MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMAN ‘GEORGE M LOVERING, 1ST.SGT.D.4TH REG’

George Mason Lovering was born on January 10, 1832, in Springfield, New Hampshire. His family then moved to East Randolph (now Holbrook Massachusetts), where he would join the local militia unit; The Randolph Light Infantry. This unit that was called into active service at the start of the Civil War on 15th April 1861 as Company ‘D’ of the 4th Massachusetts Infantry. Lovering being mustered into the regiment as First Sergeant in his Company. After their 90 day service, during which they took part in the battle of Big Bethel, the Regiment mustered out on 22nd July 1861.

On 27th December 1861, Lovering mustered into "Read's Company" 3rd Massachusetts Cavalry, a unit that’s companies, acting most of the time independently, were stationed at New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Plaquemine. Here they performed a considerable amount of outpost duty, suffering some loss. Lovering was discharged for disability on 15th June 1862 at New Orleans.

Not to be deterred from more service, Lovering reenlisted again as 1st Sergeant on the 23rd September 1862 when his old Regiment, the 4th Massachusetts Infantry, was mustered into a further 9 month term of service. On the 27th of December 1862, the regiment proceeded to New York where it embarked for Louisiana. To form a part of Ingraham's Brigade, Emory's Division, 19th Corps. Here it cooperated with the Navy in the attempt of Admiral Farragut to run past the Port Hudson batteries. It engaged in the attack on Fort Bisland, April 11 to 13, and joined in the pursuit of the Confederates as far as Franklin. On June 14th 1863, the Regiment took part in the Siege of Port Hudson, a Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. During this battle Sergeant Lovering’s courage resulted in him being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. His citation as follows:
‘For The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Sergeant George Mason Lovering, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 14 June 1863, while serving with Company I, 4th Massachusetts Infantry, in action at Port Hudson, Louisiana. During a momentary confusion in the ranks caused by other troops rushing upon the regiment, First Sergeant Lovering, with coolness and determination, rendered efficient aid in preventing a panic among the troops.’

Lovering was mustered out again on 28th August 1863, only to be commissioned as a First Lieutenant in Company ‘F’ 3rd Infantry Corps d' Afrique, which would later be renamed the 75th Regiment of US Colored Troops. The regiment participated in the Red River Campaign, then served in the Bayous of Louisiana. Its unclear when Lovering was mustered out, some say in 1865, others that he resigned his Commission several months after receiving it.

Post War, he was a member of Member of GAR Post # 10 and eventually moved to Maine, spending his final years living at a veteran’s home. He died at the age of 87 at St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, Maine. He is buried in Union Cemetery in Holbrook.

As with all Medal of Honor recipients, a large amount of information on Lovering can be found online. In 2012, his home towns Randolph and Holbrook erected a monument and memorial bench to Lovering in an area no known as ‘George Mason Lovering Square’

![LOVERING IN OLD AGE](image)

**THE MEDAL**

The Massachusetts Minuteman medal was awarded Massachusetts ‘3 month’ Militiamen who answered Lincoln’s ‘first call’ for troops in April of 1861. In 1902 the State of Massachusetts authorised the production of this medal to be given to every Militiaman who answered this call, estimated to be about 3,800 men. The medals themselves were issued with officially impressed naming, giving the name rank and unit of the soldier. However as they were only awarded on application and many remained unissued. Medals were not issued by the State to any other soldiers, meaning of the 159,000 men from this State that fought for the Union, only a fraction actually received medal. Of the men that were in these original Militia units, the majority went on to serve in other units during the War and as such their service can be hugely interesting.
Since Massachusetts Minute Men medals were only issued to a small number of men, their can’t be more than a handful (at most), that were issued to men that would also Awarded the Medal of Honor.

Note to US customers; In recent years, the sale or trade of Medal of Honor’s has been made illegal within the United States, which includes the shipping to the United States from other Countries. However, this medal awarded to Lovering, does not fall into that category and as such, this is a rare opportunity to acquire an officially named and awarded medal to a well known Medal of Honor winner.

Condition GVF, a few minor EK’s. A superb and rare medal

THE BATTLE OF PORT HUDSON

‘This series of sieges and assaults occurred over a lengthy period extending from at least May of 1863 until the eventual capitulation on July 9, 1863. There was action by both the Union Navy and Army against a Confederate garrison at Port Hudson of about 2,500. Several Navy Medals of Honor were awarded during this series of engagements as well as several Army awards.

Port Hudson was one of only two remaining strongholds that allowed the Confederacy to block free navigation of the Mississippi, the other being Vicksburg and while Port Hudson withstood furious Union naval attacks and artillery barrages along with two major ground assaults, its defenders held out. Only when word of the fall of Vicksburg (July 7, 1863) reached them did they strike their colors aware that they could not hold out indefinitely.

The first ground assault happened on May 23, 1863. This action is significant especially in connection with Sergeant Lovering, as we shall see later, though was not the engagement for which he was awarded the Medal. Some of the most courageous and unstinting efforts on this day where made by the 1st and 3rd Infantry Regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards (also called the Corps d'AFrique, and the United States Colored Volunteers, generally considered part of what is called “The Black Phalanx”.

A second major assault occurs starting on June 13, 1863 and lasting until the 14th. Like the May 23rd action this fails to breach the bastion, and results in substantial Union casualties. Both assaults while bold were probably intemperate in the face of the well entrenched defenders, a pattern that is typical of many Civil War era actions.

Lovering’s award describes there was poor coordination amongst the various unit commanders. General Banks in overall command had planned an assault on several sides, but in the actual event, Union troop formations ran into one another. The situation then
returns to active siege until July 9, 1963 when the Confederate garrison surrenders upon learning of the fall of Vicksburg.

The last infantry attack on the Port Hudson fortifications;

The successful defence of their lines brought a renewed confidence to Gardner and his garrison. They felt though a combination of well planned defensive earthworks and the skillful and deliberate reinforcement of threatened areas, the superior numbers of attackers had been repulsed. Learning from his experience, Gardner organized a more methodical system of defence. This involved dividing the fortifications into a network of defence zones, with an engineering officer in charge of strengthening the defence in each area. For the most part this involved once again charting the best cross fire for artillery positions, improving firepower concentrations, and digging protective pits to house artillery when not in use, to protect them from enemy bombardment.

Spent bullets and scrap metal were sewed into shirtsleeves to make up canister casings for the artillery, and the heavy coast guns facing the river that had center pivot mounts were cleared for firing on Union positions on the eastern side of the fortress. Three of these guns were equipped for this, and one 10-inch (250 mm) columbiad in Battery Four was so effective in this that Union troops referred to it as the “Demoralizer.” Its fearful reputation spawned the myth that it was mounted on a railroad car, and could fire from any position in the fortifications. Captain L.J. Girard was placed in charge of the function of the artillery, and despite material shortages, achieved miracles in keeping the artillery functional. Rifles captured from the enemy or taken from hospitalized soldiers were stacked for use by troops in the trench lines.

Positions in front of the lines were land mined with unexploded 13-inch (330 mm) mortar shells, known as “torpedoes” at the time. Sniper positions were also prepared at high points in the trench works for sharpshooters. These methods improved the defence, but could not make up for the fact that the garrison was short of everything except gunpowder. The food shortage was a drag on morale, and resulted in a significant level of desertion to the enemy. This drain on manpower was recorded by Colonel Steedman who wrote, “Our most serious and annoying difficulty is the unreliable character of a portion of our Louisiana troops. Many have deserted to the enemy, giving him information of our real condition; yet in the same regiments we have some of our ablest officers and men.” Miles Louisiana Legion was considered the greatest offender.

On the Union side, astonishment and chagrin were near universal in reaction to the decisive defeat of the infantry assaults. Banks was determined to continue the siege in view of the fact that his political as well as military career would be destroyed by a withdrawal to Baton Rouge. The resources of his entire command were called into play, and men and material poured into the Union encirclement. Nine additional regiments appeared in the lines by June 1. 89 field guns were brought into action, and naval guns from the USS Richmond were added to the siege guns bearing on the fortress. These six naval guns were 9-inch (229 mm) Dahlgren smoothbores. The guns were originally intended for a battery at the Head of Passes in the Mississippi Delta. The fact that four were finally emplaced in Battery Number 10, just east of “Fort Desperate” and two in Number 24, gives some idea of the reach and progress of the
Union Navy. Each of the Dahlgren guns weighed 9020 pounds and was 9 feet long, capable of firing a 73.5 pound (33.3 kg) exploding shell.

The second assault began with a sustained shelling of the Confederate works beginning at 11:15 am on June 13, 1863, and lasting an hour. Banks then sent a message to Gardner demanding the surrender of his position. Gardner’s reply was, “My duty requires me to defend this position, and therefore I decline to surrender”. Banks continued the bombardment for the night, but only gave the order for what was to be a simultaneous three prong infantry attack on 1 am of June 14. The attack finally began at 3:30 am, but the lack of any agreed upon plan, and a heavy fog disordered the attack as it began. Grover’s column struck the Confederate line at “Fort Desperate” before the others, and the same formidable terrain combined with the enhanced Confederate defence stopped the attacks outside the rebel works. Auger’s demonstration at the centre arrived after the main attack had failed, and the attack on the southern end of the line was made after daylight, and stood little chance as a result. The infantry attack had only resulted in even more dead and wounded soldiers, 1,792 casualties against 47 rebel, including division commander Brig. Gen. Halbert E Paine. He led the main attack and fell wounded, losing a leg. After this, the actions against Port Hudson were reduced to bombardment and siege.’