvt. Buford P. Lane. Was he on the battlefields of the infantry? Or was he still back at the port of entry doing some kind of QMC duty? Some infantry soldiers had already been fighting in Europe, but were 'by hook or by crook' sent to help in the Russian Civil War only if they did non-combative jobs.

Had Buford told any of his family what might lay ahead for him? If so, it was never passed down to any of his family, or they did not talk about it. Buford's brother, my grandfather Alex Layne, lived in the house with us all my unmarried life but never spoke about his baby brother. Was this expedition another USS Rohona affair, as in a WWII happening? Was it a secret military venture? Was it too frightening to let the world know what was happening in the terminus country or province? Or finally, was Buford just doing his duties as part of the Quarter Master Corps: seeing to supplies, food, ammunitions, payrolls, burials of soldiers, removal of wounded back to help stations, etc.?

The "Logan" disembarked in Russia. In the notes section of the ship's manifest are the words: Siberian Presidio Replacement Detachment No 4. "*The American Expeditionary Force, Siberia was a formation of the United States Army involved in the Russian Civil War in Vladivostok, Russia, after the October Revolution, from 1918 to 1920. The force was part of the larger Allied North Russia Intervention. As a result of this expedition, early relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were poor. Wikipedia.*"

*"The Allied intervention in Russia would continue throughout the end of World War I and the peace negotiations at Versailles, from which the Russian Bolsheviks were excluded. By **October 1919**, White Russian forces were in full retreat in the south, and Lenin and his Bolsheviks had effectively consolidated power for their regime. Recognizing the futility of their intervention in the costly and distant conflict in Russia, Allied forces began to withdraw. By the time the American troops completed their evacuation of Vladivostok and Archangel, 174 of them had been killed in action or died of wounds incurred over the course of the intervention."* And yet Pvt. Lane had not even left Ft. Mason in San Francisco! Two purposes of having the transport ship "Logan" in action during the Russian Civil War were to "*transport elements of the US Army Siberian Expedition to Vladivostok, Russia in December 1918 and to transport the 27th Infantry*

*from Vladivostok to San Francisco in September-October 1919.” “In the summer of 1919, the White regime in Siberia collapsed. By August 1919 plans were made to withdraw the British forces and by 1 November the last of their troops had been withdrawn...”*

## Monteagle Boy Reported In Siberia Casualties

Washington, Dec. 4.—Buford P. Lane, of Monteagle, is listed in the latest casualties in the American expeditionary forces in Siberia. This soldier, who is a son of Paris Lane of Monteagle, died of disease.

*Sequatchie Valley News*—Dec. 11, 1919; {Error—Paris Lane is Buford’s brother}

It took years and many different theories as to what happened to my g-uncle Buford, but to my surprise a good friend, Ms. Ey, sent me the above clipping this morning (Jan. 8, 2021) and lit up my day. My research had come to a screeching halt for years, but because of the willingness of other researchers to help me, I probably have all the information I will ever be able to find on Buford. After reading the clipping and studying the history of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia, I have concluded that Buford died of the Spanish flu and was buried in the cold, cold, soil and ice of Siberia, Russia.

Below is the ship’s manifest with Pvt. Buford #91 shown onboard. I don’t know why, but it really seems sad to have found that he was interred in Siberia without any family knowing that his body was placed in the soil and ice of a country that the U. S. A. should not have been involved. Sometimes our family tree news is not uplifting.

Class 3rd PASSENGER LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING OUT THIS FORM

Separate lists of TWELVE COPIES EACH will be filed out by each company or detachment commander as follows:  
 1st Class: Officers arranged according to rank. Army Field Clerks, Field Clerks, Q.M.C., Nurses and Civilian Employees. Names to be numbered consecutively beginning with No. 1.  
 2d Class: Non-commissioned Officers down to and including color Sergeant. (See A. R. Par. 5).  
 3d Class: All Enlisted men below color Sergeant (See A. R. Par. 5), arranged according to usual formation of the Company, that is, BY SQUADS.

To be filed in by Separation	the full name of organization including company and territorial designation	SIBERIAN	Item Number	Place
To be filed in by Embarkation Personnel	Name of Transport or Commercial Steamer	LOGAN	10015, 1910	FORT MASON CALIF

No.	NAME AND NUMBER	Rank & Initial	Organization	NOTIFY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. (Give name in full, for example: Mrs. Mary A. Smith)	Relationship	ADDRESS (Number, Street, City and State). Do not abbreviate.
83	ATTAWAY, TRUY 6319064	PVT QMC	17th SIBERIAN COMPANY	LEE RAINY	UNCLE	RFD # 3 REAGAN TENN
84	BARBER, JOE 6450054	PVT QMC		MARGARET BARBER	MOTHER	GENERAL DELIVERY YOUNGSTOWN OHIO
85	BROWN, WILLIAM H 6319070	PVT QMC		JOHN BROWN	FATHER	ROUTE 7 BOX 39 RUSSELLVILLE ALA
86	FINKELSTEIN, KEFFIE R-3119412	PVT QMC		ESTER FINKELSTEIN	MOTHER	216 80 HARRISON ST WILMINGTON DELAWARE
87	GARBER, SAMUEL 6423984	PVT QMC		HARRY GARBER	BROTHER	BOX 304 WEST NEWTON PA
88	GODWIN, JOHN A 6318942	PVT QMC		MISS ANNA L. GODWIN	SISTER	Y.W.C.A., DENVER COLO
89	GOODRICH, IRA 6204066	PVT QMC		FRANK M GOODRICH	FATHER	BAUCIBY TEXAS
90	JOHNSON, LONDON XXXXXXXX R-2350429	PVT QMC		MRS FLORA BEATY	SISTER	OAKDALE TENN
91	LAMB, EUPHOD 6319065	PVT QMC		PARIS LAMB	BROTHER	MONT EAGLE TENN
92	MCNEINNES JAMES J 6450244	PVT QMC		ROSE MCNEINNES	MOTHER	31 MARYLAND STREET ROCHESTER N Y
93	McWILLIAMS, JASPER E 6319091	PVT QMC		JIM McWILLIAMS	BROTHER	COLLINSWOOD TENN
94	MINTZ, RAY E 6319122	PVT QMC		WILLIAM R MINTZ	FATHER	RFD #1 MCDONOUGH GA.
95	MOORE, EUGENE L 6318910	PVT QMC		ROBERT L MOORE	FATHER	RFD #1 LAWRENCEBURG TENN
96	PALMER, OSCAR C 6319048	PVT QMC		W F PALMER	FATHER	DEBORSET GA
97	LEWIS, CHARLES 6507129	PVT QMC		SAM GORDON	FRIEND	625 UTAH AVE. BUTTE MONTANA
98	RINEO, IGNAZIO 6004773	PVT QMC		FRANK RINEO	FATHER	25 21 BANK STREET GENOVA ITALY
99	SAUNDERS, CURTIS R-97288	PVT QMC		MRS G M FOWLER	MOTHER	RFD #7 OZARK ALA
00	SEAL, ROBERT A 6319074	PVT QMC		GEORGE SEAL	FATHER	ROSE HILL VA
01	WELSH, ROBERT J R-2752874	PVT QMC		KATHERINE WELSH	AUNT	16 AUSTIN AVEY WARREN OHIO
02	CORLEY, WENTWORTH H 6204065	PVT S C		J H JOHNSON	UNCLE	210 MILBY AVE HOUSTON TEXAS
03	POWELSON, CHESTER E 6204065	PVT S C		MRS EDITH POWELSON	MOTHER	HEMPFORD TEXAS
04	POWELSON, HARRY A 6204060	PVT S C		MRS EDITH POWELSON	MOTHER	HEMPFORD TEXAS
05	WHATLEY, BEN 6319134	PVT S C		JOHN W WHATLEY		RFD # 5 Box 50 HEADLAND ALABAMA
06	WOODWARD, EDGAR E R-1140779	PVT S C		MRS E D CHOATE	SISTER	701 RAMPART ST PALESTINE TEXAS
07	VALLONE, ROCCO 6003468	PVT P A		MRS MARY VALLONE	MOTHER	240 EAST 146th Street NEW YORK CITY N Y
08	BURTON, EMBETT H. R-2768959	PVT C A C		MARY ANN BURTON	MOTHER	Box 75 SILVER SPRING MARYLAND MD
09	BRITTELL ARCHIE T 6411449	PVT INF		MRS ISABEL BRITTELL	MOTHER	313 CARSON AVE LA JUESTA COLO

Total Officers.....	A G.O.	A Total of 12 Copies of Passenger List are required distributed as follows: 5 Copies for American Port of Embarkation. 4 Copies for French Port of Embarkation. 1 Copy for Company or Detachment Commander. 2 Copies if routed via English. One copy at English Port of Embarkation. One copy at English Port of Embarkation.	(Signature of Company Commander)
Total Enlisted Men.....			
Total Nurses.....			
Total Civilians.....			
Total Miscellaneous.....			
Total Passengers.....		(Rank)	





**Above, wooden crosses mark U. S. burials in Russia  
Below, some soldiers have stones.**



